

Edmund Jacob Wolf

Exposition of the Gospels of the Church Year *On the Basis of Nebe*



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AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPELS

OF

THE CHURCH YEAR,

ON THE BASIS OF NEBE.

BY

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TO MY WIFE, .
WHOSE CLEVER, CHEERFUL AND PATIENT ASSISTANCE
MADE IT POSSIBLE
TO CARRY THIS WORK THROUGH THE PRESS.

PREFACE.

PERSUADED of the manifold advantages of the Christian Year to the ministry of the Word, and acquainted with the scientific and edifying value of Nebe's *Evangelischen Perikopen*, it occurred to me that a series of Lectures based upon this great work would present to my students a profitable variation from the usual exegetical methods. So far as Nebe's interpretations commended themselves to my judgment, they were freely appropriated, but such masters as Meyer and Bengel, and others, were likewise largely utilized. Independent study was of course not discarded, but I follow the maxim that in the exposition of the Scriptures the true rendering is to be sought and not a new one. A claim for originality in this domain is open to sundry suspicions.

The delivery of these Lectures excited uncommon interest among the students, many of them incurring a heavy expense to have their cyclostyled copies preserved in a bound volume. After the completion of the course the matter was carefully revised and delivered to new classes, and again with a flattering reception.

This appreciation from theological students has encouraged the hope that the publication of these Lectures would be welcomed by many pastors, especially as there is a growing recognition of the homiletical value of this logical distribution of the evangelical material. The Calvinistic opposition to the Church Festivals has about died out, and with the felt need for a systematic and comprehensive presentation of the economy of grace from the pulpit, with the confession that no other plan is extant and with the certainty that this one has for centuries proved a blessing to the Church, the times are auspicious to the appearance of such a work. Assurances have, indeed, come to me from various denominations of a demand for such an exposition, the need for which is again emphasized by the fact that to my knowledge no work of this kind has heretofore been published in English. The popular series of Sermons by Dr. Seiss, and the extensive Anglican literature on the Christian Year, do not profess to be exegetical studies.

To such a partition of the Gospel narratives the evangelists have themselves given the cue by their selection and arrangement of

such portions of the Christian tradition as were adapted to serve their ends in the publication of their respective narratives. Why shall not the Church follow their example, and make such a use of the boundless treasures of the Gospel as will best exhibit the vital interrelation of the various doctrines and the rounded organic completeness of saving truth?

For putting out a volume which is neither an original work nor a translation, I offer no apology. It is the truth that is wanted, independent of the personality that might add weight thereto. The method is Nebe's, the content is original neither with him nor with his redactor. Sometimes diverse and even conflicting interpretations are offered—advisedly, since it is not the province of the exegete to pronounce dogmatically the true, exclusive meaning of a passage. Let each student exercise his liberty and his ability in such cases. Where various renderings are admissible, it is fit that the expositor stop short of a decision rather than declare all false, except the one he approves.

Condensation had to be applied. Nebe's work consists of three volumes with a total of 1,600 closely printed pages. Valuable as all this material may be to the specialist, some of it has little interest for men unacquainted with German ecclesiastical conditions, and the copious citations from the early Fathers have been generally passed by, since they have in great part only an archeological value. Several Lessons for Festivals seldom if ever observed among us have been entirely omitted.

Confident that in these times when the pulpit is marked by an unregulated subjectivity, when men are often confessedly at a loss what to preach, when the presentation of the Gospel is sadly one-sided, partial, atomistic, earnest attention to this complete and orderly supply of doctrinal material will be a safeguard to the pulpit and an enrichment of its ministrations to the faith and life of the pew, I send forth this volume with the prayer that the Holy Ghost may bless it to the edification of the Church.

E. J. W.

Gettysburg, September 25, 1900.

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THE GOSPELS OF THE CHURCH YEAR.

A. THE CHRISTMAS CYCLE.

I. ADVENT.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

MATTHEW xxi. 1-9.

CHRIST's entry into Jerusalem is a suitable introduction to the Christian Year in general, and to the Christmas cycle in particular. This is universally recognized.

The Synoptics, cf. Luke xix. 29 ff.; Mark xi. 1 ff., show extraordinary agreement in the presentation of this scene. Mark is the fresher, more particular and more complete. Matthew connects the scene with prophecy. Luke adds traits which indicate an eyewitness: the tears of the Lord and the displeasure of the Pharisees.

Some have thought that John xii. 12 ff., refers to another triumphal entrance, especially as he uses *τη ἐπαύριον*, pointing to the day which follows that on which the Lord came to Bethany and at dinner received the costly anointing.

If a second triumph is accepted, then John very singularly omits the one described by the Synoptics. It is not probable either that another would occur after the cleansing of the temple, and the bitter opposition shown by the priests.

Besides, Matthew tells of our Lord on the next morning returning with His disciples from Bethany to Jerusalem, being hungry on the way and cursing the unfruitful fig tree, &c., leaving no room for a second public entrance.

Lücke, DeW., Olsh., Bleek, Weiss and others accept but one. Nebe holds that the only real difficulty is caused by the words "to Bethany" in Mark, and "to Bethphage and Bethany" in

Luke, which seem to deny that the procession in Jerusalem started from Bethany. He proposes the solution that inasmuch as the place in which the feast was given was called "the house of Simon the leper," and as lepers were not allowed to reside in the midst of a community, the probability is that Simon's house lay outside of the village, but still in the district of Bethany.

Mary and Lazarus were among the guests. The Lord then leaving Jerusalem from this house, would soon be approaching Bethany and would pursue His journey to Jerusalem in the direction where Bethphage and Bethany are nearest to each other.

John says that Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover, and that the triumphal entry occurred on the morrow (v. 12).

Counting the *terminus a quo*, it was Sunday when Jesus arrived in Bethany and Monday when He went to Jerusalem. The Passover was celebrated on Friday.

Nebe suggests a parallel between the anointing of Jesus, our Passover, 1 Cor. v. 7, preparing Him for His sacrificial death, and the selection on this very day of the Passover lambs out of the herd. Exod. xii. 3, 14.

1. And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem . . .

Fully conscious of what awaits Him there, our Lord presses onward. All males were required to appear at the festivals. Still, He entered the power of death of His own free purpose. His hour had come. With filial obedience He gives Himself up.

"They," Jesus, His disciples and a number of others who had joined the company. On nearing the end of their journey they arrived at Bethphage, at the Mount of the Olives. Luke mentions also His arrival at Bethany.

Bethany is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but frequently in the New Testament. According to John xi. 18, it lay fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem on the south-east declivity of the Mount of Olivés. A wretched little village settled by Christians and Arabs, and called El Azarijeh, after Lazarus, is pointed out to-day as the site of Bethany.

Bethphage, house of figs, is mentioned nowhere else in the Old or New Testament, except in the parallel passages. The Talmud often mentions it, and describes it as a locality in very close proximity to Jerusalem. Mark calls it a "village." Origen and Jerome speak of it as a village in which many priests resided. No trace of it is found to-day. It probably perished amid the sieges of Jerusalem.

Nebe says: "Not properly into Bethany did our Lord go, but in the neighborhood of the place, into the limits."

The Mountain of Olives is half a mile distant from Jerusalem, separated from it by the valley of the Kidron, formerly covered with groves of olives, especially on the western slope. Sometimes it is called simply Olivet. Its summit offers a rare, magnificent prospect—the saddest and most impressive in the world: Jerusalem at its feet—the Mediterranean in the distance—Ebal and Gerizim rise into view, and on the other side you look down into the deep basin of the Dead Sea. On the south is the Frank Mountain.

It played an important part in the Old Testament. Over the road on which the son of David is now in triumph entering Jerusalem, His father according to the flesh, King David, at one time, with head covered and feet bare, fled away from Jerusalem. "And all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up." 2 Sam. xv. 30.

Cf. Ezek. xi. 23, xliii. 1 ff. Zechariah (xiv. 4), represents the Lord standing on Mount Olivet in the day of judgment—"the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east"—the East is the land of promise. Thence streams the light of the sun. "Thither man is ever looking for his Eden. Gen. ii. 8. From thence comes the light, born of light, toward Jerusalem."

Arrived at the Mount, He then (τότε) sends—the correlatives (ὅτε, τότε) show that this sending of two disciples is to be carefully noted. "Then, not before," says Bengel. "It is clearly intimated that the event about to be described was full of mystery." The surprising thing is not that the Lord should send disciples, but that He should send them just now, so soon after leaving Bethany, and that He sends them with a very remarkable charge. On other occasions likewise Jesus sent out disciples by twos. Mark vi. 7, xiv. 13, Luke x. 1.

2. "Go into the village over against you . . ."

He points them to a place (κώμη) lying just before them. They cannot miss it. It lies visibly before them (κατέναντι). Some have conjectured Bethany, others Bethphage.

To this spot the Lord sends the disciples, promising them they would find there, without any effort on their part, an ass standing and tied as if she were waiting prepared, or had been placed there by her owner, and he would surrender her the moment she was wanted for the service.

Silently and secretly God prepares all things in His kingdom. All that was needed for this occasion was made ready to hand by divine arrangement. We may not see it, but all things are ready when He commands us to go.

This though apparently an incident of little moment, was calculated to strengthen their faith, and to lighten the task he had imposed on them.

The colt standing by the tied ass would be a sure index that this was the animal they were to bring, and also that He who required this beast has included every thing, even the most insignificant circumstances, in His wonderful counsel.

Λίσαντες ἀγάγετέ μου. A most extraordinary procedure. He commands them to take possession of the strange animals as if they were their own. The two represent considerable value. The removal of them from a place so near the city, and at a time when thousands of strangers were streaming over the roads, has a compromising and suspicious aspect.

What could our Lord want with these animals? Many a long journey has He made without ever using the feet or strength of others for His support. He had a night's rest in Bethany, from which the distance is short and the journey has no hardships. He cannot be tired out already, and require the ass for rest. It was, of course, not for the disciples to ask any questions, but in the obedience of faith to follow His directions. The divine word is everything. Reason must be held captive when the Lord speaks.

At the same time He graciously prepares and fortifies them against any opposition they may encounter. He promises the owner's consent. Whenever faith is subjected to a trial, grace is present to sustain it. The yoke is always easy, the burden always light, even when a hard thing is required of us.

3. If any man say . . . Ye shall say "the Lord hath" . . .

Jesus is He that searcheth the heart—therefore let Him be adored as the heart's true King. He knows what thoughts the disciples will have as they go on their errand—with submissive obedience, but not with alacrity. So He helps their infirmity. They are to proceed confidently. He gives them for support a gracious word—and they have long since known the import of a word from His mouth—a word of Omnipotence. Their own eyes have seen the stilling of the tempest by His word and the swaying of the masses. With this word they can meet the owner and avert his possible resistance. Let them only say, "The Lord hath need of them," to any one who might raise objections, and with prompt loyalty the animals will be turned over to them. Was then the owner a silent adherent of Christ? Of course, if he belonged to the Lord he would gladly grant Him these animals. But then the answer put in their mouth would probably have been "*thy* Lord or *our* Lord."

"The Lord" is significant. In Greek usage this was the same as Sir, Mister, John xii. 21, but not among the Jews. Jesus distinguishes *κύριος* from *διδάσκαλος*, John xiii. 13 f.

Ὁ κύριος is not one who gives instruction, but one who gives commands. Luke vi. 46. Whenever in Matthew Jesus is addressed as Lord, there is always a reference to His power, in virtue of which He rules as Lord of all here upon earth and nothing is impossible to Him. vii. 21 f; viii. 2, 6, 8, 21, 25, etc.

The term recognizes His transcendence over humanity, His Messiahship, His absolute dominion. This is evident by the sense in which the word was to be used with the inquiring owner. The stranger is to be assured that the Messiah, the King of Israel, needs his property. Only a King can thus expect obedience. Matt. xxvi. 18.

Nebe says: "The wholly peculiar constitution of the kingdom of Jesus is mirrored in this word. What kind of a Lord, what kind of a King, is this who needs an ass and her colt? He who is Lord of all, has divested himself of all, for He has emptied himself to the extreme of poverty, not having where to lay His head. He needs, indeed, these creatures not for Himself and His service, but for us and for our service."

The poverty of the Church is her wealth. And this poverty constitutes the true riches of our Lord. The words, "He hath need of them," indicating the difference between what Christ is in Himself and what He has become for us, must stir and deeply move the heart. And the disciples will learn from this that the word shall not return void to Him, but always accomplish that whereunto it was sent, even when, as here, it is sent through the mouth of messengers.

Ἀποστελεῖ. The owner, as soon as he hears this, will send . . .

The event is sure and speedy. They are already prepared to send the beast. Cf. Mark iv. 29; xi. 6.

The best MSS. attest the future. If the present is accepted, it represents as already taking place what will immediately and certainly follow. The assurance is intended to encourage the disciples, showing them in advance the beautiful, quick success which will crown their business with the stranger.

Ὁ κύριος is enough for him. Calvin sees in this a clear proof of Christ's deity. It belongs to God to know what is transpiring at a distance and to make the hearts of men accordant with His will. Jesús knew the man was at home, and that he would have confidence in these unknown messengers.

This extraordinary occurrence finds its solution in the prophets.

Strange thoughts must have occupied the minds of the Apostles who witnessed these things, but the full understanding of it was reserved until after the Lord had been glorified. John xii. 16.

Nebe quotes Augustine's saying, *Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus in Novo patet*, and adds: "This is not so exclusively true that it may not here and there be reversed thus, *Novum Testamentum in Vetere patet*, and this is true here." The Lord's command to the disciples and the whole picture of the triumphal entry which this command introduces, receives its true explanation only from the Old Testament, from the prophecy of Zechariah.

4, 5. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled . . . Say ye unto the daughter of Zion" . . .

This was no accidental occurrence, no mere coincidence with prophecy. The Evangelist recognizes in it a revelation of a definite purpose of the Lord, namely, to fulfil the word of the prophet which had been embodied in this typical form. Not only according to divine purpose did prophecy now come to fulfilment. The transaction is ordered directly by Jesus for this end, and He orders all in a way that the word of the prophet after many centuries finally becomes truth. In all these arrangements He follows not a momentary impulse, but a fixed purpose. He in whom the promises are Yea and Amen means to fulfil literally the promise of Zechariah. So Ewald, Weiss, Hengstenberg.

Nebe holds that He omits the mention of the prophet because He would group two different prophecies into one. The beginning, the address, is taken from Isaiah lxii. 11. The remainder, everything that is to be announced to the daughter of Zion, is from Zech. ix. 9. The freedom of the Apostles in quoting Scripture is suggestive, but they themselves were guided by the Holy Ghost.

Hengstenberg accounts for the combination on the score that the Apostles mean to show the deep inward connection of the two passages. But Isaiah lxii. 11 throws no light on the prediction of Zechariah. In place of "say to the daughter of Zion", the address of Zechariah is "rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion; shout, daughter of Jerusalem."

Nebe thinks the Evangelists made this mosaic of prophecy because the address of Isaiah is more sober, moderate and serious; the jubilant, exultant call to Jerusalem appeared to him unsuited. Jerusalem is not in a mood to exult over the approach of her King. She has scorned the voice of her King who would have brought her under the wings of His grace, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings. The despised King now comes once more, only to say that He comes, waiting to see whether He will

be hailed as King, or met with the shouts, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

Why the utterances of two prophets are cited as the word of one, Nebe answers with the thought that all the words of the prophets are to be viewed as issuing from the same fountain, as the inspiration of the same spirit, as revelations of one and the same God. The prophets, according to the view of the New Testament, are not isolated agents independent of each other, but they stand shoulder to shoulder as one man, they constitute a chain, an organic, united whole. "Their prophecies form one body of revelation."

Τῇ θυγατρὶ Σιών. Psalm ix. 15. It is customary for poets in all languages to personify cities and nations as feminine, sometimes as mothers, sometimes as daughters or maidens.

Subjugation under a foreign yoke is depicted by the figure of a deflowered virgin. Isaiah xlvii. 1 ff. The overthrow and the depopulation of a country are represented by a mother bereaved of her children or her husband. Isaiah iii. 26; xlix. 14 ff.; liv. 1 ff.

Zion may be *Gen. Orig.* The relation of the population to Zion is that of a daughter to her mother. It is a part or portion or offspring of the city. Bengel takes the term by synecdoche for Jerusalem.

It may also be *Gen. Appos.* "The daughter of Zion, the Church sustaining a filial, bridal, conjugal relation to Jehovah, the people of God personified as a wife or daughter. The context seems to decide for the latter. The King is now coming to His people. Zion is the residence of God—in the theocratic sense—and the central seat of His people. What is said here to the daughter, Zion, is said to the whole people of God, whose representative she is." Let all the children of the kingdom be ready to receive Him.

The Lord causes something to be said to Zion. He has also given His word of command and promise to the two disciples. "He who is making His entry does everything through the word. The word is the means whereby this King founds and maintains His Kingdom." The word is the sword whereby He establishes His reign.

Ἰδοὺ. The prophet in spirit is transported to the great moment when the new age begins. He sees the future King before his eyes making His entrance into Jerusalem. What he saw in the Spirit, the daughter of Zion is now to behold with the eyes of the body.

This ἰδοὺ shall serve to waken the daughter of Zion from her

sleep and unbelief. Something great, something notable and momentous is about to happen.

The Lord thy King stands before thy gates, O Jerusalem. Lift up your heads, ye gates . . . and the King of glory shall come in.

This is the decisive moment for the daughter of Zion—the moment for which many hearts have been longing. Your salvation is near. Lift up your heads and see, behold!

“Thy King.” Not simply the King promised thee, appointed thee from eternity. Psalm ii. 8. He is born from Israel. He is the Son of David according to the flesh. 2 Sam. vii. 12 ff. He is in truth Israel’s King. He shall rule over Zion. “Jehovah shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion,” Psalm cx. 2. Salvation is of the Jews. “And it comes in royal majesty, Jesus comes as King to reign over hearts and to rule in all lands.” It is a Kingdom that is to be set up, not a school of philosophy. Jesus is to mount a throne, not a professor’s chair.

Ἐρχεται expresses not merely the presence or approach of the King. He comes, as prophets foretold and as men heard from His own lips, from Heaven. He comes into this world from the bosom of His Father, from the glory which He had with him before the foundation of the world. He comes to His people, notwithstanding they, after all the manifold admonishings and warnings of the prophets to prepare the way for Him, have not even put a beast at His disposal, upon which He might come to them. Luther: “He is a unique King: not you seek Him, but He seeks you; not you find Him, but He finds you; for the preachers come from Him, not from you. Their preaching comes from Him, not from you; your faith comes from Him and not from you; and everything that faith effects in you comes from Him and not from you.”

Σοι, “to thee,” to thee comes thy King.

Is it thy King? Why say, “to thee?” “The prophet seeks to portray Christ in a manner altogether lovely and to invite to faith.” It is not enough that Christ redeems us from the tyranny and bondage of sin, death and hell and becomes our King; He gives Himself as our own, that everything be ours which He is and has. He comes in your behalf, to be your own; like the phrase, “A child is born to us,” Isaiah ix. 5, *i. e.*, in your behalf, for your sake, for your salvation, Luke ii. 11.

This is emphasized by the manner of His coming: *πρᾶνς*, meek. The LXX. give this for the original. Some render the original by “poor,” “miserable,” “humble.” We follow the Evangelist and the LXX. This, in any event, must be given as the first sense.

Πραῦς occurs in the Classics *vs.* ὀργίλος, θυμοειδής. In James iii. 13 *ff.* πραΰτης *vs.* σῆλος and ἐριθεία.

The King might properly come angry, indignant, to the daughter of Zion, for she had not fulfilled her engagement and made herself ready for the coming King. Hence this is a word of great comfort, and thus special prominence is given to the idea. "This is a word for the sin-troubled conscience . . . which cannot endure the nearness of the coming of God . . . knowing that He will punish sin, it trembles at the thought of God."

Καὶ ἐπιβεβηκώς. Many interpret this as further illustrating the meekness of Christ—its metaphorical expression.

Were there really two animals? Does the καὶ require two?

According to Hengstenberg, the usual view of the older and later expositors assumes but one—a view possibly due to the desire to bring prophecy and fulfilment into absolute agreement.

Καὶ may be taken as exegetical.

We thus have a climax. The King of Zion rides upon an ass; yes, upon a colt of one that bears the yoke.

Some interpret this of increased value or enhanced import. Köhler on Zech.: "By its youth the beast is characterized as that which is adapted to the service of Jehovah." Cf. Num. xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 1. Hitherto unused, it has not been defiled. It is pure, unblemished, suitable for a sacred purpose. Others find the climax to be the very reverse of this. The ass on which the King of Zion rides, becomes by this description, the more pitiful and meek. It is not yet grown—only a colt, not independent of the parent, unadapted and untrained for riding, the offspring of a very common species of ass.

The prophet points to the poor and wretched character of the animal on which the promised King celebrates His entry into His city—casting a clear light on the whole scene. How different from the warlike steeds which prance in pride under the burden of conquering heroes.

Some hold that the whole clause is but a symbol of the Saviour's meekness and peaceableness. It was not poverty that reduced Him to this lowly form—the world was at His bidding—but in meekness He chose this form of inauguration. He rode the symbol of peace rather than the horse, the emblem of military prowess and renown. So Bleek, Meyer, Godet and Weiss. The ass is at once a lowly and peaceable animal, and it illustrates the humble spirit of the Prince of Peace.

This view at the same time harmonizes with that of Hengstenberg, Keil, Kliefoth and Nebe, who interpret the choice of such

an animal as an illustration of lowliness and poverty. The King was poor, without splendor, pomp or glory.

In the earlier history of Israel prominent persons rode upon an ass. Judg. v. 10; x. 4; xii. 14; 2 Sam. xvii. 23; xix. 27. But the ass lost its value after Israel ceased to live in exclusion. From the time it maintained close relations with neighboring nations we find not a single example of a royal or eminent person mounting the ass. All the information from the East does not offer an instance of a king riding an ass, and here this is predicted of the King of kings.

Jewish expositors felt deeply this humiliating feature of their king, and sought various expedients to change the inglorious riding of their king on an ass into a riding that would glorify Him. The heathen spake with derision of the king on the foal of an ass. A Persian king, Sapor, declared to the Jews: "You say the Messiah will come on an ass. I will send Him my red horse." Rabbi Samuel replied: "If he had a horse of a hundred colors, the ass of the Messiah might be compared with it."

The passage was from the remotest times uniformly interpreted as Messianic, and this interpretation was so deeply rooted that Rabbi Schimeoni can say, "Whoever sees an ass in a dream is looking out for redemption, for it is said, rejoice, O daughter of Zion, behold, thy King cometh."

According to Theodoret the Jews of his time understood the prophecy of Zerubbabel. Some have referred it to Nehemiah, some even to Judas Maccabaeus, but there is ample evidence that the Messianic interpretation prevailed in the Synagogue, passages to this effect in the Talmud being very numerous. Some incapable of denying this rendering of the Synagogue have charged that it passed from the Church into the Synagogue. But it is incredible that the Synagogue would have adopted from the Church a rendering so contradictory to the Jewish Messianic expectations, and which gave the Christians so manifest an advantage over the Jews.

The Messianic interpretation was so fixed before Christ, that attempts had to be made to reconcile the apparently contradictory predictions in Dan. vii and Zech. ix. One solution was that if His people were pious He would come in the clouds of heaven like unto a Son of man, but if they were not pious, then He would come according to Zechariah.

The fact that this prophecy of Zechariah received a Messianic interpretation throws, it is claimed, important light upon this triumphal entry. It was not a fortuituous occurrence, an incident without a purpose.

Some have thought Jesus merely saw fit to yield to the enthusiasm of the masses. He certainly could have avoided these scenes and entered the city privately and unobserved. And as these proceedings gave the appearance that He was more than a teacher, a consideration which His enemies might use against Him, He might have avoided the pageant, had not a higher interest been at stake. Some have thought the development of circumstances rendered necessary this last link of a chain of events. Neander speaks of it as something foreseen, as something admitted into His plan, and this plan was to fulfil the counsels of His Father, in the fulfilment of which He acted as a free organ. "He would this once surrender himself to the people as the theocratic king, and thus testify to men that the Kingdom of God has come, that He Himself is the promised theocratic King."

Nebe denies that the people were the moving cause, or the first factor, in the events of the day. According to all the Evangelists the Lord sent for this ass and her foal before the people who accompanied Him to Jerusalem broke out in their acclamations. He not only allows this, bears with it, gives Himself up to it . . . He not only meets half way the crowd which goes out from Jerusalem to meet Him and salute Him as King, but He sends His disciples to Bethphage that they bring Him the ass, because He has determined *to offer Himself to the people, to the daughter of Jerusalem as the King of prophecy*. Cyril of Alex.: "He entered Jerusalem in this way that every one might recognize that He was the Christ, which, as the coming One, the earlier prophecy had predicted." The occurrence was one designed, premeditated, and planned.

On the other hand, Jesus does not here make a final attempt to set Himself up as a theocratic King and to found an external kingdom. Had this been His object He would not have ridden upon an ass, but upon a war horse, and His followers instead of carrying palms would have been armed with swords, but He does intend to effect among the people *the recognition of His Messiahship*. In that remarkable pageant, seen in the Spirit by Zechariah, Jesus now enters Jerusalem to show Himself as the One, of whom the Prophets before have spoken.

Nebe says: "As John in the prison was to recognize in the signs and wonders which his disciples reported to him, the One who was literally fulfilling the prophecies concerning the works of the Messiah, so the daughter of Zion shall by this unique entry be convinced that this Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Son of David. In him the prophecy of Zechariah has now *its literal fulfillment*."

On another occasion the Lord withdrew from the people when they came to make Him King by force. John vi. 15. Here He presents Himself to them as their King. He now owed it to Himself and to the people to declare openly His relation to those prophecies about the King of glory. What He was, what He was to be for Israel, and for all nations, He is not to conceal in His inner consciousness but to reveal, to proclaim. He is the King on whose girdle gleams the inscription King of kings, and Lord of lords, and He presents Himself as such before He departs from the world. The Old Testament clearly characterizes the Messiah as a King, and as long as He did not fulfill these prophecies the people could not be assured that He really was the coming one. His Kingship had been indeed reflected from many of His works—however, not kingly actions, but a living personal King had been predicted. Israel should be led to accept Him with all the heart as the Messiah.

Hence here upon the Mountain of Olives the mask is thrown aside and He enters the city of the great King. Matt. v. 35. He enters the capital of the many typical kings as the true, prototypal, everlasting King of Israel. It is His last notification, on a grand scale, to the daughter of Zion. It is the final step with which saving grace comes to the Jerusalem. This is the crisis, the hour of visitation, the decisive moment. Daughter of Zion, consider, know what belongs to thy peace! The Lord comes as thy King. Thus He can come only once now, and never more.

It is safe now for the Lord to present Himself to the daughter of Zion. Had He done this earlier, when the people were wild in their enthusiasm, it would have produced universal excitement, plunged the whole nation into rebellion and precipitated its ruin. Now there is no risk of this kind. All is changed. He is no longer regarded as the lauded prophet; the people have been alienated from Him, the secular and the spiritual heads of Israel have become His mortal foes. He may proclaim His kingdom. The people are less likely to rally to this proclamation, since He appears not in worldly pomp and external majesty, with which carnal hearts had adorned Him, but in the most decided opposition to the desires and hopes of the people, in the humbleness which said more loudly than language, "My kingdom is not of this world."

6. "The disciples went and did . . ."

They were accustomed to obedience. Nebe: "The Lord could not have celebrated His triumphal entry, had not these disciples yielded Him unconditional obedience."

It is characteristic of the reign of Christ that He does everything not immediately, but mediately, through His own. Such obedience is our honor, for the Lord who needs the ass and the foal, needs also our service for the establishment of His kingdom.

Their implicit obedience is crowned with fitting results. Everything eventuated just as Jesus had told them. According to Mark, the foal stood tied at the door without, in the open street, so that they need but loosen it. The owners were standing there, and, according to Luke, asked them why they were loosing the colt, but offered no hindrance to them.

7. "And they brought the ass and the colt . . ."

Matthew is the only one that says expressly that the ass was brought to Jesus with the colt.

Upon both animals the disciples laid their clothes, thus making a cover and serving their Lord and Master with something of their own. A similar case occurs in 2 Kings ix. 13, an exhibition of love and loyalty. The asses were not saddled. The clothes are a substitute. Love is inventive and gladly exercises self-sacrifice. The Lord shall ride honorably and comfortably.

They cover both with their clothing. Some explain: So that neither animal would be without adornment and thus dishonor the pageant. Others: Because they did not know which of the animals the Master might select.

And he sat himself thereon, the disciples, however, assisting. Cf. Luke xix. 35. The Persian rulers were rather placed by others than themselves, got on horseback.

Which animal did He ride? Some have thought, now one, now the other. Such an alternating in the very short journey would seem ridiculous. The other Evangelists speak only of Jesus riding the colt. Some have thought that the plural (*αἱράν*) was used for the singular. Some, both animals were covered with clothing, both were placed at the Lord's disposal.

Theophylact: He sat upon the clothes. So Winer, Meyer, Bleek, Nebe and others.

One of the most remarkable spectacles the world ever saw. Poverty, lowliness, humility, are not only the characteristic marks of this King, but they are the secret of His power. Through humility He rises to exaltation. He conquers while He apparently is overcome; through the cross He advances to the crown, through death to life.

Would we be His subjects, we must submit ourselves to those principles of His kingdom, humble ourselves and learn humility

from Him who was lowly of heart. The disciple must be humble. God dwells in the heart of the contrite.

8. "And the most part of the multitude (Rev.) spread" . . .

Now is seen the power of the Lord over human hearts. In the whole scene there was nothing, viewed externally, which could stir or fill with enthusiasm the minds of men. He had raised no standard, won no laurels, fought no battles. This King upon the ass' colt might have excited the scoffs of the multitude and exposed the disciples to derision. The early Christians were ridiculed as *asinarii*. Yet although, according to John, the Apostles themselves did not properly understand this matter, the people with an uncommonly fine perception got the correct understanding and gave Him a welcome such as no conqueror ever received. In comparison with the former the people are like the suckling to the mature man. But as very soon a hymn of praise arises to the Lord from the children, xxi. 15 ff, so now the childlike people begin these acclamations while the mature disciples are yet silent.

Matthew is quite precise. According to Luke the act of the disciples in spreading their clothes is the signal for the outburst of the multitude.

Mark, without mentioning anything else, simply reports through whom it happened, that the way of the Lord was covered with clothing and with branches of trees, and that Hosannas filled the air.

Matthew reports that the great body of the people spread clothing and branches upon the way, and he then tells of the two divisions of the multitude, those who went before and those who came after, singing Hosannas.

Some think that long branches were woven into matting, and then spread on the road over which He would ride.

"A very great multitude," *πλεῖστος ὄχλος*. The great mass, not those who came along with Him, or those who went out to meet Him, but those who happened to be on the way to Jerusalem. The road was alive with pilgrims to the passover. The gaping crowd which he happened to encounter, and which had hitherto felt no interest in Jesus, was at once deeply moved and overcome by the scene. They tore their own clothes off their bodies and threw them in His path.

They are strangers in Jerusalem, the great festival is at hand during which all are wont to be arrayed in holy and beautiful garments, but they think of nothing except to offer their homage to Him by whom they have been captivated.

Spreading the clothes in the way is an old custom of the east and the west, the symbol of homage, the greeting of a king on entering the city. 2 Kings ix. 13. Plutarch speaks of soldiers spreading their mantles over the road, when their commander returned from his province. Here strangers testify an extraordinary reverence to the Lord.

From what trees along the way did they cut the branches in the early spring?

There stood olives, figs, palms. John speaks of the latter. The enthusiastic multitude simply laid hold of everything with which they might honor the Lord. Mark mentions brushwood, branches with leaves.

It is not unusual for us to strew the way with flowers for an illustrious person, *ex. gr.*, Washington at Trenton. When Alexander entered Babylon, the street was overspread with flowers and crowns. Jerusalem was adorned with garlands to receive the same conqueror. Among the Israelites green palms in the hands were the symbol of joy. At the Feast of Tabernacles every one waved branches of myrtle, palm and citron. Here they were not waved, not carried, but thrown before the feet of the Lord.

It would seem from Matthew that it was the homage of the people which first awakened the holy joy of the disciples. No wonder, for the disciples knew the bitter hostility of the rulers, and they followed Jesus with anxious hearts as He set His face from Galilee to Jerusalem. His language at the anointing in Bethany on the evening previous must have filled them with apprehensions of the worst in the immediate future. As the tears stood in the eyes of the Master, and as soon as He beheld the city began to flow, Luke xix. 41, so undoubtedly they were oppressed with sadness.

Now, from tears they break into laughter, and with all their anguish, their hearts dilate in wonder. The marvelous impression, the powerful captivation of the people, which Christ has wrought by His lowliness, must strengthen their hearts and excite the liveliest hopes. The cause of this Master cannot be lost, the kingdom of this King must stand. The deeper His descent in the power of that love which is stronger than death, the firmer in the unsearchable depths lie the foundations of the kingdom of grace, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. They must have gained from this an intimation that the cross must become their King's standard of victory.

9. "And the multitudes that went before him and that followed . . ."

According to Luke "the whole multitude." These disciples had either followed Jesus from Galilee, or had along the way

joined the column, or else they had come out from Jerusalem to meet Him, for the raising of Lazarus which had just taken place had led many there to believe on Him. John xii. 17 ff. The latter now led the advance, John xii. 12 ff, one division of the throng preceding, the other following, the King of Zion.

The multitude having reached the summit and now descending over the green slope of Olivet, their eyes first caught a view of the southeast portion of the city, on which stood the palace of David, and which was called by pre-eminence the city of David. Some think it was here, "as He first drew near, at the descent of the Mount," where Zion first sprung into view, that the Hosannas of the multitude broke forth. From this point the road descends slightly, then the glimpse of the city is again withdrawn behind an intervening ridge. Soon the road rises again. Over a rugged ascent it reaches a ledge of smooth rocks and in an instant the splendor of the whole city bursts into view, the temple with its pinnacles, the royal palace, the castle, the gardens. Just before it lies the deep green valley of the Kidron, joining the valley of Hinnom on the southeast. In full view of the city the shouting and cheering of the multitude breaks out afresh. But at the same moment, Luke xix. 41, He who was the centre and hero of this royal ovation bursts into tears over the city whose grandeur flashed upon His eyes.

As it often happens, weak faith is strengthened by the faith of such as have hardly the elements of faith, so here, at the faith of the people the faith of the disciples is quickened, and their faith becomes a joyous faith and confession. Amid these demonstrations they raise their voices and with loud salutations confess their Lord as the Son of David.

Nebe: "If the people, without knowing it, had by their branches acknowledged Him as *the Branch*, Isaiah iv. 2; Jer. xxiii 5 ff; xxxiii. 15; Zech. iii. 8, they now declare Him to be the Son of David, *i. e.*, of course the Messiah."

Hosanna, they shout, to the Son of David. From Ps. cxviii. 25. At the Feast of Tabernacles this Psalm was sung when they solemnly marched around the altar of burnt-offerings once a day in the first six days, with branches in their hands, amid the sound of trumpets, on the seventh day seven times. This seventh day was called the great Hosanna. The branches borne in their hands received the name of Hosanna. This Psalm belonged also to the great Hallel and was always sung as a part of the Paschal Hymn, which would be recited now in a few days.

Perhaps the palm branches strewn in the road recalled this Psalm

to the memory of the disciples. And this is more likely since, by general consent, it was then already regarded as Messianic. The Synagogue followed Isaiah, who in xxviii. 16 interpreted Vs. 22 of the Psalm, "the stone which the builders rejected," as Messianic.

Jerome narrates that the Jews taught their children that the Messiah when He is revealed must be received with these jubilant words. The term which in Heb. consists of two words, "Save, I pray, bestow blessing," in its rendering by the LXX. is equivalent to "O Lord, do save; O Lord, do give prosperity." Cf. "Jesus," v. 11.

"It is joined with the Dative, not as governing it, but the Dative shows that this invocation and acclamation pertained to the Son of David. The Son of David is to be hailed and blessed and extolled.

Bengel: "We sing Hosanna, say they (as was foretold by the prophets), to the Son of David." With exulting and triumphant joy, Jesus is proclaimed King. Blessed in the name of the Lord, let Him who cometh be in the name of the Lord blessed. Others: Let Him be blessed that cometh in the name of the Lord. It is the Lord God who sent Him as His representative into the world and who now sends Him to the daughter of Zion. John v. 43. It is said that these words "Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh, &c," were customarily said by the priests, when victims were offered for sacrifice. Hartwell Horne says, when at the Feast of Tabernacles the people carried in their hands branches of palm trees, olives, myrtles, &c., Lev. xxiii. 40; Neh. viii. 15; 2 Mac. x. 7, singing Hosanna . . . "save, I beseech thee," this exclamation was a prayer for the coming of the Messiah. Hence the exultant joy of the believing Jews at finding in Him the accomplishment of their petitions so often offered. Cf. Rev. vii. 9 f.

"In the Highest." Bengel: "Succor, O thou who art in the highest." Some regard this as addressed to the Son of David, thus acknowledging His eternal Godhead. Others refer it to God in heaven. Our Hosannas resound in heaven. Let there be the same outburst of rejoicing in heaven. Let heaven unite in her exultation. De W.: "Let the Hosanna uttered from earth be repeated in heaven, where alone it can be ratified." Others: May our cry of Hosanna be heard in heaven since from thence, from the heavenly Father, we receive salvation, or let grace descend from the highest heaven upon the Messiah. Luke ii. 14; Eph. iv. 10.

Thus the Lord makes His entry as King into Jerusalem. It is glorious, and a precious type and pledge of the glory of the Second Coming of the King, when He shall take possession of all king-

doms. But though never so glorious, this entry of Christ into Jerusalem was without result. The daughter of Zion would not receive the glad tidings, "Thy King cometh, &c." Jerusalem did not know what belonged to her peace. The King is rejected by His people. The King has it announced to the daughter of Zion that He is coming, but the daughter of Zion does not go out to meet Him with the salutation, Hosanna. A few go out to greet Him, a remnant, but these few belong to the crowd, the great mass. The High-Priest, the rulers, who are the leaders of the people, will have nothing to do with this King, Mark xi. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23 f, whose kingdom is the fulfillment of the type given in the Kingdom of David.

They want, as will soon appear, a kingdom literally the same as David's, a kingdom of this world. "Master, rebuke thy disciples," cry the Pharisees. Luke xix. 39. And when the children in the temple broke out, v. 15, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they indignantly cried out. "Hearest thou what these are saying?"

The people of Israel as a body frustrated the plan of their salvation, because they would not have Jesus as their King. They would not join the chorus, "Blessed is he that cometh."

Yet they are not eternally rejected. They will yet say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matt. xxiii. 39. When the Lord shall again make His royal entry, then the daughter of Zion will joyfully bid Him welcome as her King.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

OUR KING.

1. The marks of the King.
2. The manner of the King.
3. The intent of the King's coming.

WHO IS HE THAT COMETH?

1. The Lord of lords, Omniscient and Omnipotent.
2. The promised King, Meek and Lowly.
3. The Comfort of his people, Beloved and Adored.

BEHOLD THY KING.

1. His Armor—the Word.
2. His Scepter—meekness.
3. His Throne—men's hearts.
4. His Crown—the love of His people.

BEHOLD, THY KING COMETH.

Consider 1. What blessedness He brings thee.
But also, 2. What service He demands of thee.

THE ENTRY OF CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM A MIRROR:

Of 1. His advent in the flesh.

“ 2. His advent in the heart.

“ 3. His advent among the people;

OR, A MIRROR OF HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE HEART:

1. Note what He does.

a. Sends to us His messengers.

b. Has it announced to us that He has need of us.

c. Gives us encouragement.

2. Note what you have to do.

a. Lay all that is yours at His feet.

b. With joy sacrifice to Him all the world.

c. Confess Him undeterred by fear.

THE ROYAL ENTRY SHOWS:

1. How a whole population may be deluded.

2. How little reliance is to be placed on the people.

3. How the mass is more concerned for temporal than for spiritual good.

4. What exalted privileges are offered to men before their final rejection.

WHEN DO PEOPLE SHOUT FOR JESUS?

1. When it is the general custom.

2. When it is a part of their education.

3. When it promotes their worldly interests.

4. When it is felt to be a moral duty.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

LUKE xxi. 25-36.

THE first Sunday in Advent has to do with the first Advent of Christ, the second Sunday with the second Advent. The subject of the former is His Advent in the flesh, of the latter His Advent for judgment. The two Advents sustain the closest reciprocal relation. The first without the second would be a beginning without an end, the second an end without a beginning. The Lord comes in lowliness that through it He may enter into His glory, and He comes again in great power and glory, that through these He may consummate the work of His humiliation. The first Advent is past, the second is yet to come.

However, does this passage really contain a prophecy of the second Advent? Some have charged that the Church has misapprehended the import of this passage in applying it to the second Advent.

Jesus sitting on the Mount of Olives, after His terrible denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees, the disciples, who had heard Him say the time will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another, asked Him, "When shall these things be, and what sign, etc., when these things shall come to pass?" v. 7.

According to Luke they ask only concerning the time and the indication of the destruction of the temple.

Forgetful of the indirect answers so often given by Jesus to questions, it might be assumed that His answer here referred solely to the end of the temple or of Jerusalem, and not also to the end of the world. But Matthew, as in the case of the Sermon on the Mount, reports more fully and with greater precision the question of the disciples, namely, "Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world." xxiv. 3. They propose really a double question.

Possibly in the mind of the disciples these two events coincided: The fall of Jerusalem will be the signal for the Parousia, and the consummation of the world's course.

It matters little how far from each other or how near together they viewed the two events. We simply note the *two-fold idea*.

A direct answer must therefore include alike the destruction of Jerusalem and the second Coming.

Nebe holds that if the disciples entertained error in confounding the end of Jerusalem with the end of the world, then the error will directly or indirectly be corrected in the answer.

The mistake of the expositors who limit this prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the counter-error which finds here only a majestic foreshadowing of the end of the world, must alike be rejected.

It is a prophecy of the theocratic and of the cosmical judgment, of the end of Jerusalem and of the end of the world. The two are indeed not carefully distinguished. One is the mirror, the type, of the other. They seem to be viewed as one scene, one impending consummation. This is the characteristic of prophetic vision and representation, generally called the perspective of prophecy. These future events appear as one mighty complex scene, all comprehended in a single, awful catastrophe. They are grouped as if they constituted a definitive tableau of history. Through the perspective principle great events, which in point of time are widely separated, are drawn into one field of view. Successive phenomena which stretch over unmeasured ages are presented in one vast reach of vision, like a distant mountain range with its wide intervening valleys. The failure to recognize this prophetic method led the Scribes into their prodigious error respecting the Messiah's kingdom. They expected the beginning of it to be accompanied with the glory which shall mark its close.

This same perspective is adopted by the Lord, who so unites the scene of the final judgment with the near prospect of the overthrow of Jerusalem, that exegesis has great perplexity in separating what applies peculiarly to the destruction of the Jewish state, and what to the eventual destruction of the world.

Bengel, on Matt. xxiv. 29, observes : " You will say, It is a great leap from the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the world, which is represented as coming *quickly* after it. I reply, a prophecy resembles a landscape painting, which marks distinctly the houses, paths and bridges in the foreground, but brings together into a narrow space the distant valleys and mountains, though they are really far apart. Thus should they who study a prophecy look on the future to which the prophecy refers. The eyes of the disciples, who had combined in their question the end of the temple and of the world, are left somewhat veiled . . . it was not yet the time for knowing this, v. 36 . . . from which cause, imitating our Lord's language, they with universal consent declared

that the end was near at hand." Between the foreground and the background of a picture wide distances intervene.

The only alternative to the recognition of this prophetic perspective is the dangerous claim of Bleek, that we are entitled to believe that we do not have the original utterances of the Lord, but that the Evangelists reproduced His declarations in the form they now have. They grouped related, although distinct subjects, influenced by their subjective views and expectations respecting the development and completion of the kingdom of God. So Neander, Meyer, DeWette.

Luther: "In this chapter is described the issue and the end of both kingdoms, that of the Jews and that of the world. But the two Evangelists, Mark and Matthew, cast the two into one, and do not follow the order which Luke followed, looking no farther than they report the words of Christ." If the Apostles, following their own views, have modified the clear and distinct utterances of the Lord, if they arbitrarily confounded what He carefully kept asunder, then they are certainly not true and faithful witnesses. And how can we know that they did not also in other instances alter and falsify the discourses of the Lord?

Nebe would dispense with both hypotheses. He holds that the prophecy itself distinguishes the two events as separated in time.

The transition from one to the other is indicated, but some fix on one point, some on another. Some at Matt. xxiv. 22; some, at xxv. 1; some, at xxv. 31. Nebe holds that the exegetical tradition quite decisively fixed upon Matt. xxiv. 29, with which our pericope begins. From that verse on the discourse deals exclusively with the final world-period; so the Fathers. Meyer claims, this is the certain result of exegesis. But *Eibéws* would seem to force us to the conclusion that the second Advent will in point of time follow very closely upon the overthrow of Jerusalem. Many deny that the word is to be rendered "suddenly" (*plötzlich*), and they render it directly, immediately, (*sogleich*). Everything depends on "those days" in Matt.

Nebe compares with Matthew the report of Luke xxi. 24, who speaks of the times of the Gentiles, which will follow the overthrow of Jerusalem, and believes that there is a warrant here in the plural "times" for a longer period after the destruction of Jerusalem before the appearing of the Lord. That a period of some length is set for the Gentiles is indicated very clearly by the warning to the Jews that they shall be led away captive into all nations, and that Jerusalem, *πατομένη ἔσται*, shall be trodden, be in the condition of

being trodden down by the Gentiles, to wit, before the Parousia of the Lord.

Nebe says, "I understand by the times of the Gentiles, not simply that the Gentiles shall have outward sway over the Jews, but much more, that the period of grace for the Gentiles shall now be ushered in. They will take the place of Israel now rejected on account of unbelief, and possess the kingdom of God. These gracious times of the Gentiles intervene between the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of the Lord." They can also, says Nebe, be viewed from another side, as days of affliction, "for after the tribulation of those days," said Jesus, according to Matthew. While the kingdom grows outwardly among the heathen, tribulation will succeed tribulation in the bosom of the Christian Church, and in like manner among the Jews. And we are justified in seeing in the afflictions which began with the overthrow of Jerusalem, the beginnings of those afflictions which shall come upon the earth at the end of days.

25. "And there shall be signs in the sun" . . .

Luke does not indicate the nature of these signs. Matthew and Mark give fuller information. Matthew: "The sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven." Mark is almost literally the same.

The tropical interpretation is quite ancient, and is supported by the Old Testament, in which the prophets constantly speak of the obscuration of the sun, moon and stars, as a metaphor of great afflictions and judgments befalling the nations of the earth. Is. v. 30; xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4; Jer. iv. 28; Ezek. xxxii. 7-8.

Some resort to the allegorical interpretation. Origen understands by the sun, Satan who has transformed himself into an angel of light. He will be unmasked.

Many take all these signs as indications of sorrow and woe. Dorner takes a brighter view. The fall of Judaism will soon be succeeded by the fall of Heathenism. The gods of the nature-worshipping heathen, sun, moon, and stars, sink helpless out of sight.

Nebe denies the tropical interpretation. Bengel says: "In the Old Testament such expressions are used metaphorically, the figure being derived from that which will literally happen at the end of the world," and he holds that contrary to the course of nature, sun, and moon will be eclipsed at once. But if sun and moon are taken literally, then the same must be done to earth, sea and heaven. The ancient view made heaven a firmament in which stars are placed for lighting the world. Some think a literal fall-

ing is here described. This is impossible as a fact, but the idea is introduced into a prophetic picture so grandly poetical. Nebe also thinks the context gives us no points for a figurative interpretation. Meyer, Bleek, Keil and Cremer, adopt the literal interpretation, without attempting to determine what shall be the exact nature of these celestial phenomena.

Are we to infer the total disappearance of the stars, or only the disappearance of a certain property in them?

It is nowhere said that they shall be extinguished, but in Luke that there shall be signs in the sun &c., and in the parallel passages that sun and moon shall lose their light or their brightness. This appears to show conclusively that a change of the sun and moon is to take place. This accords with the analogy of faith: Man, the lord and head of Creation, receives at the end not an absolutely but a relatively new body, a glorified body.

What is said of the stars that they fall from heaven, may properly be referred, some think, to their descending under the horizon, their becoming invisible.

Nebe instances the signs which occurred upon the death and resurrection of our Lord. The sun was eclipsed, at mid-day darkness prevailed for three hours, followed by an earthquake.

Creation sustains to man and to the Son of man a close and mysterious relation which only here and there is clearly perceptible to the sentient eye. Rom. viii. 20. Nature and man are destined for each other by the Creator. Man was anointed by the breath of life imparted by God as the lord of nature. Such a destination presupposes true sympathy. Nature can not look with indifference on the glorious completion of the redemption of man. It will be moved most deeply by this event. It was struck by the curse for the sake of man. It will, when he obtains the final blessing, also share in it. See Rom. viii. 19. So Nebe. But should we not rather view these phenomena as a catastrophe in the heavens? Is not the final curse on man also to have its counterpart in nature? Or will these heavenly bodies pale before the splendor of the Sun of righteousness—the stars disappear at the rising of the Sun?

Some regard this as the beginning of that transformation of the world which will accompany the great day of the Lord.

Not only will signs in the heavens announce this great day. The earth will not remain silent. When she hears heaven itself proclaim His advent, her own voice responds "The Lord is near." The whole world is convulsed when the Messiah appears in glory to judge. Dan. vii. 13.

“And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity—for the roaring of the sea and the billows.” The heavenly bodies influence the sea, their disturbance is attended by its disturbance. A new deluge seems imminent from the roar and thunder of the billows.

This roaring &c. is followed by distress of nations (συνοχή). Συνέχεσθαι (2 Cor. ii. 4: θλίψις καὶ συνοχή καρδίας), is used of a disease which contracts and oppresses man, *à la grippe*, Matt. iv. 24; also of a besieged city, Luke xix. 43; viii. 37, “holden with great fear.” Phil. i. 23. Anguish of heart shall seize the nations. The *ἔθνη*, according to some, are the nations not blessed in the seed of Abraham, those who will stand on the left. According to others, mankind in general. The agitation, catastrophe of the macrocosm, has its counterpart in the distress of the microcosm, universal mankind.

But will not believers be thrilled with joy when such signs proclaim the Advent of the Lord? V. 28 implies the perverseness and fearfulness of the heart. It exhorts men to look up and to lift up their heads. Not spontaneously and with the conscious realization of their hopes do they raise their triumphant heads to receive the crown. Even believers have anguish when the signs of the times indicate the approach of the Lord. He comes to execute judgment. Can they stand before Him? The prince of darkness will then, with the utmost desperation, endeavor to deceive the very elect, knowing his days are numbered.

Men’s anguish will appear “in perplexity.” They will not know what to do. Distressed by the uproar of the elements they will seek a place of refuge, but know not where to find a safe one.

If the heavenly bodies are taken figuratively, then the stormy sea may represent the tumult of the nations. Ps. xlv. 4; Isa. xvii. 13 f.; Rev. xvii. 15; so, many expositors.

If θαλάσσης is made figurative, then *σάλον* must also be so used.

Other terrors accumulate. Should men think the worst has come, they will be astonished to find the most terrible things yet to come. Nebe holds that here, too, the second Advent is so analogous to the first, that every one with eyes may see that the same One has come and comes again. Then the appearance of the heavenly host brought joy, great joy to the earth. Now the heavenly appearances bring terror and horror to the earth. Then the joy surpassed all that we can ask or think, fulness of grace was poured out, grace upon grace; now the horror that comes shall also transcend all expectations and understanding. The vials of wrath overflow from the exceeding fulness of terror.

26. "Men fainting for fear, and for expectation of things which are coming" . . .

Horror mounts the highest stage. The description reaches a climax, distress, perplexity, fainting. The nations shall be in anguish, it was first said, but now the terrors of the last hour shall seize individuals, every soul shall be overwhelmed with dismay.

Some interpret *ἀποψυχόντων* as not simply rendering one unconscious, falling down unconscious, but falling down dead. The terror slays him. Men will die from fear and from the anticipation of what is coming. Two causes will produce death: the fear of the present, and expectation of the future. What has already come, and what is yet to come, or fall upon the whole earth. The catastrophe will be universal, as the heavens are expanded over the whole earth and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. This (notice *γὰρ*) is the explanation of all these horrible scenes that will be enacted in the heavens and upon the earth.

"The powers of heaven," etc. Some: The host of heaven, which the LXX. often render by *δυνάμεις*. That phrase in the Hebrew may mean (1) starry host, Jer. xxxiii. 22; Ps. xxxiii. 6, Isa. xl. 26; (2) the angelic host, Ps. cxlviii. 2; ciii. 21; 1 Kings xxii. 19. Sometimes both renderings coalesce. Isa. xxiv. 21; cf. Job xxxviii. 7.

Then certain expositors make *δυνάμεις* the same as sun, moon and stars. Luther: "The planets will form new conjunctions," etc.

In Matthew and Mark there is mentioned with the shaking of these "powers," the falling of the stars. And thus tautologically the same scene is portrayed in other words, which is not to be expected in this grandiose and tragic scene.

Others: These powers are the angels. Origen: The angels will be moved with astonishment. Chrysostom: With wonder, over the last judgment. Aug.: As a child shudders, when a father's wrath breaks out over a servant, so will the angels then shudder.

A commercium, a sympathy, binds together rational creatures in heaven and upon earth. As the heavenly host rejoiced with the earth when the Lord descended upon it in lowliness, they will doubtless be "inwardly and outwardly moved," when at His second Advent He descends again with great power and glory. They are the attendants of the coming Lord, who will now bring to completion what they by their ministrations with individuals and in general sought to bring about.

Nebe thinks that to "be shaken" would hardly be the fitting expression for such emotions of the angels. Luther also holds that since Jesus speaks of signs, and that we shall see them and thereby recognize the arrival of the last day, they must be publicly visible

and be perceived with bodily senses. But this agitation of the heavens does not belong to the signs. It is parallel to men fainting from fear and from expectation.

Nebe, Meyer, Kliefoth, Cremer: The powers which uphold the heavens, which expand them over us, cause appearances in them, etc. Prov. viii. 27. "Those firm, interchained and subtle powers of heaven, which are accustomed to influence the earth," the powers which have hitherto been strictly ordered, through some unknown power are dissevered from their laws, tossed about like waves. Rev. vi. 14. All nature will be moved and feel the deepest pangs and travail. It will quake and flow together. Notice the movements of nature when the Lord appeared upon Sinai.

27. "And then shall they see the Son of man coming." . . .

Amid the convulsions of nature Messiah appears to judge, Dan. vii. 13. "They" will see, namely, they who are filled with dismay and they who have patiently waited for His coming.

For He does not come in the Holy Ghost, nor in a spiritual manner, but as He came forth from the grave, in bodily form.

Holy Scripture, says Nebe, does not dissipate matter or corporeity until nothing but an abstract idea remains. It teaches a proper realism.

The Lord of glory, who comes not to destroy but to transfigure this material world, comes in a way that every eye, even the eye of the ungodly, shall recognize Him. He will appear again as Son of man. This name is highly significant. It occurs 84 times in the New Testament, 83 times in the Gospels, once in the Acts, vii. 56. 81 times Jesus calls Himself Son of man, twice the name is given to Him by the people.

Interpretations of it have always varied. Some: Simply man, this man whom you well know. Sons of men = men.

The employment of this name is emphatic, pregnant, "an out and out individual designation." Some regard it as a current designation of the Messiah, whereby Jesus declares Himself the promised Messiah of Israel.

The ancient expositors derived the term from Dan. vii. 13. The Synagogue unanimously held to the Messianic interpretation of that passage. The book of Enoch, xlvii. 1, 2, 3; xlviii. 2-3; lxii. g-14; lxx. 1, unhesitatingly calls the Messiah the Son of man, and the populace seems to have recognized the scope of this name, which the Lord applied to Himself. John xii. 34.

Some have sought the ground for Christ's manifest predilection for this title among others which occur in the Old Testament, and

its Messianic interpretations, in the fact that Daniel was regarded as one of the principal Messianic books, and that the name can be applied so directly to His earthly human appearance.

Some account for the predilection, by the idea that it means the ideal man, the primordial man. He is man *par excellence*. So Herder, Schleiermacher, Neander, Dorner, Beck, Martensen, Kahnis, Gess, Beyschlag.

Nebe thinks this idea inadequate for the solution of the problem, which appears in so many passages of the gospels. Can it be said that the ideal man is Lord of the Sabbath? Matt. xii. 8 ff. Can the ideal man in himself have the power and authority to forgive sins upon earth? Matt. ix. 6.

Von Hofman and others: The article before the term places Him in contrast with the human race . . . in such a way that He appears as the man who forms the goal begun with the first Adam, the branch of Zechariah, the coming One of the New Testament. He is not one of those who spring from Adam, but that One aimed at when the race began with Adam.

Nebe follows the oldest interpretation of the name in the Church, the biblical designation for the ecclesiastical *Logos ensarkos*. Out of His divine consciousness our Lord calls Himself so. By this name He distinguishes between two forms of existence . . . the pre-incarnate, eternal Logos and the temporal form, Jesus of Nazareth. "With this self-designation He confesses Himself as the Son of God come in the flesh." The title becomes an essential complement to that of Son of God—and this is given as the explanation why this name, used so very often by our Lord, did not pass over into the terminology of the Church. "Having returned to the Father and surrendered the temporal form of existence, this designation lost its appropriateness."

Delitzsch and others have derived the title from Ps. viii. 4. The Synagogue in great part referred the "man" in Ps. viii. to the Messiah. The passage in Daniel seems, as in this case, to underlie a number of passages where the name Son of man occurs, and this is deemed sufficient warrant to derive it from Daniel. So Lücke, Hengstenberg, Meyer, Gess, Beyschlag, Keil, and others.

The Son of man they will see "coming in a cloud." Doubtless in allusion to Daniel's prophecy, where he who is like unto a Son of man appears in a cloud.

The meaning of this cloud is, according to some, the adumbration of judgment. Isa. xix. 1; Ps. xcvi. 2; xviii. 10; Nah. i. 3; Rev. i. 7.

But clouds, *per se*, do not have this significance. Heaven, ac-

according to the SS., is the dwelling-place of God, the clouds are the curtains of His tent, and thus the signs and witnesses of His presence. Where God appears there is heaven, there are the clouds, they form His abode, the Shekinah of Jehovah. The clouds are indicative of divine majesty and according as the divine appearance is a gracious or a wrathful one, are the clouds bright or dark. They are God's chariot. Ps. civ. 3; Isa. xix. 1. As the Lord in the pillar of fire led His people through the desert, as He spake out of the cloud with Moses, as He entered the Temple through a cloud, so is the cloud in the New Testament a sign of the divine presence. A bright cloud transfigured Him on the Mount, a cloud lifted Him up from Olivet. And the two men standing by told the disciples then, Acts i. 11, that they should see Him so come in like manner.

The Lord comes again as the Son of man, and he comes again in the cloud, which here, of course, as the end is at hand, is to be regarded as the cloud of judgment.

But He does not come in the lowly manner in which He came the first time. Then no signs appeared in the heaven or on earth. A solitary star appeared to the Magi of the East, and John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness, was His forerunner. Now, all creation is astir. Heaven and earth are ready to serve the day of His manifestation. It is the great day of the Lord.

"With power and great glory." Some make *δυνάμεις* the army of angels. Eph. i. 25. 1 Pet. iii. 22 they are called *δυνάμεις*, and Matt. xxv. 31 speaks of their accompanying the Lord of the earth. Cf. 26.

Many make the two terms synonymous. Power and majesty will characterize the Advent. This power and glory are to be referred also to the attending angels.

Luther: "Such magnificence and splendor will surpass that of all emperors and kings. The sky will be filled with the elect angels and holy men hovering around the Lord in the clouds. They will shine more brightly than the sun, and He, the Lord, and all the saints with Him, will pronounce the sentence against the damned."

Nebe objects to the confusion of the meaning of the two terms. Power will go forth from the returning Christ. The power which issued from Him in His lowliness is but a pledge of the power which at the end shall stream from Him anew. His power will be revealed on the dead, whose bodies will be raised, on His adversaries, whom He will condemn, on His believing ones, to whom He will assign the kingdom of their fathers, on nature itself, for He will kindle the fire which shall melt heaven and earth, 2 Pet. iii. 12,

and bring forth a new heaven and a new earth out of the ashes of the old. Rev. xx. 11; xxi. 1; Isa. lxv. 17; lxvi. 22.

The Son of man will, at the end, not only reveal His omnipotent power. Every revelation of God is a revelation of His being, of His moral attributes. The *δῆξα* of the Lord was veiled at the first advent. Only now and then did it break through the veil of His flesh. The form of a servant concealed the glory of the only-begotten. "The inner and the outer, essence and appearance, did not correspond. But then, as with the righteous spirit and body, kernel and husk, intrinsic essence and form of existence shall come to a divine harmony through the 'power' of the Lord, so shall the Head of the body, Jesus Christ, appear also in such a form that His body will be a resplendent mirror, and so transparent that His innermost essence will no longer be a mystery to us. All things shall at the end have their revelation, not only the earthly and human, but the heavenly and the divine." We shall see Him as He is. 1 John iii. 2. The appearance of the glory of the great God is at the same time the apocalypse of the Lord. Tit. ii. 13; 1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Thess. i. 7; 1 Pet. i. 7; iv. 13; Col. iii. 4.

"The revelation of the Lord will be such that the revelation we now possess can scarcely, in comparison, deserve the name for it is 'only in part,' seeing through a glass darkly." 1 Cor. xiii. 9-12.

And this appearance is to comfort and deliver his own.

28. "Look up and lift up your heads, your redemption" . . .

"When these things begin to come to pass." Some infer from this that the phenomena will not last long. Others infer the reverse, recognizing a succession. They will not transpire with a sweeping suddenness, so that one may not speak of a beginning. Matt. xxiv. 8.

Τότῳ: The signs which Luke has just depicted in the most condensed manner. Others would include in it everything from verse 20. But that part is historical, the former eschatological, which makes against taking all together.

"Look up and lift your heads" . . . *i. e.*, lighten your hearts. Sadness weighs down the head. "He who rejoices lifts his head aloft." Those who bear sorrow shall comfort themselves. For the same moment which changes the world's laughter into weeping, will fill their mouth with laughter.

Twice is the encouragement repeated. Satan would turn these signs into objects of alarm and terror, and transport timid hearts into sorrow and dismay, making them dread the day and filling their minds with heaviness. He would rob Christians of the

joy and confidence with which they should greet the coming Lord, especially such as still have an attachment to the world. Bengel: "Look up, etc., in order that as soon as possible ye may perceive the event answering to your expectation, and with joy welcome it." Cf. xxiv. 5. After the resurrection of Jesus the disciples, with faces bowed down to the earth, sought the living among the dead. "Fear the Lord now, that you may not have to fear Him when He comes." His Advent will then not be to our dismay, but to our redemption.

"Redemption," complete, perfect redemption. The first Advent brought us but the beginning of redemption, the earnest of the Spirit. The second Advent will bring this redemption to its most glorious consummation. It will redeem us from the flesh, from an evil world, from the reproaches of conscience, from the dread of judgment, from the power of Satan, from the fetters of death. Delivered from all evil, man will be placed in the primordial condition of freedom, of immediate communion with God.

It "draweth nigh," indicating that while the Son of man will come in the twinkling of an eye, His work will not be accomplished with one stroke. Redemption comes in the greatest distress, in the darkest hour.

As the disciples are unable to comprehend properly this great prophecy, and as they may easily fall into error when the scoffers ask them, where is the promise of His coming, Jesus gives a seal to His word by a parable from nature, that they may be cheered in the midst of the final convulsions.

29. "Behold the fig tree and all the trees" . . .

This is not a parable in the specific sense, but a similitude by which one thing is compared with another.

Parable is applied in the N. T. to every gnome or sentence which is expressed figuratively, Matt. xv. 15; Mark vii. 17; Luke iv. 23; v. 36; vi. 39; xiv. 7; to every simple comparison, Matt. xiii. 33; and to every type, Heb. ix. 9; xi. 19.

Jesus speaks here in a figure, comparing the time of His advent with the approaching season of summer. It is a lovely parable for such terrible phenomena.

"The Lord does not give a parable of winter or autumn when the trees are bare and everything is gloomy, but of spring and summer, when every creature opens and rejoices." What an eye for nature does the Son of man exhibit! Every creature offers to Him an expressive image of God's kingdom; the birds of the air soaring around Him, the lilies of the field blooming at His feet, are made the instructors of the people.

"The fig tree," not with reference to the fig leaves made use of after the fall; not the Jewish nation, the other trees being the heathen. Some see a reference to the fig tree cursed by the Lord. Ebrard speaks of the poisonous leaves and fruitless trees. The Lord means to give a cheering sign of the summer when the elect shall have ripened. He says, not simply the fig, but all trees. Ebrard thinks of the late fig tree, once withered under the curse, producing again leaves and fruit. Reviving Israel, the conversion of the Jews (at the close of the dispensation) is the surest signal of the Lord's return. Nebe claims that there is no warrant for such allegorizing. Not another sign or prognostic of the Parousia is added here to those in vss. 25 and 26. That chapter is completed. Jesus only aims to give them certitude in respect to his coming.

"All the trees." On Olivet were olive trees, almond, citron, fig (Matt. xxi. 19; Mark xi. 13), which were now arrayed in their brightest spring apparel. Jesus looking on them sees in them an illustration and assurance of His promise.

The parable indicates how they shall view "those outward and inward distresses." Believers shall note in them a sure and joyous indication of their near deliverance, just as the budding and sprouting of the fig tree are an indication that the beautiful summer season is at hand.

30. "When they now shoot forth" . . .

Προβάλλουσιν. Vulg: Produce fruit, but Matthew says, "the leaves." Bleek: "both leaves and buds." Mark has "budding." Leaves and fruit come together in the fig. "Ye see and know of your own selves." Luke xii. 57. No one need teach you. Every one who sees the fig putting forth shoots knows that summer is near.

31. "So ye also, when ye see these things come to pass" . . .

Those signs in the sun, &c., are unerring indications of the coming of Christ. Terrible as they are, they are the sure indications of a joyous summer-tide. It becomes believers to wake up psaltery and harp, to praise and to hail their Lord.

"The kingdom of God:" a phrase which with its equivalents occurs in many passages. Mark i. 15; x. 14; Luke vi. 20; xviii. 24. Matthew in parallel passages, iv. 17; v. 3; xix. 14, 23, has "kingdom of heaven," an expression which with great predilection he uses more than thirty times. "Kingdom of God" he uses only vi. 10, 33; xii. 28; xxi. 31, 43. The fourth Evangelist does not use either, except iii. 3-5; and Mark and Luke have "kingdom of God." In Eph. v. 5 and 2 Pet. i. 11, the "kingdom of Christ"

is a new designation for one and the same subject. In Matt, viii. 12; xxv. 34, is found simply "kingdom."

Luther: "The kingdom of God extends over the conscience and the things pertaining to God, and it has two provinces—that of Moses to show us our sins and that of Christ which consists essentially in the forgiveness of sins. But this kingdom is still in process of becoming (*werden*), it has not yet come. It comes first into the heart; it is alike temporal and eternal." Calvin dwells on the ethical idea without ignoring the eschatological sense. It is more than the realization of the Old Testament theocracy in the moral sphere. It is an organic outward reality. Meyer: "The Messianic kingdom, the winding up of the world's history." It is literally the same phrase as that of the Rabbinic designation of the Messianic kingdom. Meyer admits the ethical element, moral sovereignty, as necessarily preceding the Advent and preparing the way for it, and with the diffusion of Christianity forming the essential condition of it. The phrase has doubtless a profound meaning. Thol.: "The kingdom of God in the Old Testament and New Testament is an organic community, whose basis was the will of the living God. In the New Testament, however, God's representative is present and the form of development is different." Others: The kingdom is the divine order of things which is realized through Christ the redeemer, unfolding itself from within outwardly. Or: The kingdom is that order of things in which the gracious omnipotent will of God has come to its realization and is now alone effectual among them, or, it is the community in which the gracious will of God either realizes itself or is finally realized.

Some hold that the kingdom is also the Church, the form ordained for it between the ascension of Christ and His return.

Nebe starts with the term "kingdom," an orderly commonwealth. It must enclose a certain number, and this number it must unite in a certain unity and fellowship, under one form and norm, and under one law and government. The community is not founded by the many but by the king. He is founder and preserver of it, its living personal centre. He forms of his people a union in which he rules and dwells. We must not separate the earthly idea of the kingdom from the heavenly. "In the kingdom of God, God is the king. His will is the fundamental law, likeness to him is what all subjects of the king strive for, living with and in God is the glory and blessedness of the kingdom."

The old covenant laid the foundation for this kingdom. Israel was chosen to be God's own, Exod. xix. 5; Deut. xiv. 24; Mic. vii.

14; *Exod.* xix. 6; The Lord is King, *Ps.* lxxxix. 18; *Is.* xxxiii. 22. The idea as found in the Old Testament theocracy is only in its germ, confined to a national particularism; the holy life is bound to the form of external legalism. The kingdom is only objective, like the law on the tables of stone. It is not yet subjective, as the law has not yet been engraved upon the heart by the Holy Ghost. But it is there, even though only as a prophecy. The Lord himself expressly recognizes the kingdom of God in the Old Testament, *Matt.* viii. 12; xxi. 33 ff., 43. The idea was in process of unfolding. The universality of the kingdom of God is acknowledged, *Mic.* iv. 1-4; *Is.* ii. 2-4; *Zech.* xiv. 9; the illocal worship of God, *Is.* xix. 18-25; *Zech.* vi. 12; a perfect knowledge of God, *Heb.* ii. 14; *Is.* lx. 1 ff.; *liv.* 13; a heart fellowship with God, *Jer.* xxxi. 33; *Ezek.* xi. 19; xxxvi. 26; a world kingdom, *Dan.* vii. 14, 18, 22. Forgiveness is distinctly promised, *Is.* xlv. 22; *liii.* 4 ff., and so is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, *Joel* iii. 1 ff., *Zech.* xii. 10. John the Baptist takes up this idea of the kingdom and proclaims its nearness, the consummation of the prophetic idea of God's rule, "for, he recognized in the Son of Mary, Him whom prophecy had announced as the divinely sent and spiritually anointed king of this kingdom"—the Son and Lord of David. *2 Sam.* vii. 8 ff.; *xxiii.* 1-5; *Ps.* ii. 72; lxxxix. 3 ff.; *Is.* ix. 6; xi. 1; xl. 1 ff.; *Mal.* iii. 1. The king is now in the flesh. He arises Himself and proclaims the presence of the kingdom of God. "It is here, because the King is here. He bears the kingdom within Himself." In Him the will of God is embodied, from Him stream out the powers of the kingdom. He is Himself in person the kingdom of God. It is the work of His hands, of His spirit. Joined to Him, one is joined to the kingdom. It is not, however, an outward but in the first instance an inward union, a communion in the Holy Ghost through faith. Hence primarily the kingdom is internal. *Luke* xvii. 20 ff.; *John* iii. 3-5; *Rom.* xiv. 17 f.; *1 Cor.* iv. 20; *Col.* i. 13; *Heb.* xii. 28. But like leaven it works from within outward. Communion with the Lord shows itself in word and deed, and forms a bond with all who stand in the same heart-communion with the Lord, the King.

Thus the kingdom comes into external manifestation. *Matt.* xi. 12; xii. 28; xiii. 11, 19; *Luke* xvii. 20 ff. But this is not yet its final development. Its external form does not correspond with this idea. It develops outwardly its world-conquering power, *Matt.* viii. 11, xiii. 31 f; *Luke* xiv. 23; as inwardly it unfolds its purifying power, *Matt.* xiii. 30-33. As in the Old Testament are found only the typical beginnings, so though realized in the New

Testament economy, the perfected realization of the idea is not yet found. The kingdom is ever in process of becoming, of maturing, of coming, of being perfected.

It is present, Matt. iv. 17; x. 7; xi. 12; xii. 28; xvi. 19; Mark i. 14 f; xii. 34; Luke xi. 8; xvi. 16; xvii. 21; it is at the same time future, Matt. vi. 10; xvi. 28; xxv. 34; xxvi. 29; Mark ix. 1; xiv. 25; Luke ix. 27; xiii. 29; xxii. 16, 19; Acts xiv. 22; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; xv. 50.

It is to be understood, therefore, not merely of the kingdom of the future, the perfected kingdom of glory. True, when the world's history is completed and humanity is ripe for judgment, when time is swallowed up in eternity, then the kingdom will appear in its fullest reality, then idea and manifestation will correspond perfectly, then the gracious will of God will be accomplished, everything will be put under Christ, and Christ with His kingdom shall surrender Himself to the Father. Then God will be all in all. The ultimate stage of the kingdom is reached, the perfect harmony of the creature with the will of the Creator. Nebe: "It is the reign of God founded through grace, realizing itself historically, bringing everything under Christ, the Head."

The kingdom of God and the Church are not the same. The one idea postulates the other. That the kingdom may come Christ has founded the Church. The Church is now the energetic, efficacious soul in the kingdom. The kingdom could not be built up in this world and carried forward toward completion, if God's purpose of salvation and grace were not preached by the Church. It is by the means of grace, with which the Church is entrusted, that all the deeper impulses must be awakened and invigorated. The divine plan for the world must be realized by means of the moral development of man, and only faith brings us into communion with God.

32. "Verily I say unto you" . . .

'Αμην: asseveration, emphatic assurance. In John the word is often repeated. Sometimes the Evangelists themselves explain the term, Mark xii. 43; Luke xxi. 3, ἀληθώς; xi. 51, *vai*. Preceding a declaration, it indicates that something of solemn import is about to be announced.

"This generation:" Some, especially many modern exegetes, simply his contemporaries; the present generation would see the end of the world. Even Luther held that those then living should see the beginning of the events pointing to the end. Against this Nebe cites the *usus loquendi* of the New Testament. Meyer admits other

meanings. Cf. on Matt. p. 154; on Mark p. 205 [Eng. Ed.] *Γενεά* means (1) begetting, procreation; (2) birth. species; (3) the human race; (4) a generation. Hilary and Jerome render "the human race," which seems meaningless, simply affirming that the human race will survive to the day of the Advent. Jesus had just foretold the terrors which that day would bring to the wicked, and the salvation which it would bring to the righteous.

Some: Christendom, the Christian community. So Origen, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Lange, Cremer. This, too, is flat, remembering that Jesus had previously promised that they would overcome the afflictions of the last days, that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church. Some: The Jewish nation. So Calov, Dorner, Stier. This may cast a light upon the enigma of this nation, scattered and oppressed for centuries, yet still preserved as a nation. Others deny all reference to Israel in the context.

Cf. Luke xvi. 8, on which Meyer says: "in reference to their own generation, *i. e.*, in relation to their own kindred.—The whole body of children of the world, a category of like-minded men, is described as a generation, a clan of connections, and how appropriately since they appear precisely as *sons*." Accordingly, this class of man, this kind spoken of with reference to their ethical character and relations to others, and especially in a bad sense, Ps. lxxviii. 8, a stubborn and rebellious generation, as their fathers, xxxii. 5, 20; Prov. xxx. 11-14; Jer. vii. 29, so here this corrupt, wicked generation, this species, class, kind, Deut. i. 35; Gen. vii. 1; the degenerate mass, just as *kosmos* represents in the New Testament the entire mass.

Delitzsch refers it, Ps. xiv. 2, to the human race held captive by the wicked world. So Ps. xxiv. 6; lxxiii. 15; cxii. 2. Wherever the Heb. *dor* has an evil sense, the LXX. always render it *γενεά*. Nebe collates all the New Testament passages, Matt. xi. 16; xii. 39, 41, 45; xvi. 4; xvii. 17; xxiii. 36; xxiv. 34; Mark viii. 12 f; viii. 38; ix. 19; xiii. 30; Luke vii. 31; ix. 41; xi. 29, 30, 31, 32, 50, 51; xvii. 25; xxi. 32; Acts ii. 40; Phil. ii. 15; Heb. iii. 10, and concludes, these taken together prove in a striking manner that we have here the New Testament translation of the Old Testament technical term *Chazi Chador*, for everywhere where this or that generation is spoken of, this *genea* appears, even when it is not expressed, as "wicked," "adulterous," "perverse." The term occurs here not in a physical, but a metaphysical, ethical sense, a class, or kindred, kinship. Two further proofs are available. Matthew xxiii. 35 f. charges this generation with the guilt of

the blood from Abel to Zacharias, and then he foretells that this generation shall see the Son of man coming in His kingdom. We say "this crowd," *id omne genus*. Again: when our Lord refers simply to His contemporaries, without ethical distinction, He says "some of those standing here," Matt. xvi. 28. But the passage just given shows that this evil element, this perverse class, the immoral, godless, will not die out.

But why give such an assurance, that a godless race will remain till his Advent? Some: He will add one more sign of the Parousia. Others: that chapter has closed. The object now is to admonish the disciples to be properly prepared. The course of thought is according to Nebe: "as sure as the summer is near when the trees are sprouting, so certain is my Parousia."

This race, this perverse class of men, will remain to the end and will regard my coming as an old wife's fable. But this notwithstanding, do not be turned away from the faith that I will come again. Let them prate as they will.

33. "Heaven and earth shall pass away . . ."

Some, assuming the imperishableness of heaven and earth, render, sooner shall heaven and earth pass away; the impossible will become possible, sooner than my words shall pass away.

Others, heaven and earth shall pass away, the system of the universe shall be changed, but not until my words have become yea and amen.

Nebe: "The heathen in part believed in the eternal duration of the world, consistently with their idea of the eternity of matter. The disciples, knowing that the world was created, knew also that it would have an end. Cf. Job xxxvii. 18; Ps. cl. 1; xxiv. 2; civ. 5; Eccl. i. 4. The firmest and most fixed shall not remain. The passing away of the world is here incidentally taught most explicitly. So Is. li. 6; liv. 10, Is. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22; Ps. lxxii. 7, cii. 27; 2 Peter iii. 7 ff.; Acts xx. 11, xxi. 1. It will not be annihilated, but "transformed into a new heaven and a new earth." The new creation will sustain the innermost relation to the old creation, however it may differ from it; akin to the relation of the risen body to the present one—*i. e.*, a substantial (though not material) identity. The groaning creature will be freed from the bondage of that which is perishable—brought to a higher form of existence. 1 Cor. vii. 31.

"But my words" undergo no such change. In the universal change and vicissitude, there is but one thing subject to no change or vicissitude. The word of God abideth forever. In form and

content it endures forever. The asseveration has here especial reference to the end of Jerusalem and the end of the world, still Jesus does not say these my words, but my words, in general. The words of our Lord cannot be atomically analyzed. They form an organic whole. What He declares of one word that falls from His mouth is necessarily true of all His words. "What the Old Testament says of God's word, Is. xl. 8; Ps. cxix. 89, and what the Lord himself testifies of the Old Testament, Matt. v. 18; Luke xvi. 17, that Jesus says freely here of His own words, and thereby indirectly declares His word to be God's word. Heaven and earth will pass away, but Christ's words will not, as indeed everything that has been created, has been created by Jehovah's word." John i. 1 ff.

If the firm word remains, then will also they remain who are built upon the word. "We have a sure word of prophecy."

The Lord will most certainly come in His kingdom to the final and perfect redemption of His own. Therefore the more earnestly, since they know it, must they cultivate a suitable state of mind. Hence,

34. "Take heed to yourselves," . . .

Exercise care toward yourselves. There will be great danger of neglecting this watchfulness of ourselves in the last times. "The signs of the sun, moon and stars are something terrible, and the terror of such things is likely to perplex and confound them." The minds of men will be struck by these portents and distracted. Frightful periods of terror are not adapted to a quiet self-retirement.

Those last days also, according to Matt. xxiv. 37, (cf. Luke xvii. 26) will resemble perfectly the Noachian period before the flood. The children of the world will live securely, as if the world were eternal, and the lust of the world the chief good. The children of the kingdom are not of the world but they are still in the world, and hence must always keep in mind this admonition, but especially in that last period which will be decisive for eternity.

The Lord warns against three things: "Surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life." The two first are closely allied, still there is a difference. Cf. Trench, Sec. 61.

The first may refer to the effect of over-drinking on the previous day, the idea is that of successive intoxication.

"Cares," such as relate to this life, whatever is reckoned to the support of life. They are given in detail, Matt. vi, 25 ff., xxiv. 38; Luke xvii. 23 ff. These cares of the world and lust of the world

go together, not only in this that they divide the hearts of men, some groaning under the burden of cares, the rest devoted continually to the cup of pleasure, but also in this, that one and the same heart is often divided between worldly lusts and worldly cares. These three things overcharge, oppress and weigh down the heart. Cf. Hos. iv. 11.

The heart becomes heavy and sinks ever deeper into that which perishes. An old legend says "man is the child of care." He easily surrenders himself to it. Cares and lusts are millstones dragging men helplessly into the depth of the sea. Hence the importance of watching, so often emphasized in these eschatological discourses. When surfeited and intoxicated, this becomes impossible. Clear thought is out of the question. The disciples must keep aloof from all these things, that the great day does not come upon them unawares. The day will come as a thief, unobserved, imperceptible, secretly. This, though, must be taken relatively. *Per se*, the day does not come unanticipated, unawares. Jesus Himself has pointed out in detail its coming, announced it in advance by the most intelligible signs. To those who in obedience to their Lord are praying and watching, the day does not come unawares, unforeseen, or suddenly, but only to those who say peace and safety. 1 Thess. v. 3. This "suddenly" is repeated in all the acts and judgments of the Lord. He always comes like a thief in the night to those who sleep in their sins.

It behooves men to be sober, considerate and free from care, when the end is at hand, in order that they may think of the one thing needful.

35. "For as a snare shall it come on all them" . . .

The figure is that of a bird caught in the snare, which flies out in the pursuit of food or pleasure. Ps. vii. 16; ix. 16; x. 9; xviii. 16.

It is hinted that men will be given up to pleasure and all things of this life—but the chief point is, that the snare will fall very suddenly, instantaneously, so that escape is no longer possible. Some emphasize the idea of "suddenly," "unobserved." But the Old Testament emphasizes in this figure the utter impossibility of escape. As a snare shall it come on all them—that great and terrible day of the Lord.

"On the face of the whole earth"—not Judaea simply, as interpreted by those who find in the passage only a prediction of the fall of Jerusalem. As the lightning shineth from the one end of heaven to the other, so the day of the Lord will break over the whole earth.

"All that dwell"—not mankind indifferently, the totality of the race, but according to the analogy offered by our interpretation of the snare, that class, that portion of mankind to whom it cannot be said "your redemption draweth nigh."

Cf. Rev. vi. 10; xiii. 8-14, where by the dwellers upon the earth is meant that part of humanity which contrasts with the servants of God, the saints. Our passage is parallel to those. We learn that these earth-dwellers are not only content with their earthly lot, children of the world in the fullest sense, but also that they have sunken deep in their degradation. The world is their all. Of a higher citizenship, of a better portion, they have no conception. They have lost all spiritual affinities. They have grown together with the world, are entirely of it, and will perish with it.

36. "Watch ye therefore and pray always" . . .

While the children of the world, in their intoxication, are incapable of giving attention to the momentous event, the disciples are to be awake and vigilant, to be on the look-out, examine the signs, resist all temptation and opposition.

To the watching shepherds came the multitude of the heavenly host. The Lord, when He comes, can appear for great joy only to those watching. Watching in one's own strength is however not possible. The lamps go out if they are not constantly replenished with oil. Watching must be aimed at and maintained through prayer. He who wishes to watch without doing anything, soon falls asleep. So also we cannot keep watching in spiritual things without being occupied in prayer.

We are to watch "always," praying &c. Others: we are to watch, praying always. Luke xviii. 1-7.

It is not said what we are to pray for, only the motive is mentioned which is to impel us to pray, but from the motive may be inferred the content of the prayer. According to *Text. Rec.*: pray, that through prayer ye may be found worthy, thus excluding the idea that man may attain a moral perfection in virtue of which he may assert his claim to the kingdom. According to the text now recognized by most: "that ye may prevail to escape all these things." By prayer we possess ourselves of the powers of the world to come, and thus are enabled to escape all these things about to come to pass, etc.

"All these things:" Distress, hunger, pestilence, which will not be as severe on the elect as on the others. Possibly, calamities which will from time to time overtake the wicked and which we can escape only through faith and prayer. Some: the sorrows and

sufferings which will announce and accompany the Parousia, the Lord possibly taking us to himself before the final hour, when fear and dismay shall cause men's hearts to fail, possibly providing for us a city of peaceful refuge, such as the disciples found at the fall of Jerusalem.

It is not enough to escape all these things. From the hand of the Judge there is no escape. We must be able to stand, *σταθῆναι*, before the Son of man. Meyer: "That we may be placed before the Messiah by the angels who will gather the elect from the whole earth." Matt. xxiv. 31; Mark xiii. 27. He excludes the idea of being able to stand before the judgment. Bleek admits this latter also. Nebe holds it is the only admissible one, the only one in accordance with the context, and with the *usus loquendi* of the SS. Nowhere in this great disclosure concerning the last things, is it indicated that only believers shall be brought by the angels before the judgment-seat.

The righteous and the unrighteous shall alike be summoned by the messengers of the Lord, and with trumpet peals before the presence of the eternal Judge. To be placed before the judgment implies no ethical consideration, no privilege of grace. Our text, on the other hand, holds out what we are to gain by praying and watching. Cf. Ps. i. 5. It is like standing an examination, (*bestehen*), to stand firmly, to maintain one's self before the searchings and the trial of the judgment-seat. Cf. Ps. v. 6; cxxx. 3; Nah. i. 6; Mal. iii. 2; Rev. vi. 17; Eph. vi. 13. The reference is to our appearance before the Judge for the final reward. If we at all times watch and pray, then in that decisive, momentous day, we shall with honor stand the ordeal.

In the practical treatment of this lesson the second Advent is the central thought and may be treated in the main objectively or subjectively, according to the admonitions suggested by it. There may be comparisons between the first and second Advent, as also between Christ's coming to us and our coming to Him in death.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS COMPARED.

I. Their *dissimilarity*. (a) The first one quiet, hidden; the second, loud, open, &c. (b) The first poor, humble; the second, in power and glory.

II. Their *similarity*. (a) The first foreshadowed through signs and prophecy; the second also announced through signs, &c.; (b) The first fell upon unprepared children of the world, but also

upon such as waited for the consolation of Israel; the second also finds an unprepared world, but also a praying church.

THE SECOND ADVENT.

- I. Follows after terrible portents.
- II. Takes place in great glory and power.
- III. Completes the kingdom of God.
- IV. Glorifies the Lord as the true witness.
- V. Rewards our watching and praying.

THE DAY OF THE LORD, A GREAT DAY INDEED.

- I. A day of great terror.
- II. A day of great redemption.
- III. A day of great rewarding.

WHO IS ABLE TO ESCAPE—AND TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN?

- I. He, who discovers the signs of the times,
- II. Who is waiting for the Lord,
- III. Who remains steadfast in faith,
- IV. Whose heart is not surcharged,
- V. Who is always watching and praying.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

MATT. XI. 2-10.

THIS pericope presents a genuine Advent figure, a man of God, who is the type of Advent, the embodiment of the Advent idea.

The incarnation is no abstract thought, no mere idea, but a reality, a historic event. As the second Advent does not ensue without premonitions, so the first Advent does not take place without precursors. The last and greatest of the forerunners appears in John the Baptist, "who shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," &c. Luke i. 17. He was a burning and a shining light, but the light which shone in him was borrowed. It was reflected from Christ. It was kindled by the true light. He who came after him though He really was before him, constituted John what he was. John claimed no higher honor than to be the voice of a herald in the desert, saying, prepare the way of the Lord. The gospel of the third Sunday in Advent does not, however, contain the testimony of John to the Lord, but the testimony of the Lord to John, which by John's testimony in the following gospel, that of the fourth Sunday in Advent, is shown to be a testimony of the truth.

As John testified with full force of Christ only after it was revealed to him in his baptism that Jesus was the Christ, so in the Church-year John begins his office of witness only after the Lord has, by word and works, answered the Advent preacher his Advent inquiry, Art thou he that cometh?

According to Luke vii. 18 ff, John sends his disciples after the raising of the widow's son at Nain.

2. "Now when John had heard." . . .

In iv. 12 the fact of John's imprisonment is recorded. The cause of it is reserved till xiv. 3 ff. Herod had seized him, bound him, &c., on account of Herodias. He who preached repentance to the people, preached also repentance to the King; "It is not lawful for thee to have her."

The royal sinner would fain have killed him, but he was afraid of the people, who counted him as a prophet. Josephus narrates

the imprisonment of John, placing it in the fortress of Machaerus in Peraea. He attributes the imprisonment to political considerations. Neander thinks Josephus reports the cause which the king assigned, while Matthew gives the real but concealed motive. John's preaching to the people was in no way calculated to stir up political tumult. In his imprisonment John had freedom just like Paul in Cæsarea and Rome. Intercourse with the outside world was not denied. His disciples could go and come unhindered. Jesus of Nazareth was the burning subject in the prison. The work of the forerunner had been interrupted or terminated by man's power, but the work of Him to whom John had borne testimony, that He was the Christ, was opening grandly. John kept his eye fixed upon the Lord, and the gloom of his dungeon was illuminated by the reports which his disciples brought him concerning "the works of Christ." Some interpret: those works which it was the part of Messiah to perform, laying special stress upon this designation of Christ. Others take this simply as a proper name, denying that John wished to assure himself whether Jesus of Nazareth was really the man who had accomplished these works.

John sent through his disciples. He still has disciples, though the Master has Himself come. The morning star has not wholly vanished, though the Sun of righteousness has already risen high in the heavens. Has he then still authority to gather disciples around himself? John iii. 26 ff. Have we not a proof here that John still aims to be something—something not for himself, indeed, but for others? Is he lacking in self-effacement? Is he given to selfishness and self-seeking? The humility of the Baptist is beyond question. That he continued to be the master of his disciples must be in entire harmony with his confession, that he was not worthy to unloose the sandals of the Lord, and that he must decrease while the Lord must increase. "John is the Old Testament in the New. In him the Old Testament has become flesh and blood. The question by what right John continues to work by the side of Christ, is the same as the question by what right does the Old Testament continue to be bound in one book with the New Testament? As the way into the kingdom of grace goes only through repentance, the law cannot be banished from the Scriptures, nor John the Baptist from the plan of salvation." As long as men were to be prepared for the Messiah, his special calling continued. He might still prophesy, though prophecy was already passing into fulfilment. "His continued activity must be for both the people and their leaders an abiding criterion of the Messianic period in which they lived."

John was active not simply alongside of the Lord, but most decidedly for Him. It was his joy to point to Him as the Lamb of God. His joy was complete when he heard the voice of the Bridegroom. John iii. 29.

This attitude of the Baptist is not only a confirmation of his declaration: "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven," it is the highest form of fidelity in one's calling, the absolutely self-denying obedience of faith.

3. "Art thou he that should come" . . .

"Do we look?" The original may be Indic. or Subj. If the former we paraphrase "do we wait for another, if thou art not the one to whom our expectation was directed, but he is yet some other one?"

Luther and others: The subjunctive of deliberation, which Meyer holds, is for psychological reasons more appropriate.

"We," popular expectation.

ὁ ἐρχόμενος, He that should come, universally admitted to be a designation of the Messiah, John vi. 14; Heb. x. 37; Ps. xl. 7; cxviii. 26; Gen. xlix. 10; Isa. xxxv. 4; Mal. iii. 1; Dan. vii. 13; Zech. ix. 9. Regarding Mal. iii. 1, Hengstenberg reminds us that the prophecy of Mal. formed the text of the Baptist's preaching, and that no other prophecy so emphasizes the idea of the coming. But Mal. follows undoubtedly other prophecies, and it is not likely that the Baptist invented and introduced this term, but it was a current designation of the Messiah in the language of the people at the time. The salient point in Dan. vii. 13 is not the coming *per se*, but the coming as the Son of man. Nebe holds that the designation is originally derived from Ps. cxviii. 26, or xl. 7. The joyful acclamation in the former, bursting from the multitude as he entered Jerusalem, "Blessed is he that cometh, etc.," speaks for that passage, but Heb. x. 5 ff. speaks for the latter, a Ps. to which the Synagogue gave a Messianic interpretation. The coming lies strikingly in the foreground here, and if Ps. xl. is older than cxviii., the idea in the latter is probably derived from that.

Now, what determined the Baptizer to put this question to the Lord? Had John become uncertain whether Jesus was the Christ? A clear and satisfactory answer is most desirable. There has always been great diversity of view.

One of the first explanations was: Since the miracles of Jesus gave rise to various reports, some saying Elias is doing them, some Jeremiah, some, one of the prophets, John hearing these various rumors in prison, sends to inquire whether He who is doing these

wonders is the one to whom he bore witness, or whether it is some other one concerning whom he hears such things?

Jesus answers by showing that it is Himself who has done all these miracles. This view is now generally regarded unsatisfactory.

Another view is that John sent the message for the benefit of his disciples, to confirm in them the belief that Jesus was the Messiah. They had shown jealousy. John iii. 26. So we read of strife between them and Jesus' disciples. Matt. ix. 14. They seem to have still entertained false views of Jesus and could not bear His growing success in contrast with their master's decline. John, anticipating soon to die, feared that his followers would not transfer their allegiance to the Lord. He, therefore, selects two of their number that they might learn by ocular attestation, the difference between their master and Jesus. Christ then gave them practical proofs of his Messiahship. So Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, &c., &c.

This view seems irreconcilable with Luke vii. 18. Others hold that the forerunner himself had fallen into doubt. After all his revelations, experiences and attestations, this burning and shining light, who was "more than a prophet," was for a time overcome by unbelief like Peter, and had a sword pierce his own heart like Mary. The prophet of God himself wavered concerning the object of his testimony. Certainly a great deal can be urged against this, yet much also in its favor. The Old Testament furnishes not a patriarch nor a prophet, no Abraham, Moses or David, who did not have spiritual conflicts. The same holds true of the New Testament. The Apostles and the mother of our Lord were superior to John—for he was the least in the kingdom of heaven, yet they were all subject to powerful temptations before and after Pentecost. Why shall John alone be excepted from temptation, when a crown of life is promised to him who endureth temptation?

A momentary obscuration of his believing consciousness, a temporary eclipse of faith, is to have been expected. Only one has escaped this—and did He really escape? Think of His temptations and Gethsemane.

Meyer: "Judging from John's question, v. 3, and Jesus' reply, v. 6, it is neither unwarrantable nor, as far as can be seen, incompatible with the Evangelic narrative, to assume that nothing else is meant than *that John was really in doubt as to the personal Messiahship of Jesus and the nature of that Messiahship altogether*, a doubt however, which after the honorable testimony of Jesus, v. 7, ff., cannot be regarded as showing a want of spirituality, nor as inconsistent with the standpoint and character of one whom God had

sent as the forerunner, and who had been favored with a divine revelation."

Things were certainly taking a different turn from that form which the Messianic kingdom was expected to assume, "a sudden, overwhelming and glorious crisis." This is not a case of apostasy. His lofty esteem for Jesus, as well as his struggling faith in Him, John shows by the very sending of his disciples, and by the nature of the question. Above all his doubts rises the truthfulness of Jesus. His word will settle every doubt—His own declaration will suffice. One does not send such a message to a person in whom he at one time believed, but in whom he has lost faith. The doubt must have been a superficial one—otherwise he would not have sent to the Lord for a solution of it. The Lord who knew what was in John's heart, did not say that he had fallen away from the faith. He only intimates that he stood in danger of taking offense. But there is a wide difference between unbelief and offense; unbelief is the opposite of faith, an offense presupposes at least a desire to believe.

Nebe holds that John had not lost faith in the Messiahship of Jesus in general, but was disturbed regarding certain features. Some hold that, chafing under his own imprisonment, he was amazed that Jesus should **not** have interposed for his deliverance. His detention in prison not only deprived him of the liberty which he had always enjoyed in a remarkable degree, but condemned him to inactivity in behalf of his Master. The depression of Elias, 1 Kings xix. 1 ff., is analogous. His chief, if not his whole, concern was doubtless the interest of the Lord. "He must increase." The slow development of the kingdom perplexed him.

Hence some see in this embassy from John "an expression of impatience, and an indirect challenge to the Messiah to establish His kingdom without delay. The more John in prison heard of the works of Christ and the extent of his fame, the more impatiently he longed for the decisive crisis, when Jesus would set up His visible Messianic kingdom. He saw his own activity brought to a close by his incarceration, hence the more eagerly he awaited the public coming forth of the Messiah and the rapid and powerful inauguration of His reign. Miraculous deeds on individuals, it might be expected, would be followed by deeds of power on a larger scale and of national import. Why not declare Himself and enter upon His work? Before his approaching death John wished to see the kingdom of God established in power. He wished to die enjoying a realization similar to that of Simeon." But could not the Baptist even in his prison gloom discern that a new era had

begun? The message the disciples brought him could hardly have contained any thing new, (see v. 2). He must certainly in those works have recognized, as much as Nicodemus did, one sent from God, possessing power which had not been granted to him.

The great prophets of the Old Testament wrought miracles, while John had only the word of the Lord. Jesus, *per contra*, appeared mighty in word and deed—would this not be sufficient ground for John to see that Jesus was to be universally recognized as greater than he, the one who was to come? John no doubt shared the popular belief of the nature of Messiah's kingdom. He stumbled accordingly at the methods and the manner of our Lord's public activity. It was upon hearing of the works of Christ that he sent the embassy.

There was something about these works that staggered him. He could not reconcile the course of Jesus with the picture of the Messiah which he had drawn for himself. He had interpreted Mal. iii. 1 in a very different manner. What was he to make of God's word, if he whom he had proclaimed as Messiah proceeded in this fashion? The word of God which should repress doubts, here gave occasion for them. His whole spiritual life had turned on that passage, and from this he was led to believe that immediately upon the preaching of repentance by the forerunner should follow the coming of the Lord, the Messenger of the covenant, for grace and judgment. To all appearances thus far, the activity of the Lord was but a continuation of that of the forerunner. He overlooked, that, side by side with this continuance of his own work there was already the manifestation of something altogether new, and to this his attention was called in vss. 4 and 5. Nebe makes the point that John had subjectively fallen into the same error which doubtless the other prophets shared, that, namely, of confounding the first and second Advents. Doubtless the latter is included in Malachi's description, "Who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth?" Hence, prophecy and fulfilment seem not to correspond. The picture of Christ as presented to the world by His own words and works differs from the picture sketched by Malachi, chap. iv. 2. He says: "The day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud and all that do wickedly shall be stubble. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings," etc. Thus the last and the greatest of the prophets is indeed less than the least in the kingdom, not knowing what every Christian child knows, that there is a twofold Advent of Christ, one in the flesh, the Advent of redemption, and one in glory, the Advent unto judgment.

The two Advents of the one Lord coalesce into one event in the Baptist's mind. Christ having come in the flesh, he expects at once the consummation of what is included in the second Advent as well as what is to mark the first. He had prophesied that the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire, Matt. iii. 11 f.; Luke iii. 16 f.; *i. e.*, upon some he would pour out his Holy Spirit, upon others should descend the fires of judgment. This is what John had preached, and he expected from the Lord, who had been announced from heaven as the Son of God, at the same time both grace and judgment. He knew fully the sinfulness of the people, the malice and hypocrisy of the priests and scribes, the hardened wickedness of the king and court, and is it not probable that he was disappointed like Jonah, when judgment did not overtake this generation of vipers?

Instead of executing such judgment upon an impenitent nation, Jesus was going about using His miraculous power to confer benefits upon this wicked nation, and drawing the people around Him by unfolding the beatitudes. Instead of fire and storm and destruction there was heard only the still small voice of grace. No flash of thunderous wrath, but the warm rays of the gospel fell from heaven. It was all very strange, the course Jesus was taking, and the more so as he was studying the Scriptures, and considered the signs of the times. The word of God as he understood it, and the Christ who appeared in the flesh, contradicted each other in his mind. This contradiction he could not solve—and after being perplexed and tormented by it, he referred the matter reverently and believingly to Jesus Himself. So Ebrard, Wieseler, Lange, Godet and Weiss.

The purely philanthropic and humane features of Christ's activity are the stumbling-block—His own disciples, too, became offended again and again at the conduct of their Lord—not alone at his deep and mysterious sayings, but at some of the clearest. The preaching of the gospel to the poor, the constant exercise of sympathetic love and healing power, have greatly perplexed the mind of the forerunner. Yet the very sending of the embassy shows his humility and simplicity. He is willing to decrease—Christ shall alone be master and teacher. The messengers come at an opportune moment. Jesus is in the midst of His kindly activities. In that same hour, says Luke, He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, &c., vii. 21.

4. "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see."

Nebe intimates that on account of the crowd they could not at

once gain an audience with Jesus. They had to stand off, seeing and hearing. It was so ordered that they should see and hear for themselves, for what they saw and heard was to form the answer they were to carry back to John.

"Go and shew John." This indicates that he wanted the answer for himself, not for the sake of his disciples. "Tell John," says Luke. Facts speak louder than words. The works prove the man. Nebe: "The Baptist stumbled at the acts of the Lord. He is to rise up on the very rock over which he fell. His works are his answer, the very works that had perplexed John's mind. *Ἀκούετε*, i. e., what the people say. Those who were cured were giving thanks. Some would say: We have never seen such things in Israel. Some: God has visited His people. Some gave glory to God who has given such power. Certain expositors refer the "hearing" to the gospel which Jesus at the time was preaching to the poor.

Nebe compares the miracles to the sound of the church-bell calling the people from every quarter to hear the word. They may be viewed too as symbols or parables, showing in the outward world what Christ is working by the power of his word in the sphere of the spirit. In this way hearing has a higher import than seeing. The words of Christ even more than His works answer to the desires of faith. John xiv. 11. He that has ears, let him hear.

That they may know precisely what, from the many things they have seen and heard, they are to communicate to John for the confirmation of his faith, Jesus collects the main things in a few short words, and fastens them like nails upon their memory. They are formulated in three pairs. With v. 6 there are seven. This is to be viewed as a direct answer.

5. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk" . . .

These were the very miracles reserved for Christ. "The dead are raised." The young man of Nain had just been raised. Luke vii. 14.

Πτωχοί, the poor evangelize, or, are evangelized? Some of the ancients and some moderns hold the former. Most hold with the Vulgate and with Luther to the latter. See Lexicon. *Εὐαγγελίζεσθαι* is used for *εὐαγγέλιον*, and mostly in an active sense, and then with the dative of person. Rom. i. 15. The accusative of person is also found, especially 1 Peter i. 12, Luke iii. 18, and frequently in Acts, but the nominative may also give the person to whom the good tidings are brought. Where verbs have the dative of the person, the person in the passive construction goes into the

nominative, Gal. ii. 7; Rom. iii. 2; Heb. xi. 2; Luke xvi. 6; Matt. x. 7. With the nominative of person this form is used passively, Heb. iv. 2, 6; in LXX. Joel ii. 32; 2 Sam. xviii. 31.

The parallelism with the previous clause seems to require the passive. And outbursts of grateful praise, which alone could be thought of here, could not yet be designated as a preaching of the gospel.

Some claim that all these expressions, or at least certain ones of them, are to be taken figuratively, *ex. gr.*, the raising of the dead. The proclamation of the gospel is the power by which the spiritually dead are awakened from their sleep. The context is against this, and especially in Luke, who speaks of the miracles our Lord was working in that very hour, and but a little before He had raised the widow's son. They are to report what they heard and saw. Could they, with bodily ears, hear the transformation going on in men's hearts? The sorely perplexed John is referred to the outward works of Christ, who makes a selection. This selection is significant. The works of Christ as John had heard of them, seemed not to accord with the Scriptures. Physician of the soul, He knows the wounds in John's heart. The sword, the Scriptures, which wounded, is now called in to heal. The answer is but a repetition of the Scriptures, Ps. cxlvi. 7-9; Isa. xxxv. 5-6; lxi. 1-2. With the prophetic words concerning the blind, &c., He portrays His own miraculous activity, and presents these as proofs of His Messiahship. These clear and well-known facts of His history coincide with the delineations of prophecy.

John had clearly caught only the darker side of these prophecies, "Your God will come with vengeance," &c., Is. xxxv. 4, "The day of vengeance of our God," Is. lxi. 2, and hence by the Scriptures had been moved to question whether the works of Jesus conformed to the prophetic picture. Jesus calls his attention to other features and truths in these same passages.

Neither of the Isaiah prophecies contain allusions to the cleansing of the leper or the raising of the dead. He may have had in his mind Is. xxix. 18, or other passages, or He may have simply indicated the exceeding magnitude of His healing grace. At all events, from the whole tenor of the reply, John must feel convinced that Christ's form of activity was not arbitrary, but in obedience to the word and will of God. This conviction should be all the more forcible because the Synagogue based on these very passages the Messianic activity of the expected son of David, which they characterize quite similarly to the works here mentioned by the Lord.

Prophecy and fulfillment are thus in perfect accord. "Still,"

says Nebe, "it is not to be denied that the passages in Isaiah refer to such as are spiritually blind, deaf, &c., in figurative language. To the complete fulfilment of prophecy, then, properly belongs such a translation from the spiritual to the bodily, from the ideal to the real. Christ is Lord and redeemer of the entire man. As He had a sacred right, following the Synagogue, to translate the prophecies from the figurative to the literal, so have we also the indisputable right, now that He is present with us only in spirit, to turn these utterances from the bodily into the spiritual." The *πρωχοὶ* renders this transition easy. For as Luther says, "These are not the beggars and bodily poor, . . . but those of poor and contrite hearts . . . those who want help and comfort for tormented consciences, but not temporal goods and honors. For them no help can be found, except in having a gracious God."

The answer is quite characteristic,—not directly affirming "I am He who is to come, I am Christ." It is clear enough and yet reserved, intelligible, yet sufficiently dim to leave the decision to the inquirer. The time for the open announcement had not yet arrived. The answer was sufficient for John, who kept searching and was able now, through the very words of the prophet, who had prophesied concerning himself, to remove the rock of offense. But Jesus, knowing with what obstinacy men cleave to their opinions and prejudices, and knowing too how fully John had surrendered his mind to this one-sided view of Messianic activity, added to the answer an earnest word of warning.

6. "Blessed is he who shall not be offended." . . .

This was John's danger, taking offense, staggering. *Σκάνδαλον*, properly, the movable stick or trigger of a trap, a trapstick; a trap, snare; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall. Metaphorically: any person or thing by which one is entrapped into error or sin.

The career of Jesus, for instance, was so contrary to the expectations of the Jews concerning the Messiah, that they were led to reject Him and fail of salvation. The offense of the cross is often spoken of.

The noun and verb of this term occur never in the classics, but often in the LXX., N. T. and the FF. The active form means to cause one to stumble or fall. The passive, to be made to stumble, or fall, to be deceived either through another, or through one's self. Another, though the occasion, is not always morally guilty. I may, by my want of understanding, stumble where all is smooth and level. Hence here, "offended in me." He who was so in-

offensive, may prove the occasion for offenses. Cf. Luke ii. 34. That very circumstance that many should be offended in Him was foretold of the Messiah. Isa. lii. 14.

The disciples of John could appreciate the force of this admonition. See vss. 18, 19; cf. Luke vii. 34; xv. 2. Jesus was continually giving offense. John escaped falling by humbly inquiring of the Lord Himself. By his example he has indeed pointed out the way for us when we cannot reconcile ourselves to what we see or find in Christ. An open confession of our helplessness, and a diligent search of the Scriptures, are the things needful in such a case. All the difficulties which arise have been anticipated for us in the eternal word.

This may be regarded as the clearest part of the answer: "When Jesus calls him blessed who shall not be offended in Him, He thereby announces Himself as the One in whom blessedness is to be sought and found." I am the one who blesses. John's perplexity and gloom must have prepared his heart for so cheering a message. Blessedness is to be found only in One, only in self-surrender, unconditional faith in Him who is the coming One.

We are not told how John received the message. But we may conclude that the Lord gave to him His rod and staff, and that he passed through the dark valley comforted and full of joy.

7. "Jesus began to say unto the multitude concerning John" . . .

This was intended to correct the impressions of the people. From the inquiry of John's messenger they might infer that he who had borne testimony to Jesus had changed his mind, and was now in doubt whether this one was in reality the One who was to come. Jesus comes to the assistance of their weakness and removes their suspicions.

Luther says: "Christ not only praises John, showing him in his preaching and steadfastness a pattern for all preachers, but He also reproves the unbelief of the Jews, that they had so low an estimate of such a preacher."

It is significant that Jesus did not pronounce his eulogy on John until his messengers had departed. Bengel: "Otherwise they might have become puffed up. The world praises to the face, reviles behind the back. Divine truth does the opposite."

The disciples of John were furthermore so impressed with the greatness of their teacher that they were loth to transfer their allegiance to his Lord. Had they heard this encomium of him from the Lord's lips, it would have only confirmed them in this attitude. "Began to say" . . . Some: Simply, He said. Some: As they

were going He began. Others: The importance of the declaration is marked by this. Jesus spoke out of a heart deeply moved. xi. 20; xii. 1. It is probably only a customary form of introducing a speech or action.

Fritsche punctuates thus, Why went ye out into the wilderness? To see a reed shaken? Better: To see what, did you go out? *θεῖσασθαι*, to behold, more than *ιδεῖν*, cf. 1 John i. 1; Matt. vi. 1, 22; xxiii. 5, "to see as a spectacle, idly." Many a one among the auditors of Jesus had gone into the desert "to behold." "Wilderness," Matt. iii. 1, uninhabited pasture-lands in the east of Judah stretching from Tekoa to the Dead Sea. The Evangelists did not carefully distinguish it from the region of the Jordan, Matt. iii. 5. Hence, it may include the desert which stretches northward from the Dead Sea along the west bank of the Jordan. The two deserts bordered on each other and the Baptist carried on his work in both.

The question has a judicial import. They are by their answer to pronounce judgment upon themselves. He asks first for the judgment of the Jews, since proof is the stronger when it comes from an enemy.

What went ye to see in the desert? There is not much to see there. At most reeds, which abounded along the Jordan where John was preaching. Some take the reed literally, something quite ordinary and commonplace. Is that what took so many of you into the desert?

The interpretation may then be: You did not go to see an object of nature, not an ordinary man even, but a prophet. But against this literal rendering, it is objected that the following verse contains nothing to correspond with the reed, as something to be found in the desert. The "shaken by the wind" also becomes superfluous. The reed has no firmness. The softest breath shakes it to and fro. Did you want to see a man of this character, unsteadfast, vacillating and swinging to and fro from external circumstances, of easy disposition, ready to second your desires, a miserable reed dependent on the popular breath, a man devoid of character? Isa. xxxvi. 6; Ezek. xxix. 6; 2 Kings xviii. 21. Such a person cannot explain the eagerness of the concourse into the desert. Such a multitude, including the most eminent as well as the masses, could not have been drawn thither had they not expected to see an extraordinary character, a man firmer than rock, a man whom neither favor nor fear could move. Was, then, John so unmovable, so firm?

A fierce wind was blowing, the storms of doubt were beating

against him, but he was not moved to another direction. He turned the more earnestly to Jesus, and clung to His words. This very course reveals his character. In the hour of weakness and peril, he applies for the solution of his trouble to Him concerning whom he has fallen into perplexity. His firmness, not his vacillation, is strikingly brought out. Some recognize, at the same time, in this praise of the Baptist an indirect rebuke of the people, whose heart was like a reed blown by the wind. There is more of this in verse 16 ff. In John they saw the very opposite of themselves. Neander emphasizes the point that Jesus would vindicate John from the charge of vacillation which the inquiry of the messengers would suggest among those who had heard his testimony. There may be in it also a severe rebuke to the Jews, that while they knew John to be a prophet of the highest order, and had flocked out to him, they yet did not believe on him.

8. "A man clothed in soft raiment" . . .

"But:" "The preceding hypothesis is dismissed." Forcibly the discourse proceeds: You did not go forth to view a spectacle, but to see something. What, a man, etc.? This brings again to their forgetful minds the man who was clad in camel's hair, with a leathern girdle, and subsisting on locusts and wild honey. He was an embodied sermon on repentance to his generation. He was "more than a prophet." He showed his earnestness by personal example, denying the world and its lusts, crucifying the flesh. So Elijah, 2 Kings i. 8, is called a hairy man. The prophets generally wore clothing of skins. 1 Kings xix. 13, 19; 2 Kings ii. 8, 13 ff; Zech. xiii. 4. The rough clothing shows the rough man. The vigorous asceticism of the prophets is the formal expression of their separation from the defiling fellowship of popular life.

"Those wearing soft raiment," etc. Jesus Himself answers this question. And the answer bears this interpretation: "He was and is a prophet, and is suffering the usual fate of a true prophet."

Jesus calls their attention to the effeminate and luxurious court of Herod. The Baptist himself was no stranger there. He might have been a courtier, but he did not appear there in purple and fine linen. He was languishing in prison. To be at court, and yet not to wear soft clothing, although known to the king, this shows John the true prophet. The people who went out into the desert to John because they held him to be a prophet made no mistake. He is a true one. Is that all?

9. "But what went ye out" . . .

"But" . . . The discourse still rises. To regard John as a

prophet merely is not sufficient. He is more. Περὶσσότερον = πλείον, Matt. xii. 41 f; Luke xi. 31 f. Some have taken it as the accusative Masc. With special emphasis, "Yea, I say unto you," Jesus pronounces the pre-eminence of John. In what did it consist?

The Old Testament prophets were essentially prophets announcing distant events. John was more a herald proclaiming what was present. He lived not in the times of the prophecy, but of the fulfilment. He was not one of the numerous messengers of God predicting the Advent, but was himself predicted by the last prophets of the Old Testament, as the angel before the presence of the Lord, who in His own person enters into His temple.

10. "For this is he of whom it is written" . . .

Jesus Himself explains the "greater than prophet." He testifies of the Baptist who had testified concerning Him. For the human praise John gave the Lord, he in turn receives divine praise. He called Jesus Lamb of God; Jesus calls him the angel of the Lord.

The faithful servant receives extraordinary honor. He who felt so humble as to be unworthy to loose the Master's sandal-strings, receives a wreath from the flower-garden of God's word. Two Old Testament passages speak of John; the one speaks of him in a humble manner, the other in high and glorious terms. John himself always cited the former, Isa. xl. 3, in justification of his office. Jesus takes the latter, which speaks of the forerunner in exalted strains. Mal. iii. 1.

The language of the three Synoptists, cf. Luke vii. 27; Mark i. 2, differs, however, so much from the Hebrew text that the uniformity of these passages is taken as a proof that the citation proceeded from the mouth of Jesus, and thus passed in a fixed form into the evangelical tradition. The Hebrew literally is: Behold, I send my messenger and he prepares my way. The LXX. render it literally.

In the New Testament "thy" regularly takes the place of "my." This may have its explanation in the relation of the sender to the one sent, the relation between the Father and the Son.

Jesus designates John as His angel, the angel commissioned by the Lord, a messenger who was charged orally to deliver the message. Mal. ii. 7. This messenger shall go "before thy face," immediately before thee. Luke i. 76. John was not a prophet of distant events. "Thy face." Bengel: "It is one of the

strongest arguments for the divinity of Christ, that those things which are said of Christ in the New Testament are quoted from the Old Testament, when they are predicted as exclusively belonging to God." The Advent of the Father and that of the Son are the same.

Another pre-eminence of John was: "He shall prepare thy way." This task was with John quite different from the task which devolved on all other prophets. He was the final, culminating one. Immediately after him appears the coming One. How he is to prepare the way Malachi does not say, he simply quotes Esaias.

Luther: "What was in the way for John to remove? Doubtless sin, still more the good works of the proudly holy, *i. e.*, he must point out to all, that the works and being of men are sin and corruption and require the grace of Christ. He who knows and thoroughly confesses this, he is already humbled and has prepared the way for Christ."

In the pulpit use of this pericope the tried Baptist may be the theme, or the Lord seeking to strengthen faith in him.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

SPIRITUAL DESPONDENCY:

Its cause and its cure.

THE EMBASSY SHOWS JOHN:

1. In his weakness. 2. In his strength.

CHRIST'S PRAISE OF JOHN.

1. He is no reed, but in conflict holds firmly to the faith in his Lord.
2. He is no man in soft raiment, but in conflict still serves as prophet.
3. He is the angel preparing the way of the Lord, even his conflict giving Him opportunity to testify concerning Himself.

CHRIST'S TREATMENT OF THE TRIED BAPTIST.

1. The gracious rescue from his doubts.
2. The glowing praise He bestows on him.

THAT CHRIST IS THE ONE THAT WAS TO COME,
is attested: (a) By His words. (b) By His works.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CONFLICT.

1. It brings us to the Lord.
2. It causes us to be instructed from the Word.
3. It secures the crown of life.

COUNSEL TO THE TEMPTED :

1. Make your complaint to the Lord.
2. Believe His word.

JOHN'S PERPLEXITY.

- (1.) Its nature. (2.) Its occasion. (3.) Its cure.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

John i. 19-28.

HERE too we have an embassy and testimony: an embassy to the man, who in the previous lesson sent to Jesus the inquiry, "Art thou He that should come," and a testimony from him to whom the Lord in that gospel testifies.

"This pericope," says Nebe, "shows how well John deserved the praise accorded him by Jesus. But John is more than a prophet, he is the noblest flower of Old Testament prophecy, the ripest fruit of the Old Testament theocracy. Thus his testimony to the Lord becomes a clear and decided testimony of the Old Testament to the Lord." The Evangelist John without question regarded the testimony of the Baptist in this light, else why produce it twice, 6-8, 15 ff., in his magnificent prologue? Noting his distinction between the law and the gospel, v. 17, and his mention of "the Jews," v. 19, it is clear that the Evangelist views this testimony as a testimony of the true Israel, as a testimony proceeding from the spirit and the heart of the children of light.

This narrative has no parallel in the Synoptics. Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7, 8; Luke iii. 16, cf. 26, 27, appear closely related to it in thought and expression, but the two reports differ widely. The report of the Synoptics gives the testimony of the Baptist *before* the Baptism of Jesus, words not elicited by an embassy. The testimony here given is *after* the Baptism. So the ancient expositors, and Lücke, Tholuck, Meyer, DeWette, Luthardt, etc.

Olshausen held that Jesus was baptized on the evening of the day this testimony was given. Hengstenberg, on the following day. John says, v. 31, "And I knew him not," etc., which is commonly explained as teaching, that John himself up to the Baptism had not distinctly recognized Jesus as the Christ. Nebe argues that the testimonies before the Baptism proclaim merely in general the nearness of the kingdom, and that the hesitation of John to baptize Jesus means no more than that the Baptist held the approaching Jesus as morally his superior. That Jesus is the Messiah, that He is indeed the Son of God, of this truth those testimonies contain nothing.

19. "And this is the record of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites" . . .

Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. John alone of the Evangelists uses this term (very often and usually in a special sense), designating the chiefs of the nation, probably the Sanhedrin in particular. At the time of his writing the Jews were clearly distinguished as the party hostile to Christianity, the enemies of Jesus. Besides, John's readers were Gentiles. John ii. 6, 13; iii. 1, etc., the term is used indifferently. "Here, in these Jews, the enmity of the world is personified." i. 19; ii. 18; ix. 18; xviii. 12, 14; iv. 22; xi. 19, 33; xii. 9.

Meyer: "John writing when he had long severed himself from Judaism, makes the body of the Jews, as the old religious community from which the Christian Church had already completely separated itself, thus constantly appear in a hostile sense in face of the Lord and His work . . . the ancient theocratic people in corporate opposition to the new community of God (which had entered into their promised inheritance) and to its head."

John had long witnessed in Jerusalem their fierce opposition to the gospel, hence a "Jew" had become synonymous with an adversary of Christ, Judaism the opposite of faith in Christ. John recognizes also the distinction between Jew and Israelite i. 48. "Jews" is a more recent designation than "Israelites." It first appears 2 Kings xvi. 6; cf. Jer. xxxiv. 9. It became current only after the exile. "Israelites" the descendants of Abraham are called, as long as they in general follow the ways of God; "Jews," from the time they as a body fell away from the faith and the customs of their fathers.

The designation represents the nation as a whole, its characteristic attitude toward Christ, determining its historic position toward the Church of the covenant, the Jewish nation estranged from Christ and His Church and hostile to them.

The messengers come from Jerusalem. This is significant. That was the seat of religion, the religious and political centre of the nation. The Evangelist views them as the representatives of the entire nation. It was a deputation from the Jews. Not the Jews from Jerusalem sent, but they sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem.

The deputation consists of "priests and Levites," which according to the Old Testament *usus loquendi* is a designation for the spiritual order, the clergy as such in general. Josh. iii. 3; viii. 33. The absence of the article is explained by the fact that not the whole of the priests, etc., went out into the desert, only certain ones of them were deputed.

According to ancient tradition the Sanhedrim consisted mainly

of priests and Levites. The deputation therefore represented immediately the Sanhedrim. It was sent out by this the highest authority, which was fully justified in making the investigation and proposing the inquiry. The Sanhedrin was indeed not an authority instituted by the Old Testament. The Greek term shows it to have arisen in the Greek period, *i. e.*, the reign of the Seleucidæ. But its jurisdiction over the nation is clearly indicated in the New Testament. Luke xiii. 33 f. The Mishna speaks expressly of its authority. Bar-Cochba was also interrogated after the same manner by the Sanhedrin. It was the supreme spiritual court, cf. Matt. xxi. 23: "chief priest and elders." There is nothing surprising in this mission to the Baptizer. It is surprising, rather, that it was so long delayed. John has been for some time prosecuting his office in the desert, which is not so very far from Jerusalem; with great power he had proclaimed the imminence of the kingdom, and publicly baptized with reference to Him who was to come. The people ran out to him in great crowds, and even Jerusalem is not above going forth to the preacher in the desert. Luke iii. 15, "All men mused in their hearts of John, whether he was the Christ." Nebe reminds us that the delegation was not sent while John's popularity was at its height. Matters had come to a standstill. A reaction in popular feeling was taking place. Public sentiment over the Baptist is divided. There is no longer a general surrender to his extraordinary personality and mission. Men are coldly reflecting who he really is. Besides, John had spared no class with his preaching of repentance. He had been cleaning out the floor in preparation for Him who was coming to thresh the wheat and separate it from the chaff, burning the latter with fire; and thus he had repelled many.

He had attacked the Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. iii. 7 ff, and these controlled the Council. Acts xxiii. 6. It is, again, not merely the division of public sentiment which moves the authorities to send a committee of inquiry. There is probably also a desire for revenge. It is the Jews, embittered foes of the truth, who send the priests and Levites to ask, "Who art thou?"

Luthardt concludes from the form of the question that the main thing with them was the person, not the call and purpose of God, thus showing the true Jewish spirit. Art thou the glorious deliverer? But Meyer contends that they would have inferred the call and purpose of God from the person, as the question they ask in v. 25 shows.

Meyer denies that the question was framed in a captious spirit or was prompted by a malicious motive, but that is the general

view. Their purpose, however, miscarried. "Against their will the Council attests the grand and profound activity of the Baptist, and by their inquiry offer to him the finest opportunity to express his mind concerning himself and concerning the Lord before the highest tribunal in Israel." Cf. v. 33. These things were not done in a corner. To the highest in authority was borne the witness of the truth.

20. "And he confessed and denied not," . . .

The form of the Baptist's answer is peculiar, striking. It must have contained a very serious import to him, cf. Rom. ix. 1; 1 Tim. ii. 7. Some expositors fail to see this. Meyer regards the phraseology as no more than the emphasis of a ready, frank confession.

The two words, *ὡμολόγησεν, ηρνήσατο*, must be used for a purpose. Godet: "The *first* indicates spontaneity, eagerness. In the *second* the Evangelist means to say he did not for an instant yield to the temptation which he might have had to *deny*. The second is added to connect with it the confession which is to follow." He also suggests that some were inclined to give to the person of John the Baptist an importance superior to his real dignity. He confessed the truth. He denied himself, not Christ. It is well to remember that the Baptist says nothing here of the Lord: he is speaking simply of himself.

Nebe: Both verbs refer to one and the same expression, *one* testimony from two points of view, an acknowledgment and a non-denial. John's expression is a confession, a free, open, frank declaration; at the same time it is a non-denial, for even though from the first he said "no," and his disposition sounds like a denial, yet at the same time this disposition is a self-abnegating proclamation of the truth. He made a confession: "I am not the Christ," and this implied that the Christ was not far off.

Considerable difference in the interpretation of the Messianic prophecies may have prevailed. The Pharisees may have had grave doubts. They may, likewise have, asked with an inquisitorial and unbelieving spirit. The prompt, open, candid answer is "I am not the Christ." But had they asked if he was? Nebe: "The commission purposely does not ask whether he is the Christ. They may have suspected that he was. The question was put in the interest of judicial investigation. They were not concerned to know if John be the expected Christ, but to know what or who in particular he was, for various opinions prevailed. John adopts the proper course by repudiating at once the highest view which the people cherished. This was much better than to begin

with the lowest view. He does not intend to *increase* but always, even before this embassy, to *decrease*, till he has reduced himself to a lowliness that is unworthy to loosen the sandal strings of his Master. The people seem to have held the Baptist to be the Messiah. Luke iii. 15; Acts xiii. 25. From this delusion of the people we may infer the extraordinary character of his appearance, and what divine power accompanied the words of his mouth." Such was his excellence, says Augustine, that he could be believed to be the Christ, and in this he proved his humility, because he said he was not the Christ, when he could have been believed to be.

His blunt answer implies his displeasure and impatience at such a delusion of the people. Not for a moment will he appear in a false light. I am not the Christ, was the instantaneous reply.

21. "And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias?" . . .

They press for an answer. They desire to know not so much his relation to the Messiah, as what he properly is himself. Nebe: "As he was baptizing and proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom, they believed that he stood in the closest relation to him, that he was Elijah." His stern reformatory work, his clothing, etc., strongly resembled Elijah, Matt. iii. 4. This is evident from the order of words in the original. From Mal. iii. 23 Israel expected Elijah before the Messiah. Testimonies are cited from the Rabbins that the Jews expected a general purification or baptism before the coming of the Messiah, and that it would be administered by Elijah. John promptly and bluntly answers, "I am not." Origen already expresses his surprise at this categorical negative. Jesus said later, "If ye wish to receive it, this is Elias who was to come." Cf. Luke i. 17: "He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias." In descending from the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus said, "Elias has come and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed." Matt. xvii. 11, 12. The ancients explained the difficulty by the two Advents: Of the first Advent, John is the herald and forerunner. Of the second, Elijah. Elijah, who was to come at the second Advent of the Saviour, now comes through John in power and spirit. As Elijah will precede the second Advent, so John the first. Even Olshausen and Stier hold that Elijah is yet to come. The Reformers abandoned this exposition.

Luther believed that Malachi spoke simply of John, and that the personal Elijah is not to be looked for again. His main support is the language of the angel, Luke i. 17, which refers to the prophecy of Malachi, and even quotes his words: "to turn the heart of

the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, etc." Why should he have applied this to John if another Elijah is to come? The Jews themselves always understood Malachi of the coming of Christ in the flesh. Hence they ask John here if he were Elijah who is to come before Christ. Luther holds Christ's exposition, Matt. xvii. 10 ff, to be decisive. Jesus himself repudiated the mistaken notion of another Elijah. Malachi (iv. 5) purposely added "the prophet," indicating that it is not the personality that is to be considered so much as the office and the spirit and power of Elijah.

In Matt. xvii. 11, the disciples ask Jesus "how is it that Elias must come first, and yet thou impliest that he has come after thee? The Lord first confirms the prophecy and then affirms the fulfillment, "I say unto you." In the first clause, He admits the correctness of the interpretation of the Scribes, supplementing the quotation from them, the future being justified on the ground that they are the very words quoted. It is as they say, "Elias is first coming and will restore all things." In the second, he shows that they failed to discern the signs of the times, which showed John to have been the promised Elijah. His preaching and preparatory labors have realized the restitution of the order of things in advance of Messiah's coming. The misapprehension of John was analogous to the misapprehension of Christ. The categorical denial is explained: Jesus said, in spirit John was Elias. John denies that he is so in person. There was extant among the Jews an opinion that one individual might personally and bodily reappear in another. Mark vi. 14. Hence John so decidedly retorts, "*I am not.*" He does not propose to discuss with this deputation, technically in what sense he is Elias, in what sense he is not, which Nebe interprets as showing that a tension had already taken place between the Baptist and the Jews of Jerusalem. He certainly was not Elias in the sense in which they looked for him. Bengel: "He rejects from himself all the characters which their conjectures attributed to him, in order that he may confess Christ, and bring the enquirers to Christ."

"Art thou the prophet?" What prophet did they mean? That one of whom Deut. xviii. 15, 18, spake. So Bengel, Bleek, Meyer, etc. "The article," says Bengel, "has reference to the promise of the prophet and to the expectation of the people." Some supposed this prophet to be distinct from the Messiah, others as identical. John vi. 14, 15; vii. 40, 41. Here they regard him not only distinct from Christ, but even inferior to Elijah. Note the anti-climax. Cf. 25 and Matt. xvi. 14, where some assert

that Jesus was Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Jeremiah is called the prophet of God in 2 Mac. xv. 14. The Rabbis are said to have expected the return of Jeremiah as well as Elijah, and certain expositors think he is the one in the mind of the inquirers.

Some Jewish scholars applied Deut. xviii. 15 to Joshua, others to Jeremiah; but the *Messianic* sense, which does not prejudice the historic, has always been given to this passage in the Christian Church, and it was not unknown to the Synagogue. John i. 46 is a proof of this Messianic interpretation. More definitely dots vi. 14 show that this sense was accepted by the whole people. The remark of the Samaritan woman, iv. 25, is another instance. And Nebe thinks this interpretation was openly adopted by Jesus Himself, John v. 45 ff.

Besides the strictly Messianic sense generally held, Nebe holds that there was yet another view more indefinitely Messianic, as shown by John vii. 40 ff, where many of the people said "This is truly the prophet," but others, "This is the Christ." This seems to imply that under the promised prophet many understood only a prophet in general. And that is the sense here.

Again a decisive "No" is given. The inquirers certainly are to be understood as meaning a prophet distinct from Christ. Still John says "No," because he knew that the coming One predicted by Moses was both prophet and Messiah, and therefore an affirmative answer would be misleading. There was also an idea that the prophet would be one of the old prophets risen from the dead. Had they asked whether he was a prophet, instead of the prophet, he would doubtless have answered "Yes," for he was conscious of being a prophet. After another sharp retort the deputation must doubtless have retired, had they come in their own name. They must have by this time seen the fruitlessness of their mission, but as ambassadors they persist in seeking an answer.

22. "Then said they unto him, Who art thou?" . . .

They do not become provoked or impatient. They maintain their dignity, and, indefatigable, simply prosecute their inquiry. They must have an answer. But, as if they had exhausted the roll of those whose coming prophecy had foretold, they no longer ask, Art thou this one, or that one, but they now submit the general question, "What *sayest* thou of thyself?" They want a round, positive answer. The Baptist recognizes what is due to the magistracy, and so he renders to the spiritual authorities a becoming obedience. He now gives a clear answer, quite a circumstantial one.

23. "He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness" . . .

That he calls himself *φωνή*, a voice, is very surprising. This impersonal designation John emphasizes again and again, while he never calls himself the messenger, or the angel, of the Lord, according to Malachi. Some: The sound precedes the Word.

Luther: "How does a man become a voice? When he desires to be nothing in himself, when his personality is to count for nothing at all, his word is to be all. John is a voice, because he seeks nothing for himself, no esteem, no honor, only something to be heard, to be listened to. He points away from himself to Him who is to come after him." The Jews wished to make something of John. This he will not allow. He is only an instrument of God, only a drum, which announces the coming of the King. He turns them away from his person to his testimony. The former is nothing, but his office and mission must command their attention. *Φωνή βοῶντος*. Some press the Genitive, distinguishing between the voice and him using it. The voice does not call, but the calling one uses it as his instrument. John is the voice of another. Jesus, the Logos, is the one who calls. John is the voice for the Word.

Luther explains "the voice of a calling one," the voice which calls. Cf. Rom. xv. 26; 1 Tim. iii. 16; John is the calling voice. *βοῶντος* characterizes the voice as strong, powerful. The idea is that of calling loud to those afar off, those hard of hearing, that they may apprehend the magnitude of what he says. Cf. v. 15; vii. 28, 37; xii. 44. This is another way of describing him as a witness, who bears testimony to one infinitely exalted above him.

"In the desert" the voice is heard. All the Evangelists connect *ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ* with *φωνή*, not with what follows, what the voice says. The original prophecy, Is. xl. 3, is rendered by some: A voice crying; in the desert; prepare the way of the Lord. This connects it equally with both clauses. But the LXX. connect it decisively with the first. It is immaterial whether taken with the first, or left suspended between the two. The voice, which is the important factor, resounds in the desert. Whosoever would follow the call of this voice must go out in the desert; the way to the preparation of which it admonishes, must be prepared in the desert.

It is very significant that this voice is heard in the desert. The prophet views the people as having not yet entered into the promised land; they are still wandering in the desert in order to escape from the house of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Here the significance of the desert appears. They are in a condition of spiritual and temporal misery. Out of this condi-

tion, corresponding to their condition when they passed through a real desert (a faithful picture of their condition), out of this condition the Lord will redeem them, but that this may be done they must do their part. The Lord cannot make a way through the desert if the people have not beforehand themselves prepared one, and to this they are admonished by His servant. It is implied that the whole prophecy of which this forms a part is about to be fulfilled.

By calling himself a voice of a herald in the desert, John declares that everything is desert, waste and empty; everything is concluded under flesh and sense. The world is a desert. It is viewed thus by some Pagan writers.

Still the desert is not to be so regarded as to exclude all living movement. The voice says: "Make straight the way of the Lord," putting here into one clause the two clauses of the prophet: "Prepare ye the way, make straight in the desert," the verb in the second clause being appropriated to the first.

What is the way of the Lord? How is it to be prepared? The prophet in the spirit sees God arising to visit His people—the road shall be levelled so that He may come faster and all flesh behold Him. The way of the Lord is not the way by which the people come to their God, but conversely the way by which God comes to them. This way shall be prepared. Whatever hinders the revelation is to be put aside. The people thus addressed are to go to work. Outward circumstances rest not, indeed, on men's hands—these are ordained by God—but inwardly, in the spirit of their minds, the people can prepare themselves, they can remove the inner hindrances for the manifestation of God.

Malachi iv. 6 explains Isaiah when he says that "the last messenger before the coming of the Lord shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers."

Luther, in the Sermon on the Gospel, says: "This is the preparation of the way of the Lord and the proper office of John, that he shall humble all the world and say that all are sinners, lost, condemned, poor, needy, wretched men, and that no life, no work, no state appears so holy, good and beautiful, that it is not damnable, if Christ the Lord does not dwell and work and live therein, if he be not and do not everything through faith in Him, that they altogether need Christ and should with all desire become partakers of His grace." See also Seiss.

The heathen were not without this self-knowledge. Seneca praises Epicurus for having said, "The beginning of salvation is the knowledge of sin."

Thus John shows from Isaiah the warrant for his appearance before the people as a preacher of repentance. Isaiah the prophet is referred to for his credentials. Isaiah in the spirit saw John and testified of him. If these Jews believe Isaiah, they must also believe him. He closes his answer as humbly as he began it. Not *the* voice he said there, but "a voice," one of the many voices that preach in the desert. Here he says not "I am the one," etc., but classes himself among all the prophets. Isaiah's word applies to him only in general. So, with like humility at the close as at the beginning, he leaves it quite in doubt whether Isaiah had him primarily in mind or only in a secondary way. This ends the investigation in the name of the Council, and the Evangelist proceeds now to a private transaction.

24. "And they which were sent" . . .

Some have so read this verse as to conclude that after the deputation had returned to Jerusalem, the Pharisees were not satisfied with the answer, and had accordingly sent some of their own party to John. There is certainly a difference in the tone of the question which is now propounded. In comparison with the former it sounds haughty and hateful. Others hold that the deputation proper withdraws, but the Pharisees belonging to it, now in their own name and in their own interest, continue to question him. The official transaction has terminated, a private conference now takes place, and with it is developed personal irritation.

It is a mistake to regard this verse as supplemental to the preceding. It is preparatory to the following, the introduction of which would be unaccountable but for this verse. They are Pharisees. This explains what follows.

This religious sect stood apart from others, because they deemed themselves purer and holier, and dreaded contact with others for fear of becoming impure. They thought to guard and increase their piety by zealously observing all the ordinances of Levitical purification. They were characterized by bondage to the letter, work-righteousness, the outward semblance of holiness. But in this devotion to external forms and outward righteousness the inner life dried up.

Ingenious scholastic questions, foreign to the spirit of true piety, they again and again propounded to the Lord. Matt. xix. 3; xxii. 36. Ethics they changed into wretched casuistry. Mark vii. 11; Matt. xxiii. 16. Outward forms took precedence over all. Matt. ix. 14; xii. 2; xxiii. 4; Mark vii. 2. They appear here in their true character, petrified devotees to ordinances, clinging to the letter, etc.

25. "Why baptizest thou then?" . . .

They cannot reconcile John's baptizing with his confession concerning himself that he is neither the Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet. This baptism is of such moment, so valuable a treasure, that they cannot conceive of any one administering it save one of those three, one having a divine mission.

It is held by some that Jewish baptism had been already in vogue. The antiquity of Baptism is a difficult question. Mai-monides dates it from Moses, cf. Exod. xix. 10. The Babylonian Gemara knows nothing of it, but simply attests the existence of proselyte baptism in its day. Neither Philo, nor Josephus, nor the older Targumists make mention of proselyte baptism. Some regard it as at the time wholly unknown. Lightfoot and others: the Pharisees grouped John's baptism with "Judaic Baptism."

Another solution of the offense taken by the Pharisees at John's baptism is offered by Nebe: The Jews expected in the Messianic era a general purification or baptism of the people, cf. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, which Rabbi Salomo paraphrases; "I will remove your impurity through the aspersion of the water of purification." This purification was necessary, because the pure eyes of the Messiah could not behold the moral defilements of men.

This lustration was represented in Old Testament symbolism by the prophet as a purification through water, Gen. xxxv. 2; Exod. xix. 10—the people must sanctify themselves and wash their clothes that they might receive the law on the Mount of God, cf. 1 Sam. vii. 6. The prophets proceed from these symbolical transactions as a basis and teach, Is. iv. 4: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, etc., Zech. xiii. 1. In that day there shall be a fountain opened . . . cf. Ezek, xxxvi. 25; xxxvii. 23, ff., in connection with the vision of chap. xlvi.

John doubtless regarded his baptism as the fulfillment of those prophecies, and as he so decidedly brought it into the closest connection with the approach of the kingdom, the biblically-instructed Pharisees quite properly recognized in this baptism an intimation or announcement of the Messianic era. But if John is neither the Christ nor Elias nor the prophet, he is profaning a symbol reserved for a very definite period.

The work-righteousness and spiritual pride of the Pharisees had another occasion for stumbling at John's baptism. His baptism was the plastic representation of his preaching of repentance. By his baptism he indicated that the people stood disqualified for the kingdom of God and his righteousness—that they were lying in a

wilderness of sin. Such an announcement must be very wounding to men who were the leaders of the people, and who had exalted thoughts of the chosen nation. Both *ὅτι* in the beginning, and the form of the closing words, show the animus of the question.

26. "John answered them, and said: I baptize with water" . . .

Is this an answer to their question? Some have held that John did not mean to give a direct answer, but only to state his relation to the Messiah. A number hold that John gives the most definite answer which he could have given in his mode of speech, which is always enigmatical. The Pharisees challenged the validity of his baptism, because they regarded it as the Messianic lustration, yet John protested that he was neither the Messiah nor one of His retinue. To the question, Why then dost thou administer the Messianic baptism, he replies, I baptize with water. I am not administering the Messianic baptism—mine is only a water baptism. This was a square, clear answer, and must have been understood by the Pharisees.

This was not the first time that he thus designated his baptism, cf. Matt. iii. 11, but, be it noted, that declaration was not made to the people, but to "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees." iii. 7. Those pointed words had become graven in their minds. The Baptist need but faintly recall them, and they stand fresh in their memory.

John distinguishes his baptism from that of Christ as water baptism from Spirit baptism. He does not pretend that the Holy Ghost is conferred through his baptism,—though some expositors have maintained that Christ's Spirit baptism was applied to those who had received from John the water baptism. Cf. Acts xix. 1-6. John speaks of his baptism in the present, of Christ's in the future. The Holy Ghost could not at that stage have been conferred even by the baptism of Christ's disciples. Cf. John vii. 39, where it is taught that the giving of the Spirit is conditioned upon the ascension of Christ to glory.

Still John's baptism was not an empty symbol, or a dead sign. It was a baptism unto repentance. Matt. iii. 11. It aimed at repentance. He baptized only those to whom he had preached: "Repent," Matt. iii. 2, and who confessed to him their sins, Matt. iii. 6. He baptized these to confirm their penitent disposition, and to obligate them by this symbolical ceremony to continued self-purification, the sanctification of the body and the spirit. It was more than a symbol of the renewal of the old, natural, sinful man. It was a confession of repentance, of the doing away of the old

mind, a change of mind. Luke iii. 3; Mark i. 4; Acts xix. 4. It was more than an indication or pledge to prepare for admittance into the kingdom.

It conveyed an actual treasure of grace to those baptized, *i. e.*, to those who with sincere hearts confessed their sins. Mark i. 4 puts forgiveness in the closest connection with John's baptism. This passage is a very strong one, and, connected with Acts ii. 38, it teaches that the baptism of John imparted in reality the forgiveness of sins. Hengstenberg holds the difference between John's baptism and Christ's, was not that the former embraced only *μετάνοια* and not *πίστις*, but that it embraced both in a weaker stage. Others claim that John so clearly contrasts his baptism with Christ's, that we must conclude that the difference was qualitative as well as quantitative. Thomasius: "John's baptism procured forgiveness on the condition of a moral change, but it could not impart the Holy Ghost. Even its forgiveness was more of an external and preparatory character, analogously to the efficacy of Old Testament offerings. Those offerings really did disburden the heart from the consciousness of guilt. Ps. xxxii. 1; Rom. iv. 7. Still this is true rather of individual sins. Sin as a condition or state was not affected when this or that sin repented of and confessed was forgiven. That state undergoes no change till the Holy Ghost awakens a new life-principle. There is, therefore, an essential difference between the two baptisms."

John adds: "There stands one among you whom you know not"—most emphatic and decisive. And this is a further reply to the question, Why then baptizest thou? If his baptism be not the Messianic baptism, it is certainly in order, for He who will baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire is already here. He speaks very decidedly of this presence of the Lord.

Meyer: "The emphasizing of the antithesis has brought *μέσος* to the front, because it was the manifestation of the Messiah already *taking place in the very midst of the Jews*, which justified John in baptizing. Had the Messiah been still far off that baptism would have lacked its divine occasion." He was, however, standing in their midst mingling with the people. He stands = "He has taken his stand." The term is certainly to be taken metaphorically. Ps. lxxxii. 7, Joel ii. 27. He is here, not as a vanishing phenomenon or appearance. He has planted his feet firmly to stay. John had a miraculous attestation of it at the baptism . . . But the people do not know Him who clothed in flesh and blood, stands in their midst.

Υμεῖς is emphatic—this not simply in contrast with his own

knowledge, but he whets their desires that they may be anxious to become acquainted with Him. And he would fain prepare the way for them, as may be seen from the following testimony to the exalted character of the Messiah who has already appeared.

The presence of the Messiah in their midst, at that moment, and unknown to them, is a sufficient answer to their question asking a warrant for his baptism. It is time to introduce Him to the nation.

27. "He it is who coming after me is preferred before me".

Evidently referring back to a former testimony, which is found in v. 15 and in Matt. iii. 11 and parallel passages. The answer has again the genuine Johannine impress, short, paradoxical and pointed.

This coming after John must not be interpreted of His coming into the world, *i. e.*, being born, but of His presence and work. When John testified this Jesus was already thirty years of age, as was John himself.

Luther: I am come, I have begun to preach, but I will soon give place to another, who is about to begin to preach.

"Is preferred before me" is not genuine, but is interpolated from vss. 15 and 30 to facilitate the interpretation. The *ἐμπροσθεν* can be taken temporally or spatially; if the latter, a superiority of rank is implied, a preference. If the former, then the Baptist attests the pre-existence of the Lord, which the Evangelist set forth in the opening verses. Such a view is not foreign to John the Baptist. Cf. iii. 31: "He that cometh from above," "He that cometh from heaven." John the Baptist had been nursed on the prophecies, and they speak of a pre-temporal, pre-historic Messiah. Mic. v. 1; Ps. ii. 7.

Nebe, however, objects that in giving the temporal sense to the clause, v. 15, it becomes purely tautological, and he, therefore, takes the local sense. Jesus, who in point of time comes after John, obtains the precedence, the pre-eminence. This is not said of His divine nature, but of His office. "He who was behind my back is now before my face, and has outstripped me and left me behind."

"He must increase, but I must decrease." Bengel quotes Phil. iii. 13: "Forgetting those things which are *behind*, and reaching forth unto those things which are *before*, *ἐμπροσθεν*," and holds that this term is never used in reference to time. It means "*before*" in reference to position, and here in reference to grade. My follower has become my predecessor. Coming after me, He has caught up with me, He has come to be in advance of me. How could this be said then already of Jesus, who has not yet appeared before

the people. Though He has not yet appeared upon the public stage, the Baptist knows that this precedence belongs to the Lord. He knows it from the revelation at the baptism, when His Sonship and endowment by the Spirit were revealed to him. And besides, as may be seen from v. 15 and the parallel passages in the Synoptists, which come before the baptism, he had from the beginning a clear apprehension that He who would succeed him would throw him into the shade, for he learned from the prophets, and especially from Malachi, that the One coming after him was the Lord Himself.

ῥέγωνεν strikingly sustains this interpretation, both in its essential import, "becoming," and in its perfect form. He could from the beginning testify, "He has taken precedence of me," for from the beginning it had been revealed unto him that He upon whom he should see the Holy Ghost descend was the One who would baptize with the Holy Ghost.

For this purpose John baptized, that He, who was already standing in their midst, might emerge from His retirement and manifest Himself. V. 31 ff. The mightier One was here, and as His coming forward would result in the immediate going back of John, he proclaims that which is about to take place as having already taken place. The coming One so transcends the Baptist in rank that he confesses himself unworthy to unloose his shoe-latchet.

Ἀξίος, in the Synoptists *ἰκανός*. The former is stronger, implying distinctly that the Baptist institutes not only an outward comparison, but compares himself in the inner state of his heart with the Lord. He has preached repentance to himself as well as to others.

To loosen or tie the shoe-strings, to carry the shoes or the necessary articles to the bath, was the work and token of slaves. The different expressions in all the gospels amount to this. Such was the case among the Romans and among the Jews, with whom such menial service was the pledge of slavery. Hence the figure very forcibly illustrates the humility of John. He does not deem himself worthy to be bought by the Lord as a slave for His house or His kingdom. This indescribable humility may be interpreted as the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God. No other mortal ever humiliated himself thus. His very greatness shines forth in such humility.

It gives him heartfelt joy to see Him who was coming after him, take the place before him. He is conscious of no envy. Well did Jesus call him "a light burning and shining," John v. 39, for of the light it is said, *lucendo consumor*.

28. "These things were done in Bethabara (Bethany), beyond Jordan" . . .

The oldest MSS. have Bethany, but Origen already, after the most careful research, was unable to find any Bethany along the Jordan. He accordingly changed the text to Bethabara, because tradition had named that as the place of John's sojourn near the Jordan. There was such an absence of criticism that Chrysostom and his successors boldly asserted that the best MSS. contain Bethabara.

Some: the same place had two names—originally Bethabara, later, Bethany was the current designation, but finally, soon after the time of Christ, the old name was again used.

Nebe thinks this too artificial. He holds that John the Evangelist knew of two Bethanies. He distinguishes this Bethany as *πέραν τῶν Ἰορδάνων*, from that which was near Jerusalem, xi. 18. The terrible devastation of that country from the time of John to the days of Origen had swept away many cities, towns, fortresses and villages. He further takes the etymological significance of Bethany to be that given by Rosenmüller: a low place. If Bethany near the Jordan, was so notably low that it received its name from this fact, the place may have been washed away by a flood. Hence, no wonder that Origen could find no trace of it. Let it be asked, where are certain localities which disappeared in the Thirty Years' war, and who could give an answer to the inquirer?

Some think the Evangelist mentions so distinctly the place where these things transpired, because he had a very lively interest in them, as an eye and ear-witness. Nebe thinks the transaction had a general, an objective interest. The Baptist's testimony stands here not as a private testimony, but as a testimony before the government of his country, a confession of the greatest scope and of the highest significance. Here is an official declaration from the divinely-sent prophet respecting Him who is to come.

Jesus says, v. 33, "you sent unto John," etc., and thus calls up the Baptist as a witness to the unbelief of His nation.

Paul, too, plants himself on this testimony in Antioch of Pisidia. "And as John fulfilled his course he said, Whom think ye that I am," etc. Acts xiii. 25.

In the treatment of this gospel it is most appropriate to confine our meditations to the person of this energetic Advent figure, who not only confesses with his words the transcendent glory of Him who is to come, but who presents to us in his own personality an example how we are to conduct ourselves toward this Lord of glory. Thus shall the way in us be prepared for the Lord.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY.

1. Of himself. 2. Of the Lord.

HOW JOHN ENDURES BOTH

1. Temptation. 2. Conflict.

THE GARLAND OF HONOR AROUND THE BAPTIST'S HEAD IS WOVEN OF,

1. Approved truthfulness.
2. Thorough self-knowledge.
3. Joyful confession.
4. Unfeigned humility.

JOHN'S TESTIMONY OF THE COMING OF THE LORD.

1. That He will come, but the way is not yet prepared.
2. That He has already come, but the world does not know Him.
3. That He comes after him, but is already in advance of him.

TWO ADVENT QUESTIONS.

1. Who art Thou? 2. What is Christ to thee?

THREE ADVENT QUESTIONS.

1. Art thou humble?
2. Art thou penitent?
3. Art thou believing?

THE FOUNTAINS OF TRUE ADVENT JOY.

1. The humbling knowledge of ourselves, what we are and what is lacking to us.
2. The exalting knowledge of the Lord, who is near and who comes in glory.

II. THE NATIVITY.

CHRISTMAS.

LUKE ii. 1-14.

THIS gospel lesson is indispensable. Mark has nothing of the birth. "Matthew speaks of it only in passing; the appearance of the wise men from the east has for him the chief interest." John speaks of the incarnation of the eternal Word, which was, etc.; but of the birth itself he, too, has nothing. Luke, who "had perfect understanding of all things from the first," is therefore our indispensable guide to the Christmas scene. And we may firmly rely on him as having conscientiously drawn from the purest fountains, which were still accessible at the time he wrote. It is a most fascinating story he gives us.

1. "And it came to pass . . . there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus" . . .

With what simplicity the Evangelist speaks of the situation, which forms the turning-point of the world's history, and which has a character entirely its own.

A decree, *δῶγμα*, imperial edict, Acts xvii. 7, was published by Augustus. Nothing is said of taxation, but simply of an enrollment. Every entry into public lists is designated by *ἀπογραφή*, and this term, *per se*, does not imply that their registration had any reference to taxation. For a census of that kind, as the Romans called it, the Greeks used *ἀποτιμᾶν*, *ἀποτίμησις*; however, *ἀπογράφειν* may also be used for it.

Meyer: "The term cannot at all be meant of a mere *registration* which Augustus had caused to be made for a statistical object, possibly with a view to the *Breviarium imperii*, but must, on account of v. 2, be placed on the same footing in respect of its nature with the *Census Quirini*, and is, therefore, to be regarded as the *direct registration into the tax-list*, belonging to the *Census* proper and forming its essential element." V. 2 calls this the "first" registration, having reference to similar enrollments.

Acts v. 37 says, Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the

enrollment, ἀπογραφῇ. Josephus, in the Antiquities, xviii. 1, 1, states that Cyrenius was sent to be a judge of that nation and to take an account of their substance, and that this Judas effected a revolt on account of this taxation, saying that it was no better than an introduction to slavery. The latter registration of Cyrenius was, therefore, clearly a census; the first "apographe" must accordingly have aimed at the same.

A taxation of "the whole world," the orbis Romanus, was ordered, not simply of Palestine. "Πᾶσα ἡ οἰκουμένη," has a well-defined meaning, orbis terrarum. No Jewish writer has so narrow a horizon as to regard the holy land the whole world. No instance of this kind is found in the New Testament. Acts xi. 28 speaks of "the great dearth throughout the world." The famine raged in Judea in particular, but this is not to be construed as meaning that other lands were not likewise affected though in a less degree.

At the time of the birth of our Lord, then, Augustus appointed a universal enrollment. But serious objections are offered to this. It is alleged that such a registration is contrary to other historical data. Only Provincial census, it is claimed, were taken under Augustus. This is not correct. Definite accounts of great imperial census under Augustus are found in Cassiodorus, Suidas and Isidore of Spain. Their testimony cannot be rejected on the score of their being Christians, and therefore not trustworthy witnesses. They evidently drew also from other sources than the Gospel of Luke.

Besides, though no contemporary profane historians speak of this registration, Suetonius, the biographer of the first Roman Emperors, says of Augustus, that he three times appointed a census, the first and third with a colleague, the middle one alone. The Monumentum Ancyranum speaks also of this threefold census. Even if it was but a census of Roman citizens, it attests the high estimate Augustus placed on such statistical collections. We have other proofs of his fondness for such statistics, and in public and private affairs he was given to keeping careful accounts. Proofs of this are furnished by ecclesiastical as well as profane writers. The great ruler sought to have the most thorough inventory of his vast dominions.

It is objected again that if such a universal census was taken at the time of Christ's birth this could not have applied to Palestine, as it did not become a province till 759 A. U. C. Meyer adds: "And indeed the ordaining of so abnormal and disturbing a measure in reference to Palestine . . . a measure which surely would not be carried through without a tumultuary resistance, would

have been so uncommonly important for Jewish history, that Josephus would certainly not have passed it over in absolute silence, especially as it was not the rex socius himself, Herod, but the Roman Governor, who was, according to Luke, the authority for conducting it."

Nebe holds this objection cannot stand the test of investigation. The position of the kings subject to Rome was so dependent on the favor of the Caesars that if Augustus wished to know how many men capable of bearing arms the Jews could furnish, and what amount of taxes, no rex socius, least of all a Herod, could resist his will.

The Jews had for a long time been paying tribute to the Romans. Josephus says: "Julius Cæsar in his fifth consulate 'hath decreed that the Jews shall possess Jerusalem,' that they be allowed to deduct out of their tribute every second year the land is let, a corus of that tribute . . . and that the tribute they pay be not let to farm, nor that they always pay the same tribute." *Antiq.* xiv: 10. 5, 6. They were exempted from the tribute in the Sabbatic year; on the second year they were required to pay the fourth part of what was sown. Nebe holds that besides this tax upon the soil there was doubtless first of all a poll-tax. If they were accustomed to these heavy impositions, besides the tenth which by imperial edict was required to be paid to Hyrcanus and his descendants, it cannot surprise us if the emperor took steps to assure himself that these taxes were regularly paid. This could be ascertained only by an "apographe," making an enumeration of the people and an inventory of their possessions. This task would naturally be devolved on Roman officials, rather than on King Herod or the people, in whom the Romans put little confidence. A subsequent registration which looked toward an increase of taxes, provoked an insurrection, but that does not make it certain that there would have been one in this first census. The people knew the tribute to be inevitable, and an imperial registration would be viewed probably as a good arrangement for an equitable distribution of burdens. Subsequently the discontent of the people experienced a marked growth.

Nebe concludes that an inference from the silence of Josephus on this point is as unreliable as an inference from the silence of the Roman historians on this general census. "The report of Luke concerning a universal taxing of the Roman world has not only nothing against it, but very much in its favor, and it must be accepted as a true report, until a decided and positive testimony can be brought against it." That this is not likely to happen, may be seen from the peculiar history of the exposition of v. 2.

2. "And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius" . . .

This verse, it is alleged, offers the strongest proofs against the correctness of Luke's account. It is claimed to be contradicted by Josephus, who says, *Antiq.* xvii. 13. 2, 5, and xviii. 1. 1, that Archelaus, the favorite son of Herod the Great, was removed in the tenth year of his reign by Augustus, and that Quirinius was sent as governor to Syria to carry out the taxation of that now Roman province. This happened in the year 6 A. D. Thus the *presidium* is put by Luke ten years too early. Quirinius, it is claimed, was governor but the once. This taxation is the only one of which he had charge, and which is historical.

This difference between Luke and Josephus it has been attempted to solve in various ways. Some have tried exposition; some, the emendation of the text; some have regarded the entire verse an interpolation; some hold that Luke was in error; some have taken *πρώτη* = "sooner than:" "This taxation occurred much earlier than when Quirinius ruled." This census was the first, and occurred before the Syrian governor Quirinius. Doubtless Luke, as Meyer suggests, would have known how to express "sooner than" simply, definitely and accurately. Bleek says: "The most that can be made out of this is: 'This took place as the first before Quirinius,' " and this is an unnatural form of expression. It is unusual to designate time in this manner.

Other expository feats have been employed on *ἡγεμονεύοντος*. A wider meaning is given to the term. Quirinius, who enjoyed the special favor of the king, was not in reality governor of Syria, but only an extraordinary revenue commissioner of the emperor for the province of Syria. Tacitus speaks of him being in the east about that time with extraordinary commissions, and an analogy is found in the Gallic census held by Germanicus.

Meyer says: "This expedient would only be possible if *ἡγεμονεύοντος* stood by itself in the passage, and not *τῆς Συρίας* beside it." *ἡγεμον* has a very definite meaning. Some, realizing this, render it prophetically under the subsequent governor of Syria. This imputes an amazing degree of stupidity and awkwardness to Luke.

Expository make-shifts having failed, men have resorted to the emendation of the text. Some change the accent of *αὐτῇ* = *ipsa*. The command was, indeed, given at that time by Cæsar, but the census itself, resting upon these registers, took place later, especially in Syria, under the proconsulate of Quirinius. Meyer holds this to be erroneous, since in fact v. 3 relates the very carrying out of the registration. The Greek has specific terms for both forms of registration, the registration proper and the census or levy; and as

Luke uses in vss. 1, 2 and 3 the same (related) words, we must give to each the same sense.

Others have tried to change *Κυρενίου* into *Κυντιλίου*. Others suggest *Κρονίου*, Greek for Saturninus; and still others *Σατουρνίνου*.

Nebe: "Nothing in the text warrants these emendations. There are no variations. If Luke wrote this verse he wrote it as it stands here."

One thing more remained: to exclude altogether this verse as an interpolation. Beza did this in the first three editions of his Greek Testament. But it is contained in every MS. without exception.

In despair of any other solution, some say flatly that Luke committed an error. Meyer: "The statement of Luke, that at the time of the birth of Christ an imperial census was taken, and that it was the first that was provincially carried out by the Syrian Præses Quirinius, is manifestly incorrect." Bleek also accepts the idea of an inaccuracy.

According to Nebe it has been shown by Zumpt that Quirinius was not only governor of Syria six years after Christ, as Josephus reports, but that he had also been governor of this province in the years 4-1 B. C. He holds that this puts the truth of Luke's statement beyond a doubt. Bleek does not accept, as Meyer does, any difference between the names Quirinius and Quirinus, the MSS. varying in the orthography.

By giving these precise dates, Luke means doubtless to make the birth of Christ a certainty. The birth of the Lord, marvellous as it is, is an event of history, and it is brought by Luke into immediate connection with an event in the great world history—for Rome is a universal empire, and the taxation is of the whole world—in order to indicate its significance. Christianity is a universal religion, and the Lord is the Redeemer of all men. As the whole world at the time of the birth of the Lord experienced a universal commotion, so shall He, born in this universal commotion, move and agitate the human race to the end of time. The Emperor Augustus publishes this edict. God rules the world in a wonderful way. Means and ways are never wanting to Him. What He once undertakes must reach its aim and goal. All creatures must enter into His service. The mightiest kings are no more than humble instruments to forward the work of the great King.

By this enrollment Augustus demonstrates in fact and undeniably his dominion over the Jewish nation. He requires for himself the tribute they have been wont to pay to Jehovah. This means that Augustus henceforth prohibits the separate relation of Israel which was grounded in the theocracy. He proposes to in-

corporate them also in the great mass of the nations which the Roman world-empire is uniting. The idea does not succeed in the sense of Augustus. Israel shall indeed like leaven work upon the mass of the nations, but not the Israel he is now taxing, but the Israel which in faith has appropriated the consolation of Israel. The end of Israel, the overthrow of the Old Testament kingdom, is confirmed by this taxation. The curse over the people with a stiff neck and iron heart is beginning to break in upon them. Israel as a whole has ceased to be the people of God, for it has broken the covenant. The Roman eagles are hovering around the carcass. The sceptre has departed from Judah, having passed into the hands of Herod, an Idumæan. It is not even in his hands. He is but a nominal king. It is in the hands of an alien, a heathen. Augustus is the real ruler of Israel.

3. "And all went to be taxed, every one" . . .

Objections have also been raised to this. Meyer: "This statement, too, does not suit a census proper; for to this every one was required to subject himself at his dwelling place, or at the place where he had his *forum originis*, whereas in our passage the Jewish tribal principle is the basis. But if the above was not a census, but a mere registration, there was no reason for departing from the time-hallowed division of the people, of for not having the matter carried out in Jewish form. The actual historical state of the case shines through the traditional dress of the census."

Nebe protests that this objection, and others like import are not sufficiently important to call into question the account of Luke that a census was taken. If this taxation was the first in Judea as stated by Luke, the greatest consideration and caution must have been observed. The feelings of the Jews were spared and instead of adopting new forms of entry, the old national terms were employed. Bleek's objection to the amount of traveling required is met by the fact that traveling was no burden to the Jews. They seem to have been fond of it . . . and even accustomed to three annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem. The family tie is strong among them, and in this way happy family reunions were brought about. This, too, appears to have been the best method of securing correct results. In the original home of the family, in the family circle, it could best be known what was the state of one's possessions.

4. "And Joseph also went up from Galille, out of" . . .

He seems to have long ago emigrated from Bethlehem, the ancestral home. No blood-relatives or personal friends were there to go to his assistance in this most critical period. Nebe holds that

he was impelled by poverty to leave Bethlehem. A carpenter might find more employment in Galilee. Such a removal must have been painful. The Israelite clings to the land of his fathers. How must Joseph have been attached to the city of David, belonging himself doubtless to those who were yearning and waiting for the promised Son of David! Besides, the strict Israelites held Galilee in contempt as the region where Judaism and heathenism were largely intermixed.

Ἀνέβη, "he went up," like its Heb. equivalent, is applied alike to journeying toward Jerusalem and to Judea in general, a usage due not only to the physical elevation of that region, but also to the moral elevation, attaching above all others to the country and city, where the holy nation had its seat and where the temple stood.

"Out of the city of Nazareth, . . . unto the city of David." Jesse, the father of David, lived in Bethlehem, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, and thus Bethlehem became David's city. Cf. the Lecture on Epiphany. It never came to any great importance. The list of the cities of Judah in Neh. xi. 25 ff. makes no mention of it. But mention of it is made in Ezra ii. 21; Neh. vii. 26, and especially Mic. v. 2, where it is said, "Thou Bethlehem Ephrata, little among the thousands of Judah," etc. It remained small. In John vii. 42, it is called κώμη. In Josephus simply χωρίον. The Lord was to have no form nor comeliness, nor was He to derive any prestige from the place of His nativity. His self-emptying is mirrored even in such humble matters.

"In Bethlehem, the house of bread, He was to be born, who is the bread of life."

"Because He was of the house and lineage of David." The Evangelist is quite circumstantial in setting forth the Davidic descent of Christ.

The tribes are divided into families (πατρίαι), and the families into houses, as here (ὄκος). Joseph belonged not only to the same ancestral branch from which David was descended, but specifically to the house which had David as its founder.

Joseph went up

5. "To be taxed with Mary his espoused" . . .

Some connect σὺν Μαρίας with ἀνέβη in the fourth verse. This is opposed by others on the ground that it disturbs the order of words which belong together. Hence they render "Mary went along because her name must likewise be entered into the census-list." Some hold that she was enrolled as an heiress, though

Luke knows nothing of her earlier connection with Bethlehem. He states, however, very clearly, i. 32, 69, the Davidic descent of Christ. There is nothing to forbid the idea that she went with her husband of her own accord, although Luther argues naively that her journey did not proceed from her own decision: "Here our Lord Jesus had already begun to reign, though secretly, and the great Emperor Augustus, with his empire, must serve Him though unconsciously, and by His command give occasion for the Virgin Mary to go to Bethlehem, and in accordance with the word of the prophet bring there to the light the Redeemer of the world. Because Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, therefore Caesar must give the occasion thereto and thus serve Christ in His birth."

Some attribute her accompaniment of Joseph to her near delivery. Joseph, to whose tender charge the angel had specially committed the chosen Virgin, would not leave her at that critical moment in Nazareth, particularly as he could not know of a certainty how soon he might be enabled to return. Mary would not be separated from Joseph, whose presence in the hour now so near was of the utmost consequence to her, and the great secret might be kept by him from evil tongues. Luke is careful to state that she was only the espoused wife of Joseph. But the betrothed among the Israelites was the same as wife, hence a breach of the betrothal was treated as adultery. Deut. xxii. 23 ff., cf. 22; Levi. xx. 10.

6, 7. "And so it was that while they were there the days were accomplished." . . .

This brings us face to face with the miracle of Christmas. With what simplicity the Evangelist portrays in the simplest terms this wonder of wonders, this mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh.

"Her first born." A long controversy over this term, beginning in the fourth century, has been maintained to the present day. Did Mary have other children? Basil the Great and most of the FF. firmly opposed this claim, and were shocked at the suggestion. Jerome holds that the *primogenitus* is not he whom brothers follow, but he who was born first, even though no later one was born.

The perpetual virginity of Mary was made an article of faith in the Roman Catholic Church. The Reformers did not reject this dogma. The Catholic Church has held fast to it in its ever-heightening cultus of the Virgin. But Protestants are divided in their views. Some hold that it would be impossible for Joseph, after his marvelous experience, to believe that his union with Mary was for the purpose of begetting children, while a host of others

hold that the gospels require *πρωτότοκος* to be taken in the opposite sense of *μονογενής*. It may stand, indeed, for an only-born, for every Hebrew child that opened the womb was so-called, whether others followed him or not. "But when we find not in registers but in historical books *πρωτότοκος*, it can no longer be understood as *μονογενής*, it must be regarded as the beginning of a series." The only child of her mother may be called her first-born only at the time of the birth, . . . and always only with respect to others who followed or were expected. The Evangelist, to whom this whole course of things lay in the past, could not have said, Mary gave birth to her first-born son if he had known and had meant to say that after him no others were born to her. Take in connection with this Matt. i. 25, and the sense of the words requires subsequent marital intercourse and children. Hence, when we afterwards meet brothers and sisters, and always in connection with Mary, Matt. xii. 46 ff.; xiii. 54 ff.; Mark iii. 32 ff.; John ii. 12; Acts i. 14, we must regard them as real, natural brothers and sisters. For the hypothesis of cousins there is no foundation. Cf. Matt. xiii. 54 ff. with Matt. xii. 49, "Whosoever doeth the will of my Father . . . is my brother," etc. The extraordinary use of the term presupposes the natural relation.

Certainly He who has partaken of our flesh and blood, and who is not ashamed to call us brethren, will not in the least degree suffer dishonor by our acknowledgment that He had real brothers in the flesh, and that His blood connection with our race extended to this point. Neither is there the slightest disparagement of the glory of Mary in this interpretation of the Scriptures. Marriage is a holy relation, instituted by God Himself, and as God sent His angel with the announcement, after she had been betrothed to Joseph, without directing her to dissolve this relation because she was chosen to be the mother of the Lord, she could not without an arbitrary and selfish course annul the relation. God did not stop for that, and so she must sacredly keep her troth. This corresponds altogether with the mind of Mary expressed in the words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

Φάλη, Meyer and others: a *manger*. Some: a *stable*, which is not the original meaning of the Greek word.

It is evident from this that the birth of Jesus occurred in a stable. Tradition points out a grotto as the place, and this is still shown in Bethlehem, and revered as a most holy spot.

This happened so: Mary was confined in a stable, because there was no room in the *καταλύματι*—no room or chamber was unoccupied in the place for the reception of men and women.

This is generally held to show the deep poverty of the holy family. In those days public houses were found in Palestine, where for payment lodging and ministrations could be obtained. Luke x. 34. Bethlehem, too, had such an inn, but the guests were so numerous on account of the registration, that no further accommodations could be had. Still, if Joseph had possessed a full purse, a corner could have been found somewhere for Mary. That was the thing lacking. Mary, in the "Magnificat," refers to this, i. 51, ff.: "He hath showed strength with His arm, . . . exalted them of low degree, filled the hungry with good things," etc. The family of David is deprived of the throne and the crown, they have sunk into poverty and misery. Ordinarily great kindness and tenderness are shown to a woman about to become a mother, but Mary is neglected and despised, so poor in fact that when her time came no place was allowed her in the inn, she had to repair to a stable. "All the guests," says Luther, "were comfortably taken care of in the inn, but this poor family must go back to the stable where the cattle are wont to be."

In hotels there is still seldom room for Christ. The world refuses a lodging to its Lord, has no place of sojourn for Him, proving John i. 11, "he came unto his own," etc., and Matt. viii. 20, "the son of man has not where to lay his head." Still Mary found a humble retreat for her babe, and so the Lord still, while the world does not open its gates and doors to Him, finds the place He needs for His word and His church. He always has found and does find a hospice for His church.

The ancient church loved to tarry and muse over the spot where the Lord was born. The very heathen viewed that cave as the nativity of the Redeemer. The mother of Constantine in her visit to Palestine sought out the grotto, and had a splendid church erected over it. Jerome spent the evening of his busy life in this rocky cavern in prayer and meditation.

It is, however, not the cavern but the child born there that engages our minds. That child of miracle has always fascinated the most contemplative eye and the most eloquent speech of man. The poetry of the ages has been kindled into the loftiest strains by this scene. Nebe thinks the ancient Christmas poets fell too much into dogmatic, Christological and Trinitarian thought. The true mean was first found by Luther: "Des ewigen Vaters einig kind." Here the mystery of the faith is confessed in the most decisive manner; however, not in words that savor of the schools, but which well up spontaneously from the earnest, believing heart. The greatest Christian poet along with Luther is Paul Gerhard: "Ich steh an deiner Krippe hier."

Christ is born. The Savior of all men lies in the manger of Bethlehem. But who knows it? How shall this joyful evangel be preached?

8. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding" . . .

To the shepherds the Christmas announcement is made. How strange! Why to them and not to Herod? The shepherds were watching. As the second Advent will be hailed only by those who watch, so the first rewarded the watchfulness of the shepherds. Chrysostom thinks that patriarchal piety had been preserved in the simplicity of these shepherds. They were an innocent race.

Nebe: "The message was brought first to them because far and wide around Bethlehem they were the worthiest to receive it." This is no invention of our imagination, but a fact. The shepherds become our instructors. Vss. 15, 17.

Some have thought the watching of these shepherds with their flocks in the open field compels us to reject the tradition that Jesus was born on Dec. 25. According to the Talmudists, the sheep were driven out in March, and in the beginning of November they were brought in. Certainly there was no law on this point. It was at most a custom. Much depended on the temperature. Besides, the reference of the Talmudists is to the keeping of the sheep in the wilderness, . . . and not to pasturing them in the fields. According to Luke, Mary was confined in a stable, which Nebe regards as proof that the sheep had vacated it. The birth in the stable forbids the thought of extreme cold.

9. "And, lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them" . . .

καὶ θίδοι: Something unexpected, sudden. So *ἐπέστη* implies a sudden, unexpected manifestation, and is generally employed of theophanies. Cf. Luke xxiv. 4; Acts xii. 7. That which so suddenly appeared to the watching shepherds is called "the angel of the Lord;" not a particular angel, like the angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament, Luke i. 11, but an angel of God in general. This is given as a historical fact, which we believe, as we do the actuality of all angelic appearances in the Old and New Testaments.

Heaven and earth from their creation sustain to each other a close relation. They are the two halves of the world. This relation is not restricted to the physical elements, to heaven and earth as cosmical bodies. The earth was created for the sake of man, the heavenly bodies must also exist for the sake of rational beings, to whom God assigned them as places of abode, and who are often called the heavenly host. The heavenly and the earthly rational beings sustain relations to each other. They form a communion.

The angels have a care for men upon earth. It is not a mere figure when Jesus speaks of joy among the angels over a repentant sinner, Luke xv. 10; cf. Matt. xviii. 10. It expresses a literal truth. The fellowship of angels is not restricted to sympathy. The angels are powers, forces, Eph. i. 21; Col. i. 16. They exercise their fellowship in deeds, in the small and great services which they render, in friendly encouragements, comforting promises, merciful ministrations, and also in mighty deeds. Cf. Heb. i. 14: "for the sake of those who shall be heirs of salvation." They are bearers and agents in the economy of grace, in the service of salvation. They appear at the great junctures of the history of revelation, not when the kingdom is moving forward on its even course. They appear here, therefore, at the threshold of a new era, a new beginning, made not by men, but immediately from God; again, after the temptation, when the beginner of our faith had proved the test, and in Gethsemane, when the beginner had inwardly prepared himself to be the finisher. The Risen One is attested by angels, and the Lord from heaven is accompanied by angels to the right hand of the Father. When the Gospel begins its march among the nations the dear angels appear again: one delivers Peter from prison that he may carry on his work among the Jews unhindered, and another announces to the chosen vessel for the Gentiles on the sea, that he shall stand before Caesar in defense of the faith. These appearances are, therefore, no visions. They are real, perceptible appearances. Not visionary angels could bring food to the Lord in the desert, nor lead Peter forth from prison.

What objection can be raised to a real appearance of angels? If the only-begotten Son of God can come from the bosom of the Father to be clothed with our flesh and blood, what is in the way of these other heavenly beings, far beneath Him in rank, appearing upon the earth and being seen and heard by human senses? If they are viewed as pure spirits, their becoming visible involves no greater difficulties than the appearance of the living God in human form in the period before the Advent, or the incarnate appearance of the Son of God in the fullness of time. But if they are not pure spirits, as maintained by many, but simply more spiritual than we are, then their luminous corporeity will be sufficient for them to make themselves perceptible to us.

Nebe holds it to be self-evident that the angels as created beings have a *locus consistendi*, a place of abode, which they cannot arbitrarily abandon. Their Old and New Testament name indicates that their coming is ordered of God; they are God's messengers.

God gives the seal to His ambassador. "The glory," the brightness, of the Lord appears with him. It envelopes the angel and shines around upon the shepherds.

Nebe: "This is the Old Testament glory of the Lord. Light and life go together as death and darkness. The living God is He whose garment is light." Ps. civ. 2; cf. 1 Tim. vi. 16. This light is, therefore, an uncreated light, "the manifestation of the immanent glory of God," "the glorious appearance of the essence of the Godhead, which is manifested not only toward the world, but is also from eternity disclosed and open to itself, *i. e.*, the divine nature has an infinite beauty in itself though it should be perceived by no creature." When God Himself appears, He is surrounded by this glory, this splendor of light. Here He envelopes His messenger with it as his credentials. Bengel: "In every instance of Christ's humiliation, there was a kind of befitting protest to secure the recognition of His divine glory. How this was effected by the announcement of the angels; in His circumcision by giving to Him the name Jesus; in His baptism by John, saying: 'I have need to be baptized by thee;' in His passion, by ways and means far exceeding in numbers all the previous instances."

This light shining around the shepherds, the angel appearing in this light, affrighted them.

Luther thinks they did not see the angels. They only saw the light and splendor, and heard the word spoken. They "feared a great fear" (Greek), is Hebraic, like some other expressions that appear before this one in Luke, indicating the sources from which he derived his material. This great fear is not surprising. "Fear is the inheritance of Adamic humanity." Innocent childhood knows no fear; it plays on the mouth of the adder. While man was yet in a state of innocence, he knew no fear. Fear entered into the world through sin. Adam was afraid of God as soon as he had fallen, and as we all, like Adam, have transgressed, we can only experience fear when of a sudden the heavens open above us and an angel of God appears.

It is the most natural thing that we look for the revelation of righteousness from heaven, for the wrath of God, and we see in the coming of the angel the executor of divine judgment. The more susceptible the minds of these shepherds, the more heartily they sorrowed over their sins, the more they would now be affrighted, especially as they were unprepared. The more the heart feels its iniquities, the greater will be the fear, when it apprehends the connection of this world with the future world, and sees the heavenly world breaking in into this earthly one.

10. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not" . . .

Luther says: "No one desires an unknown good—a hidden treasure is a useless treasure. So with this joyous birth. If God had not caused it to be proclaimed by the angels and otherwise, and had not revealed this treasure to the people, no one could have desired, much less enjoyed it. That is the first sermon of the new-born child, which was brought by the angels from heaven. Therefore, it deserves to be diligently learned by us, and we need to guard against thinking that we know it altogether. If it were preached every year, or even every day, we could not exhaust it here on earth."

Nebe says: "If only an angel would, with a burning coal, touch the tongue of each expositor of the Christmas tidings, that with angel-tongues he might testify of the child that is born to us! Note the admirable fitness of these words. Every word in its place, so fitted into each other as to be a model for every Christmas sermon, yea, for every sermon." He calls the exordium "a homiletic masterpiece." The angel does not cast around for a suitable introduction. This the shepherds themselves offer in the great fear which lies like an Alp upon their hearts. He begins at once, "Fear not." To remove this fear from their hearts is the first thing to be done. Fear must be done away if Christmas is to be celebrated. If it were possible for a heart to take it all in, it would never have another sad thought.

Fear and faith conflict with each other. Luke viii. 50. Fear is resistance to the truth; it is unbelief. Nebe: "Better, there is no fear in love. God reveals His love not in words, but in the gift of His only Son, and by preaching His love, which rises exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think. He would awaken the love of our hearts. If this love is to be in our hearts, fear must go out."

There is no longer ground for fear—a new age has dawned. We are not come to the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, etc., but to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. God has appeared in the flesh. This is enough to banish all fear. "Behold, I bring you good tidings"—this is the key-note of all true Christmas preaching. Not only tidings, but tidings of joy, of great joy.

Luther says, the angel is concerned chiefly to deliver a discourse which shall take hold and accomplish its purpose. Hence, he does not say, I proclaim to you a great wonderful work or fact, concerning which they could not yet know whether they should receive it, or rejoice over it, but, I proclaim and bring you pure

joy—not ordinary, but great joy. Bengel: “Express mention of joy is here made, inasmuch as the causes for that joy were not as yet so clearly manifested. On the other hand, the angel who announced the resurrection does not expressly exhort to joy, inasmuch as the cause for joy was manifest.”

The angel proclaims great joy; so the Apostle, Phil. iv. 4. The world claims to have many sources of joy, but they are broken cisterns. There is but one joy, one true, eternal joy, that brought by the Christmas angel.

This joy shall be “to all people.” *Ἀπὸ* may be limited to Israel. The angel was addressing Israelites in a way appropriate to that time. They would certainly understand it as applying only to their nation. Afterward it was about to be realized that the same blessing should be vouchsafed to the Gentiles. V. 32. But this fact was at that time hidden from the angels themselves. Eph. iii. 10. So Bengel.

Nebe repudiates this limitation. He recalls the angel’s song in v. 14, which certainly does not restrict salvation to the Jewish people. That extols the peace that now comes upon earth and speaks in general of men of good will. Does the host have a larger view than the individual angel? And was that concealed from the angels which long before had been proclaimed by the prophets—the calling of the Gentiles into the kingdom? Was this at the time still a concealed mystery in heaven? Listen to Simeon, speaking of the salvation “which thou hast prepared before the face of all the people,” and immediately exclaiming, “a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel”—the heathen world and the Jews being embraced in “all the people.”

Luke often connects Israel and *λαός* in a way that shows he does not regard them as synonyms. The opposite view would present a striking pleonasm in ii. 32; Acts iv. 10, 27 (xii. 11); xiii. 17, 24.

Nebe claims that Luke designates mankind as *ἔθνος*, or *ἔθνα*, so far as they are still alienated from God, but that he applies *ὁ λαός* without distinction to Jews and Gentiles, when he considers them in reference to God. Acts xv. 14; xviii. 10. The Christmas joy, which began in this little spot, shall be spread abroad in ever-widening circles. This was announced to the shepherds, and at the same time an intimation given to them which according to v. 17 they clearly understood.

11. “For unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour” . . .

The cause for this joy is given.

Ἰμὴν, not simply individualizing, but as intended emphatically

for their pious hearts and aiming at faith. To them is born to-day, in this hour, a Saviour. He does not say "Christ," but gives "Saviour" as the main thought, as the principal name. He knows what expectations the Jews were cherishing regarding the Messiah—a carnal Messiah who would found a worldly kingdom with outward splendor, glory and righteousness. Had he said, "To you is born the promised King," the shepherds would certainly have misunderstood him, and the angelic announcement would have strengthened their delusion. But the angel announces not a King, but a Saviour. He gives the new-born child a name which had not been perverted by all manner of human additions, and in this word shows them the true character of their Lord and King. *Σωτήρ* was with the Greeks a favorite predicate for men and gods. It was applied to Jupiter, to generals and statesmen who had rendered distinguished service to their country. The New Testament gives this appellation only to God (in a few passages) and to the Lord Jesus. It has a specific sense in the economy of salvation, and designates the deliverer from the misery of sin.

Luther: "Till now you were captives of Satan, who tortured you with water, fire, pestilence and sword, and most of all with eternal anguish, sin and death. To you who with body and soul lay under the tyranny of the prince and god of this world, this Saviour is born. It is something great and glorious that God became man, but this is far transcended by His becoming our Redeemer and Saviour." The Son of God, who became man, did not come to exhibit His divine glory, but to bring relief to the sick, the prisoner and the captive, who had sighed for it in vain. This relief the new-born one effects through His life in our flesh.

"Which is Christ." This guarantees Him to be the Christ. When the angel calls the Saviour the Christ, he not only indicates that in the power of the Holy Ghost, as Prophet, Priest and King, He will prepare salvation for the whole world, but He lays hold of the SS. and "gathers into one heap all the prophets." The angel announces that the born Saviour is no one but the Christ, therefore the Messiah of whose coming the prophets had spoken so much. He is here whom so many prophets and kings desired to see; the consolation and the salvation of Israel.

As the hosts of stars twinkle and shine over the shepherds, so this word of the angel calls forth another host of stars. The prophecies now pass into fulfillment, and fulfillment far transcends the highest expectations. The glory of God shines around the angel and the shepherds. This Christ is "the Lord." The glory of the Christ-child rises ever higher, not only into heaven, but into

the bosom of God. The Saviour, the Christ, is Lord, "Lord" without article, *i. e.*, absolute. How scriptural! Christ is the Lord, the Jehovah of the Old Testament. The LXX. always translate Jehovah by *Κύριος*. This Lord selected Israel as His property. He is the Rock that followed them in the desert, 1 Cor. x. 4, and has led them through every vicissitude till the present hour. This God of revelation has now become man.

The Lord has come. He who from the beginning was the Light and Life of men, has come to His own now as the Lord, that He may seek His own, deliver it out of the hand of the enemy, and establish His kingdom.

Luther concludes that the angel particularizes thus, and gives the child so high a title, to produce a certainty of conviction that this babe, born bodily from the Virgin, is true, eternal God.

"In the city of David." As the angel announced the time of the Lord's birth, so also the place.

The mention of the place confirms the truth of the message not only *per se*, but especially in the circumlocution for Bethlehem, "the city of David" which must recall the promises respecting the Son of David.

12. "And this shall be a sign unto you" . . .

Nebe: "It looks as if the angel saw already the heavenly host approaching. He expresses himself very briefly. As the heart of the good shepherds begins to leap, so sympathetically the message of the angel also begins to leap. No hortatory close to the sermon is needed. The hearts of the hearers are burning from the glory of the Lord. They burn with desire to see the Saviour, the Christ, the Lord. The angel does not let them go without carefully guarding them against a stumbling block. He has told them glorious things about the Lord. How will these correspond with the poverty and lowliness in which they will find Him? What will they say if they find one so solemnly proclaimed, lying in a manger?" The angel not only tells them freely what they will find, but the one thing at which the natural man would stagger, he stamps as a sign by which they would recognize the Lord. "Even the lowly garb itself was a sign to believers. Marvellous divine wisdom, which turns all human wisdom to folly! Every cause of stumbling is removed. The shepherds will seek and they will find Him. With this promise the angel closes his discourse.

13. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude" . . .

As the morning stars sang together when God laid the foundation of the earth, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, Job xxxviii.

7, so now when a second creation is completed. The heavenly hosts do not all remain before the throne, but they come in numbers down to the earth. For in the holy night the heavens parted asunder over the earth, the Lord of heaven came down upon the earth in order to make a heaven out of the earth. The angels, who to prepare the way for salvation so often had left heaven, hover now in a mass of light down upon the earth, to testify to the world the fulfillment of all the promises, and also to behold for themselves this wonder of wonders, cf. 1 Pet. i. 12, and to praise the God and Father who laid this Child in the manger.

Nebe: "A discourse is accompanied by a hymn, as a prayer is by an amen. And this song of praise utters the amen of the angel's sermon." Luther: "The angels raise a beautiful song, so that as the sermon is a divine master-sermon, so this is likewise a fine, new, divine master-song, the like of which was never before heard in the world." *Gloria in Excelsis* was the first Christian hymn, used as a morning hymn in the Greek Church as early as the second or third century, a source from which many another spiritual and lovely hymn has been derived.

14. "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace among men of good will."

The *Lectio recepta* has three sentences; but modern authorities, almost to a man, accept the reading of the oldest and best MSS., which consists of two sentences, the first being glory to God in the highest. This gives a beautiful parallelism. Glory and peace in the highest and upon earth, God and among men of good will. In the beginning is always God, and He certainly provides the feast of the holy night. Hence, the song of praise rises first from earth to God.

"Glory to God in the highest." Some supply *ἐστὶ* Cf. 1 Pet. iv. 11. This is thought to add liveliness to the song. Thus the angel-choir, with prophetic and proleptic view, sees the work of redemption, the foundation-stone of which is now laid, already in its final completion. Others *ἐστῶ*, holding that the "glory" loses not the least degree of freshness or life by this. The doxologies never have a tense, nor the benedictions. An imperative or an optative is always suitable. The true rendering is not "God in the highest," but in the highest height, in heaven, let praise be sung to God. The inhabitants of heaven, who did not descend with the choir of the heavenly host, are called upon by their fellows to give God glory, "for the glory of God is now displayed with the utmost splendor."

Bengel says: "The incarnation calls forth praises to God from the noblest of His creatures. They do not say 'in heaven'

where even the angels dwell, but employing a rare expression, 'in the highest,' a place to which the angels do not aspire." Heb. i. 3, 4. The very highest intelligences are summoued to God's praise.

Nebe: "The honor of God had suffered violence through the sin of man, the divine world-plan had been crossed, God's image dishonored, God's world disturbed, God's name desecrated. A yawning chasm had been made. God's honor is now restored. For the Saviour of sinners is born, God's purpose is realized, God's image will be restored, God's world will be delivered from vanity, God's name will be adored. God's honor had been pledged, He had by His servants promised the Christ, He Himself gave the first promise to fallen man. He has now redeemed His word and kept His solemn oath. Now let the heavenly host bring glory (honor) to God; it belongs to Him, to Him alone. The world with all its resources has not produced this flower of mankind, this ideal man. The tree of humanity is rotten from its deepest core to its topmost bough. It bears no such bloom, it bears only corrupt fruit. But the hand of God, stretched forth from heaven has, in the gift of His only begotten Son, inserted a branch into this tree, which imparts health and life to the corrupt and decayed trunk."

To God the glory. This child is the gift of His mercy.

"And on earth peace." The Lord over whom the angels exult is "our peace." Eph. ii. 14.

Luther interprets: "We shall live on earth in a fraternal, peaceful manuer, and resist the devil's base impulses and tyrannical spirit. There is to be no envy, nor hatred, nor violence, but each esteem the other better than himself, and keep saying 'Dear brother, pray for me.' Peace in Hebrew means every good."

Calvin: "The earth will have peace when men being reconciled to God will have peace in their hearts." Augustus is said to have commanded for the third time in his reign that the temple of Janus should be closed in 743 A. U. C., but as there were outbreaks in Dacia this could not be accomplished till 752. Then a coin was struck with the inscription *Salus hominum Pax orbis terrarum*. At that period the Lord was born, the Prince of peace. At the manger of Him who says, "my peace I give unto you," John xiv. 47, and who greets His own with "peace be with you," John xx. 19, the angels sing "Peace." As in Him peace is made between God and man, as He the God-man is the surety of our peace, and through His theanthropic work effects our peace, the heart is to rest in this peace with God, and for the sake of this peace maintain peace with the brethren.

"On earth" is significant. There always was peace in heaven. Only on earth was it wanting. Peace not only in Judea, but everywhere, over all the earth. The natal day of the Lord is the day of peace.

Those who accept a third clause interpret either, that men may have good will, or that God may have good will (pleasure) with men. Luther: "Men are to have good pleasure in God, in His saving grace. Let men rejoice in this Saviour, in their possession of the kingdom."

Some: among men there is good pleasure—joy and delight over the birth of Messiah. Others: God's pleasure rest upon (or rests upon) man. Godet finds in the closing sentence the ground why there is to be in heaven and earth that contained in the first two sentences. This would imply that not the incarnation, the miracle of the holy night, is given as the ground for shouting glory to God and peace upon earth, but a consequence of the incarnation, a fruit of Christmas is the inspiring motive.

But, accepting the text with two clauses, we must render "among men of good will." There is now to be peace among men, among men of good will, among men upon whom the good will of God rests. "Heretofore men had been spoken of unfavorably among angels, now these latter, as if in wonder, give utterance to what seemed a paradox, good will among men."

Εὐδοκία, "the newly-manifested favorable inclination of God towards the whole human race in His well-beloved." Before this, men were the object of divine sympathy or displeasure, aye, the children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3, but now they are accepted in the beloved, Eph. i. 6, in the only-begotten Son of the Father, for He has come in our flesh.

Nebe: "The birth of the Son of God into humanity involves as its necessary consequence the regeneration of the whole human race. God not only views mankind in the Son of His eternal love, but He so incorporates the only-begotten Son with humanity that His life becomes their life, His righteousness their righteousness, His God and Father their God and Father." Augustine: "Our God has so received us into Himself that we also receive Him into ourselves."

Thus the song of the heavenly hosts has a glorious ending: The first clause rises to the glory of God in heaven, the second looks upon the earth and finds that the eye of God rests with good pleasure upon men, and that the peace of God which passes all understanding abides here below.

"This joyful, comforting song," says Luther, "is formulated

so briefly by the angels, that one may well see that it has not grown up from the earth, nor been made here, but has descended from heaven."

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

HOW GLORIOUS THE FIRST CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL.

1. The festal preparation.
2. The festal event.
3. The festal discourse.
4. The festal song.

THE MIRACLE OF MIRACLES IN THE HOLY NIGHT.

1. The Son of God becomes a child of man.
2. The children of men become children of God.

CHRISTMAS, THE GREAT BIRTH-DAY.

1. The birth-day of the world's Redeemer.
2. The birth-day of redeemed mankind.

TO-DAY THE SEALS FALL FROM THE BOOK OF TIME.

1. We look into the past and see the foundations of salvation.
2. We look into the present and behold the appearance of salvation.
3. We look into the future and view the completion of salvation.

THE LORD WAS BORN IN THE FULNESS OF TIME.

1. All the ways of the nations lead to Him.
2. From Him goes forth the blessing to all nations.

THE INCARNATION, THE TURNING-POINT OF HISTORY.

1. The close of the ancient world (period).
2. The beginning of the new (period).

WONDERFUL IS THE CHRIST-CHILD.

1. All the world's history points toward Him.
2. God becomes man in Him.
3. The sinner becomes a man of God's pleasure through Him.

THE CONTRASTS OF HUMILIATION AND GLORY IN THE CHRIST-CHILD.

1. What darkness and what brightness.
2. What concealment and what announcement.
3. What poverty and what riches.
4. What scorn and what praise.

THE FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS A CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL.

1. It leads us to a child.
2. It fills the world of children with joy.
3. Its due celebration demands a child-like spirit.

EPIPHANY.

MATT. ii. 1-12.

THE Greek Church which gave the Western Church this feast calls it not only *ἡ ἐπιφάνεια*, *τὰ ἐπιφάνεια*, but also *τα θεοφάνεια*. That Church commemorates on this day the baptism of Christ. It makes it in fact the baptism festival.

The Western Church took a different view of the festival. It was at first the feast of the baptism of Christ, then it commemorated the three wise men, and finally the manifestation of our Lord's miraculous power. His divine glory was the theme for the day, the miracle of Cana or that of feeding the five thousand forming the basis. This three-fold relation of the festival is found as late as St. Bernard. Nebe says: "The calling of the Gentiles became more and more the central idea of the festival. Augustine contended earnestly for this view, and at the close of the middle ages it was the prevailing view. The Evangelical Church fell heir to this. In the first century of the Reformation, Epiphany was regularly observed, . . . but it became gradually a 'half festival,' to disappear finally here and there altogether from the church year." The interest in heathen missions, characteristic of our age, is a strong incentive for the observance of this festival which commemorates the oblations of the first Gentiles.

1. "Now when Jesus was born" . . .

Matthew does not give the precise time, saying only in general that the birth of the Lord fell in the reign of Herod the Great, son of Antipater. The child had been born when the Magi came. How much time intervened between the birth of Jesus and their visit is not told.

Bethlehem lies six miles southwest of Jerusalem. "Judæa" is not superfluous, for besides this Bethlehem, there was another one in the tribe of Zebulun in Galilee. Joshua xix. 15. As David's birthplace, it is called the city of David.

Ἰδοὺ. Something extraordinary happened. "This particle frequently points to something unexpected. The arrival of the Magi at Jerusalem had not been announced." Such a thing was of course never dreamed of.

Mágoi, originally the learned class among the Parsees, who exercised the priesthood, and as naturalism plays so large a part in oriental systems of heathenism, they were likewise occupied with astrology (hence the star guiding them), physic and medicine. According to Herodotus, they were one of the six tribes of the Medes and Persians. Jer. xxxix. 3 has the phrase *Rab Mag*, chief of the Magoi, Dan. ii. 48. Olshausen recognizes here adherents of the Zoroastrian worship of light, whose cultus even before the time of Christ was widely spread through western Asia. Meyer: "A distinguished priestly class," while others emphasize the fact that the Magi were the great ones, what the word literally signifies, the aristocracy, "kings." At an early day "magus" was synonymous with *goeta*, used of all who were devoted to occult science, especially astrologers. This is shown in Philo and in the *usus loquendi* of the New Testament. Acts xiii. 6-8. In Acts viii. 9 Simon is described as *μαγείων*.

Some expositors have regarded these visitors as jugglers, magicians, *goetai*, persons who in the east traveled from country to country in order to gain notoriety and money by their enchantments. Others hold them to be real magi, honest persons who, according to the best of their knowledge and conscience served their gods, seeking in nature for the essence and will of God, truly "wise men." Able teachers hold the former view; still, as Nebe maintains, if they were such wretched persons this canonical gospel would lose its moral character and would sink to a place among the apocryphal gospels. But as Matthew presents their appearance and worship as an event pertaining to the evangelical history, and manifestly attaches great importance to it, we are forced to conclude that they were honorable men.

"From the east" is to be connected with *μάγοι*, not with "they came." The East was their home, and hence they came from there. But this is indefinite. It may include everything east of Palestine. No country in that quarter is distinctly designated by that name. Hence divers countries are assigned as their home. Some have even conjectured Egypt. This conflicts with the language of Scripture and with the geographical position of Egypt. Some: adjacent Arabia. The majority of modern expositors favor this country, because the presents of the Magi, frankincense and myrrh, are natural products of Arabia.

Some of the older ones have been influenced by Old Testament prophecy, especially Ps. lxxii. 10. From India they came, according to some, and Thomas, the alleged apostle of the Indians, preached to them, later, the gospel. Some: Babylonia; some,

Chaldea; and some, Persia, in regard to which Nebe holds that the most plausible view is this original home of the Magi. It is claimed, also, that their religion, that of the Zend, contained, among other remarkable germs of truth, "the idea of a Sasiah, an expected Saviour." The Jewish expectation had, doubtless, been diffused. See Olshausen, I., 181.

It has been questioned whether the Magi were Jews or Gentiles? The former view has been widely maintained of late, some holding them to be representatives of the dispersed ten tribes. Nebe says this view is without foundation and is contradicted by the "Lesson" itself. For instance, these wise men knew not where Jesus was to be born, a thing known to every child in Israel. Besides, they ask concerning Him born King of the Jews, not for their King. The FF. regarded them as heathen, and so most moderns: representatives of the heathen world offering their homage to the Lord.

Legend has greatly enriched this tale. It fixed the number at one time at fifteen, then at twelve, and finally Leo at three, and this view, growing perhaps out of the number of gifts, won the day. Their names, after many fluctuations, came finally to be fixed as Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar.

But it was not enough to have simple priests and wise men come to the Christ-child. To the new-born King, kings must come and worship Him as the Lord of lords and King of kings. Passages like Ps. lxxii. 10; lxxviii. 29, 31; Isa. lx. 3; 6; xlix. 7, and others gave hints of this and were used in confirmation. To the claim that this incident is a philosophical myth, expressive of the idea awakened by Old Testament passages relative to Messiah's universal sway, we answer that Matthew has little to say of the universal scope of Christ's mission.

2. 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews?' . . .

They come to Jerusalem not to find the royal Babe, but to gain certain information concerning the place of His birth, thinking it possible that He was born in the capital. They were not in the least doubtful concerning the fact of the birth. They know the event and the time, but not the place. The scribes knew only the place; the time, Bengel thinks, they ought to have learned from the Magi. Nebe: "How the kingdom of God aims at fellowship in which one gives assistance to the other with his special gift. God does not reveal again what He has already given in inspiration. The wise men are to ask where God's revelation has transmitted itself from mouth to mouth and from generation to generation through the word of Scripture."

Τεχθεις. Some recognize in this term a distinction from such kings as seize the throne through violence and fraud. He has a right to the kingdom—is born to it. 1 Chron. vii. 21.

“King of the Jews.” By this they mean not an ordinary ruler of the Jews, but Him whom the Jews in a special manner designated and expected as their King, Messiah. So all the ancients and eminent moderns. And more than this was doubtless implied in their question. He is not to reign over the Jews alone. The action of the Magi symbolized their own subjection. He is a King born of and to the Jews, but from them as a centre He will extend His kingdom. John iv. 22.

Bengel says: “The name of Jews after the Babylonian captivity included all the children of Israel, being opposed to Greeks or Gentiles, whence it is given also to Galileans, Luke vii. 3; John ii. 6; Acts x. 28, etc.” Cf. Lecture IVth Sunday in Advent. The Jews, however, or Israelities, called Christ the King of Israel; the Gentiles, the King of the Jews. Matt. xxvii. 29, 37, 42; John i. 50; xii. 13; xiii. 33.

Nebe: “in the fulness of time God sent His Son. Gal. iv. 4. This phrase has a wide scope, and it is further confirmed by the fact that at the time of the incarnation of the Son of God, there was a general sentiment throughout the world that this time was near.” See Virgil, Eclog. iv. 4; Aneid vi. 792 ff.

This sentiment grew stronger with time; Israel’s priestly relation, its mediatorship in the midst of the nations of the earth was felt and recognized. Tac. Hist., v. 13; i. 10.

Suetonius in his life of Vespasian, C. 4, says, “those coming from Judea shall rule things (*rerum potirentur*). His phrase, *Prædictum Judæi ad se trahentes, rebellant*, is interpreted as supporting the view that this sentiment was not the result of Jewish influence, but that it proceeded from the heart of heathenism.

The earth was in a most wonderful manner prepared for the reception of the promised King. But the Lord of the world prepares not only everything in the world’s history. Lord of heaven and earth, the heavens must serve Him and His work of redemption. “His star.” That great events upon earth have their corresponding appearances in the heavens (principally in the stars), was a very general opinion of antiquity, and not without truth. Superstition has sadly abused this idea, but the abuse does not destroy a proper use. Meyer says: “It was the universal belief of antiquity that the appearance of stars denoted great changes, especially the birth of important men.” The Jews especially believed in a star of the Messiah according to Numb. xxiv. 17.

At the end of the world the mystical union of heaven and earth will show itself with the clearness of the sun. And this union has again and again been clearly indicated.

"For," say the Magi, "We have seen his star" . . .

Γάρ is equivalent here to our "yes." It adds force to the question as in Matt. xxii. 28; Acts xxi. 13.

Through a star God revealed to the Magi that the promised King of the Jews was born. They must have known of ancient revelations through Balaam, Daniel, etc. What the angels announced to the shepherds, the star proclaims to the wise men, who had made a study of the heavens, each using the language of heaven, because the language of prophecy had ceased.

As the Magi seeking Christ are representatives of the heathen world, claiming a part in the Son of God, so we recognize that these heathen are called through the star. Bengel: "The Magi are led by a star, the fisherman by fishes, to a knowledge of Christ." These Magi, and with them almost all the nature-worshiping nations, worship the stars as appearances or manifestations of deity. This star points the wise men to the true Star. The religions of nature point beyond themselves. They do not satisfy the heart of man, and in this very way they are prophecies of the perfect religion. The shadow appears only from the light, and the lie, even though it be a lie, posits the truth. The grace of God is universal—Jews and Gentiles are called and ordained to childhood, but the grace of God becomes universal only through this, that it can be individualized, that it can call and influence every man in a peculiar manner. Augustine says: "The rusticity of the shepherds requires the admonition of the angels, the curiosity of the Magi is instructed by the language of heaven." In most manifold ways the Father draws to the Son.

They had seen "*his star*," the star that refers to Him and to no other, the heavenly sign indicating of a certainty His earthly appearance. The FF. ascribed marvellous things to this star. Ignatius: "Sun, moon and stars illuminated by it, surround it like a choir." Some held it to be an angel, which manifested itself not as usual in a human body, but in the body of a star. Moderns hold largely that it was a constellation or conjunction of planets, such as was witnessed in 1825. Meyer objects that τὸ ἄστρον would be required for this, but Nebe responds: "We have here no scientific work on astronomy, but a simple historic narrative which does not follow the sharp distinction of astronomers—a distinction which not even astrologers observed. Kepler was the first to call attention to the circumstance that a very remarkab

conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn took place, A. U. C. 747, and he declared this to be the star of the wise men. His view met with great favor."

Nebe: "On May 20th, 747, Jupiter and Saturn came into conjunction, later, 748, Mars was joined with them in the constellation of the Fishes. Kepler formed the hypothesis that a special star was added, an event which was repeated at the junction of Jupiter and Saturn in 1604, disappearing in 1605." The astronomical tables of China confirm this hypothesis of Kepler, tables which are pronounced by competent authorities as perfectly accurate and historical.

That star was visible from February to April, 750. Wieseler, who has made a profound study of the subject, holds that already the conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars, which took place in the constellation of the Fishes, excited in the oriental astrologists the deepest suspense concerning the near future. When later a new star was added to the constellation, the Magi immediately entered upon their journey to seek the new-born King. The Fishes were the constellation of the Jews, and as the extraordinary phenomenon was observed in that constellation, they surmised that something extraordinary among the Jews, yea, the most extraordinary thing, in regard to which a sentiment had been spread over the whole then world, had transpired.

Some think the text limits us to a single star. The narrative speaks of the movement of the star—constellations have no movement. Movement dissolves the constellation, the individual stars of which it was composed proceeding in their orbits. Bengel: "The star was either in itself new, or in a new situation, or endowed with a new or, perhaps, even a various motion."

Some have thought a meteor would best meet the demands of the text. Cf. v. 9. Some, a comet; one is said to have been observed in China, 750 A. U. C. Most of the FF. are content with the simple announcement that a new star appeared to the wise men. "At a new birth from a virgin a new star appears." Aug. Those who claim a constellation and those who advocate the theory of a single star are now essentially at one. For the followers of Kepler lay the principal stress upon the new star which entered into the constellation, the Chinese tables designating it expressly by that term. Whether it was a comet or a fixed star we cannot know. It must be conceived of as a miraculous star, one that moved and stood in a miraculous manner. This only can be decisively maintained, that the Magi had never before discovered this star in the sky, and from the rising of it they inferred the birth of the new King.

Olsh. calls attention to the analogy between this star and the sign of the Son of man at His second coming, Matt. xxiv. 30; cf. Num. xxiv. 17, which is a prophecy of the first Advent.

Bar-Cochba, who was a false Christ, means "son of a star." "*His star*:" How did they come to connect this star with the royal birth? An ancient view was that the Magi had received a writing of Seth, which contained a prophecy of this import: The Messiah would be born from Israel and a star should proclaim His birth to the world. It is claimed that for centuries the Magi had been looking from a certain mountain for this star. Others: The idea of this was inherited from Balaam. Nebe: Num. xxiv. 17 must, at all events, be recognized as the principal passage, from which flowed the Jewish belief that the birth of the Messiah would be coincident with the appearance of a new miraculous star.

Some hold that Daniel left to the Magi a Messianic tradition. So Luther, who claims that without doubt these Magi are the remnant of the little company of Daniel's pupils, who learned from the Jews the word of God and believed that from the Jewish people should be born the Saviour of the whole world. Cf. Dan. ii. 48. He hardly kept the hope of Israel from the Magi of Babylon. Still there is no proof of the existence of any Messianic traditions being derived from him. Nebe thinks, since the Jews in captivity lived on friendly terms with the native population, seeds of truth concerning the great Messianic hopes of Israel were scattered among the people of the East. These seeds took the deeper root in the hearts of these people, since the idea of a divine Mediator was not wanting to their system of religion. Some writers have even maintained that a prophecy which had its literal fulfilment in this star had been transmitted among the Magi from generation to generation.

Although no star appears to guide us to the new-born King, yet a star, our life's star, ever gleams through the darkness of the heart, a remnant of the divine image, which dimly reflects the glory of God.

"In the East." Some: In the eastern sky. What has that to do with the new-born King of the Jews? Some: We have seen His star in the rising. Others: We have seen in the east country His star. "Whilst they were in the east" they had seen His star to the west, over Palestine. Meyer claims that only the plural, *αι ανατολαι*, according to current usage designates the orient, cf. v. 1; viii. 11; xxiv. 27; Luke xiii. 29. But the singular with and without *τον ηλιον* occurs also for "the east" in the New Testament. Rev. vii. 2; xxi. 13. Hence grammatically it can mean the

east. Some find a contrast in v. 9, the star they had seen in the east they now see over Bethlehem. Nebe holds that the contrast in v. 9 is this: The star which previously the Magi had seen, and which for a long time had disappeared, now merges again in super-terrestrial clearness. He accepts the rendering "in the rising," on the ground that if the Evangelist had meant the east he would have used the plural as in v. 1. The use of the plural there and the singular in the next verse is significant.

What was the relation in point of time between the appearance of the star and the birth? There are three views: According to some the star appeared to the Magi before, even two years before. Some: The star appeared two years subsequent to the birth. Others, especially most moderns: the star synchronized with the incarnation of the Son of God. The second view conflicts with *τεχθεις*, which Luther correctly translates "new-born." The Magi expect to find the King among recently-born babes. The first view may find support from the murder of the innocents under two years, but it does not explain how the Magi came to the conclusion that the King they were seeking had just been born, and why they came only after two years. Did it require two years for the journey? The terms "He, born king, &c," make it pretty clear that the idea is to be conveyed that the Magi arrived soon after the birth of Jesus. They seem in this language to assume that he has quite recently been born. And as they connected the appearance of the star with the birth of Jesus, so, as no correction of their assumption is made, both events are to be viewed as lying close together.

The Magi ask for the new-born King, because they came to worship Him. Josephus says, *Antiq.* iii. 15, 3: "Some there have been who have come from parts beyond Euphrates, a journey of four months, through many dangers and great expenses, in honor of our temple; and yet when they had offered their oblations, could not partake of their own sacrifices, because Moses had forbidden it." Nebe says: "Where these salvation-seeking Orientals dared not come, there the Magi proposed now to go. They would bring their homage to the Lord who has come to His temple."

Προσκυνειν means to show reverence, offer homage, bowing down with the face to the earth. *Gen.* xviii. 2; xix. 1; xlii. 6; xlviii. 12. The FF. understood by it here religious worship. Augustine: "They adore with their bodies, they honor with their gifts, they worship with their services. They see man with their eyes, they confess God with their allegiance." The word may mean no more than political homage, civil submission, personal veneration of men, or

lowly manifestation of extreme respect. Bleek says: "Among the Greeks prostration with one's face to the earth was an honor suitable only for the gods, but in the east it was largely customary to offer it also to men." Bengel: "The Magi acknowledge Jesus as the King of grace, and as their Lord. Luke i. 43. All things must, however, be interpreted according to the analogy of these beginnings. It was certainly not on any political grounds that, after having undertaken and performed so long and arduous a journey, and being so soon about to return home, they worshiped a King remote and an infant, and that, too, without paying the same homage to Herod; nor did Herod in v. 8 profess an intention of paying him political homage." In v. 11 they did worship Him.

The worship offered on this wise to men had a religious origin, for in princes and other eminent personages men recognized gods. Thus a religious idea inheres in *προσκυνεῖν*. It means to pay to one divine honor. One said to Alexander: "Thou Macedonian, will'st have us bow the knee to thee and worship thee as god?" And Konon refused to pay such worship to the Persian king. Hence we take it that the act of the Magi meant more than the homage of political subjection. "They comprehended in one the natural and the supernatural indiscriminately in their intended worship." Nebe thinks it probable that their experience in Jerusalem led them further in the recognition of the true nature of Jesus, and that by their worship they honored Him as God in the flesh. Our Lord decidedly accords to the term a religious significance, in His answer to the tempter who had proposed to receive *προσκυνεῖν* from Him, *i. e.*, to be honored as God. Matt. iv. 10.

The apostles took the same view of the word. Peter protested against Cornelius falling at his feet, Acts x. 25 f, saying, "I myself am a man." Cf. Rev. xxii. 8, 9.

As Jesus never offered resistance to such *προσκύνησις*, this must be accepted as a declaration on his part that He was a being who, because equal to God, could claim divine honor, and when the apostles report that Jesus was worshiped with *προσκυνεῖν* they mean that He was divinely honored as God incarnate.

3. "When King Herod heard he was troubled" . . .

We learn from Josephus that Herod was often disturbed on hearing certain things. His consternation might have proved wholesome. When God made known the birth of the promised King to the "wise men" and not to him, He showed that He looked upon the heathen as more worthy of salvation than Herod and his house, and this ought to have brought him to repentance. But

his fear had other grounds. Either he himself shared the expectations of the people concerning the Messiah, or if even he regarded the promises of God as myths or legends, he knew that the masses had a different view, and that the news of the Messiah being born might occasion the most serious popular disturbance. He trembled for his throne, and for his house. No child was born in his family—nor could any Israelite be persuaded that the Son of promise should proceed from his house, for he was an Edomite. Josephus, *Antiq.* xvii. 2, 4, says, the Pharisees had prophesied that God had decreed that Herod's government should cease, and that his posterity should be deprived of it. These prophecies seem now about to be fulfilled; these Magi who in the east are held in high esteem as soothsayers and interpreters of mysteries, confirm them. Herod is alarmed. He fears the new King is actually born. He trembles at a child, at an idea, at a delusion. "If King Herod trembles at Jesus when only a child, who should not tremble, when the child is become a man and this man is angry!"

"And all Jerusalem with him." In v. 1 Jerusalem is neuter, here feminine, not because πόλις is to be supplied, but because the population of a city is taken as a collective noun in the feminine.

The whole population is "troubled." "The people naturally followed the lead of the king. Men are frequently upset by the sudden announcement of even good tidings." The happening of what is great and mighty seizes men with terror. After all, their fear was of a character different from Herod's. Sometimes we start back for joy as if by an affright. But the King's heart was drawn together from fear.

But Nebe thinks that "with him" implies that the fear of Herod and that of the people was of like character. Olshausen understands by "Jerusalem," the rulers, the leaders of the people. Conscience announced to the priestly caste as well as to Herod that their reign of iniquity was drawing to a close. The idea of Messiah's spiritual character had survived in some minds. Best is the view that the people stood in terror of the dire calamities which were to usher in the Messiah's reign, or, that they were dreading the terrible measures which Herod would employ for the maintenance of his throne. Some who had profited largely from the liberal and extravagant reign, its immense architectural undertakings, &c., felt dismay at the idea of the overthrow of Herod.

4. "And when he had gathered all the chief-priests and scribes" . . .

Herod was no Jew. The promises of the prophets are unknown to him. He is ignorant of what was known to every Jewish child,

that Bethlehem, the city of David, was to be the native city of the Messiah. But he knows of whom to inquire. He applies to the theocratic authorities—the matter is of extreme importance—he seeks the judgment of those of highest position. He assembles all the ἀρχιερεῖς.

In the restricted sense of the word Israel could have but one ἀρχιερεῖς, for the high-priest could not be removed, he could only die. But these ancient sacred ordinances had been largely departed from, either arbitrarily, or to gratify the Romans. Cf. Joseph. iii. 15, 3; xx. 10, 5. Those deposed retained the high-priestly title, and continued to wear the high-priest's garments. Joseph. iv. 3, 10. Cf. Luke iii. 2. Nebe denies that the presidents of the twenty-four priestly classes were called "chief-priests;" but, according to Josephus, the optimates, the leaders among the priests, bore this title, those more nearly related to the high-priest, who had from that circumstance greater influence. Acts iv. 6.

Besides the chief-priests, he called the γραμματεῖς of the people, writers, learned men, expositors of the law, Jewish canonists. Cf. Ezra vii. 6, 11; Neh. viii. 1. The study of the Scriptures was their life-work. They were properly the theologians or doctors among the Israelites, and as such were capable councilors, held in high esteem. For the most part they were Pharisees.

Was this gathering of the chief-priests and Scribes merely a theological conference, or was it a session of the Sanhedrin? The Sanhedrin, when designated according to its assessors, is described as the chief-priests, the Scribes and the elders. Matt. xxvi. 3; Mark xi. 27; xiv. 43, 53; sometimes, merely as "the chief-priests and the elders," Matt. xxi. 23; xxvi. 47; xxvii. 1, etc.; and occasionally, like here, as "the chief-priests and the Scribes," Matt. xx. 18; xxi. 15; Mark x. 33; Luke xx. 19. There is nothing to hinder the interpretation that Herod called a session of the Sanhedrin, to obtain a decisive answer from the highest forum.

Bengel says, a theological reply is spoken of. Meyer thinks that if the whole assembly were meant, πάντας would forbid that the presbyters should be omitted. xvi. 21; xxvii. 41. But πάντας need not be pressed. According to most expositors the members of the Sanhedrin are meant. The king called a session of the highest tribunal—the proper thing to do, for to this body was ascribed the highest knowledge of the true doctrine.

Bengel contrasts chiefs of the priests with Scribes of the people.

"Where Christ is born." The verb is purely present. Herod does not ask "when," but "where," making the question of the Magi his own. A general expectation of the event is implied. It

is remarkable that while the Magi simply announce the "King," Herod asks about "Christ," identifying the Messiah with this King.

He betrays his utter lack of character, giving us a striking example how unbelief and superstition go hand in hand. He believes in no Messiah and yet is afraid of Messiah. He wants to know from the Scriptures where the Messiah is born, and yet will not be taught by the Scriptures how to receive him.

5, 6. "And they said . . . in Bethlehem of Judea" . . .

Nebe: "The Sanhedrin must have been astonished at such a question. They could hardly have ascribed such ignorance to the man who at an immense cost had beautified the temple. If any further sign was needed to show that the time was fulfilled when the sceptre must depart from Judah, this question must have fully opened their eyes." They soon give the correct answer. They are versed in the Scriptures, even though but externally. Stiff formalism, dead orthodoxy, is the characteristic stamp of the highest judicatory in Israel. These men possessed of dead knowledge still have their use. Even if they themselves do not come to the living fountain, they may serve as finger-boards to the fountain. Bengel: "The knowledge which the Scribes, who do not go themselves, have derived from their ancestors, is of service to the Magi, who are seeking Christ." The Sanhedrin confirms its decision that Bethlehem is the birthplace, by an appeal to the formal principle of Protestantism: "Thus it is written." How artfully and continuously the fulfillment of prophecy is worked in by the author! This may be quoted by the Evangelist, but better, the Sanhedrin alleges this reason, and Matthew stamps it with his approval. The quotation is from Mic. v. 2, one of the most remarkable and most definite prophecies of the Old Testament—a passage without a parallel. But the passage is not given literally either from the Hebrew text or the LXX. The form is probably that given by the scribes, who quoted perhaps freely from memory, perhaps from the current verbal form of the passage. Nebe holds the difference to be so great that the Greek text is the very opposite of the Hebrew: The prophet, thou art too small, the Evangelist, thou art not small.

Micah reads: "Although Bethlehem is too unimportant to be reckoned among the cities of the district, yet a ruler in Israel will come forth from it." Matthew makes Bethlehem undoubtedly an important place, "for out of," &c. Matthew adds "land of Juda." In Micah Ephrata specifies Bethlehem. Bengel paraphrases prophet and Evangelist: "And thou Bethlehem Ephrata, or district in the

tribe of Juda, *art* small, inasmuch as thou art among the thousands of Juda. In the dignity exclusively thine own, however, thou art by no means the least, but altogether the greatest among the princes and thousands of Juda, &c., that from thee shall go forth for me one who is to be the ruler in Israel." "The greater honor obscures the less." Notwithstanding its insignificance, Bethlehem is highly honored. 2 Sam. vii. 19; Isa. xlix. 6. Luther: "The Evangelist has respect to the spiritual greatness, to which also the prophet makes reference, somewhat like this: Thou art small before men, but in the truth thou art not the smallest before God, since the Lord of Israel shall come in."

Bengel puts "land of Juda" by synecdoche for the township, as in Luke ix. 12, fields for cantons. Judah was the tribe of the Messiah.

Nebe says γῆ, "country," cannot mean city. Weiss says the territory belonging to the city is thus addressed. Others make of γῆ Ἰούδα the Nom. absolute, or Bethlehem in the land of Juda. Undoubtedly, the two words supply the place of Ephrata in the Hebrew. Ephrata is, *per se*, without significance. It is the ancient name of Bethlehem, and sustains no relation to the distinction shed upon Bethlehem in the economy of redemption. Some refer γῆ Ἰούδα to 1 Sam. xvii. 12, where Bethlehem, Judah and David stand in the closest relation; or, to Jacob's blessing, Gen. xlix. 10, as intimating that the Shiloh promised to Juda is to be born in Bethlehem.

Matthew renders the Hebrew by ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμονίαις, which some take for a literal conformity with the text. Meyer holds that either the Evangelist or the translation he used, committed an error. The division of the Jewish nation was into tribes, families, thousands. The heads, the *hegemones*, presided over these respectively. Matthew puts the heads of the families for the families; and these again for the chief towns in which they are settled. Bethlehem, the town, appears personified in the midst of the heads and princes of the families, amongst whom it had by no means the lowest position.

Bengel well says, "Matthew does not give the preference so much to this city or thousand over the other cities of Juda, as to the prince who came forth thence over the other princes of thousands."

"From thee shall go forth." Micah reads, "Out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." Matthew: "Out of thee shall come forth a governor"—a relative clause is added.

The Sanhedrin, as they only had been asked to give the birth-place of the new-born King, had no occasion to give also these words of the prophet, which not only exhibit the high antiquity of the race of the future ruler, but his transtemporal, eternal descent.

Ποιμανεῖ means to rule, *i. e.*, a faithful, gentle, peaceable rule. In antiquity princes are often called shepherds. Homer and others often: shepherds of the people. Like David going out from Bethlehem he is to be the shepherd. The term is doubtless chosen to signify the mild and gracious character of the Messiah's reign.

In 1 Chron. xi. 2 the LXX. say concerning David: "Thou shalt shepherd my people Israel and thou shalt be for a prince over my people Israel." Ps. lxxviii. 71, 72. It is, indeed, a word worthy of the kingly office, and at the same time according with the pastoral youth of David at Bethlehem. By the word "shepherd" the Evangelist includes also and condenses v. 4 of the chapter of Micah cited, where the LXX. have the same expression. Cf. 2 Sam. v. 2, which is, doubtless, the original passage. Cf. also 2 Sam. vii. 7. These words point to the typical relation between the first David, born at Bethlehem, and the second, the Messiah.

Even *ἡγούμενος*, governor, has the idea of guiding, rather than that of employing law and force. Governing and tending a flock are closely related, yet the latter emphasizes the ideal character of the true ruler who has the good of his subjects at heart.

"My people." The term includes God's spiritual Israel among all nations. This clause was enough to alarm Herod. The Sanhedrin thus offer us the most powerful testimony for the Messianic interpretation of this passage in Micah. The old Jewish expositors bear the same testimony. The people in the time of our Lord held the same opinion as their leaders. John vii. 41 f.

Bleek says, this declaration of Micah is a direct Messianic prophecy, which proclaims the appearance of the future great King of Israel, and in particular his coming from Bethlehem.

Nebe recognizes in the Sanhedrin a full college of orthodox men. They have the Scriptures, they are thorough searchers and masters of it, but their religion is a cold matter of the understanding without any living root in the heart. Even an ossified theology consisting of the traditions of the school, still serves a good purpose. Christ directed the people to hear them, Matt. xxiii. 2 ff.

Luther asks: "Why did not the star conduct the Magi into Bethlehem? but the place of birth had to be certified from the Scriptures." This he holds is "to teach us to keep to the Scriptures and not according to our own pleasure follow the teachings

of men. God did not give the Scriptures in vain. He is to be found in them and not elsewhere. He that despises and sets aside these will never find Him elsewhere."

It is to be observed, too, that the miraculous never intervenes, unless there is necessity for it. God honors his word. Divine providence shows here that the Scriptures, which were found alone among the Jews, are the means for the instruction of the Gentiles.

7. "Then Herod, . . . called the wise men" . . .

The inquiry of the Magi was known throughout Jerusalem, the whole city was in commotion over it. The Sanhedrin was called together on account of it. Their arrival and inquiry was no secret. Meyer thinks Herod did not act very shrewdly or consistently, since this very course would arouse suspicion, but to adopt secret measures is characteristic of such a ruler.

The question of the Magi greatly disturbed Herod, the answer of the council throws him into consternation. He already sees his throne rocking. But if he reveals his fear he is lost, for he had so oppressed the people that they were like a boiling volcano. He, therefore, pretends publicly to pay little attention to the matter. Still he cannot wholly ignore it, his reign is at stake. He must in secret adopt measures of security, work in the dark against the royal child. He calls the Magi to himself, not to a solemn audience (that might have given importance to it with the people), but to a secret interview, possibly in the same night after the session of the Sanhedrin.

Then by careful scrutiny he sought to ascertain accurately the time of the birth, the location having been indicated by the council. The birth is assumed to synchronize with the appearance of the star, though it is not said whether from hints of the Magi or not.

Ἡκρίβωσεν, cf. v. 8, ἀκριβῶς. According to Meyer: "not, he carefully investigated, but after he had brought them to a secret interview he obtained accurate knowledge from them." Bleek: "The word means to do something exactly, carefully, so that it means to know exactly, or to investigate exactly." Herod learned accurately from them the appearance of the star. He carefully gets all the information he can, being, as Josephus shows, exceedingly suspicious. Why did he not send a commission to Bethlehem? He knew as yet too little about this royal birth. The slaughter of the innocents was the extreme measure of despair. There is evident a vacillation between confidence and mistrust toward the Magi, which corresponds psychologically with Herod's character.

"The time of the appearing of the star." Expositors mostly emphasize the present of the participle, not the beginning of the appearance, but, time how long, how long does the star appear, continue, make itself visible, since ye saw its rising in the east?

DeWette holds that according to vss. 2 and 9 we are not to understand a continuous shining of the star. He takes the present participle, as is often done, as implying time in general. Herod asked simply, when did the star appear? The FF. understood the narrative as meaning that the star was no longer visible when the Magi arrived at Jerusalem, and only appeared again as they journeyed from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

8. "And he sent them to Bethlehem, . . . go and search" . . .

Of course Herod has no idea of coming to Bethlehem to worship the child. By this hypocritical semblance of sympathy with their object, he hoped to deceive the simple men and induce them to bring full information. "If human wisdom would avail," says Luther, "his course would have been shrewd for the murder of Christ, but no wisdom nor council prevails against the Lord. Prov. xxi. 30; Ps. xxxiii. 10; xxxvii. 32 ff. God catcheth the prudent who so shrewdly set their own nets, with wonderful wisdom in His net. They must at last minister to those who sincerely seek the Lord. Herod is now serving the wise men, as the star in the heavens previously served them. Every thing must be subject to the Lord; and if to Him then also to his believing people."

9. "When they had heard the king, they departed" . . .

Note their unsuspecting behavior. They went, but no one joined them! Perhaps from cowardice, from fear of Herod, no one moved a foot, and the Magi are permitted to depart alone, while not an Israelite joins them in their journey to behold the King of Israel. Nebe thinks it was not cowardice so much as obduracy and perfect indifference that kept Scribes and others at Jerusalem, while strangers were traveling to Bethlehem—a melancholy prognostic of the people of Israel right in the beginning of the gospel history. The heathen came to the Lord, the children of the kingdom keep aloof.

Luther commends the powerful faith of the wise men, in that they dismiss every other thought from their eyes and hearts, and simply follow the Word, which was presented to them from the prophet Micah.

They asked for the new-born King in the royal city of Jerusalem, doubtless believing they would find him clad in purple and fine linen. But from the capital they are sent to a poor little rural

town. There they cannot find the child as they might have expected to find him in Jerusalem. With this King of the Jews the case is quite peculiar. He does not present the conditions of a world ruler—His kingdom is not like one of this world. Were the Magi not in danger of stumbling at all this?

“And lo, the star.” Luther thinks they were sad and mournful, staggering at something, having been disappointed in Jerusalem, not finding there the royal Child. Hence the Evangelist says, when they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding joy. When the star disappeared they were sad and anxious, but now that the star has appeared again they rejoice, etc. God wisely ordered that the star should not guide the Magi on their entire journey. Most of the FF. share the view of the whilom disappearance of the star and its sudden unexpected reappearance to the Magi, as they took their departure from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, about eight miles distant.

Suddenly becoming visible again, it went before them. Bengel holds that in their whole journey they had not seen the star. Others: the star now changed its position in the direction of Bethlehem. Some notice that the Magi traveled by night, according to Eastern custom.

Meyer: “The star which they saw . . . went before them on their journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem . . . showing them the way as it proceeded before them.” Thus they not only saw at Bethlehem over the house what they had seen in the east, but it was their guide. Notice the miracle: The way on which the star now preceded them as a guide goes from north to south, while stars in their natural course always go from east to west. The planets and some comets move from west to east, and the course of many comets is almost from north to south. Doubtless, the moving of the star and its “standing over the house was miraculous, the end of the journey as well as the beginning of it determined by the heavenly guide.”

Nebe holds a miracle to be not strictly necessary. The approaching planets appeared simply as one great star; or, that star which joined itself to the group may be regarded as a comet. The most important thing is that we look from the star to the God of heaven and earth who guides it, and through it draws these Magi so marvelously to His dear Son. “God,” says Luther, “comforted and encouraged them through the star, which He caused to go before them, and showed Himself more gracious than at the first appearing. They now see it near and as their guide; they are made sure of everything and need make no inquiry. In the first

instance it was far away, and they were left uncertain where they would find the King." Now it leads them not only over the right way, but to the right house.

It stood "over where," etc., not simply in general over the city or district of Bethlehem, but as v. 11 immediately says, "going into the house"—this is an indication that the star took a position right over the house, pointing out to them the very house in which they would find Him. Of course, this leaves us the difficulty of a star or any star-like body taking such a position as to point out a particular house. The Apocryphal gospels tell the story of the star ever sinking toward the earth and finally falling into the well of the house where Christ was.

The plain meaning of the Evangelist is that the Magi found the house without human agencies. As they stood before it they saw the star directly over the house. Nebe: "There are not only stars in heaven, there are also stars in the heart. The star in the heavens leads the Magi towards Bethlehem—the star in their hearts leads them to the right house." The magnet finds the pole. "If the Father has drawn these wise men from the east into the Holy Land to His Son, so by the laws of attraction, when they have reached the end of their journey, the force of attraction is sufficient to guide infallibly to Him whom they are seeking."

The Bible, says Kepler, speaks of the things of human life to men, as men are accustomed to speak of them. It is no text-book of optics or astronomy, it pursues a higher aim. Nebe reminds us of the sword which was seen hanging over Jerusalem, Joseph. Bell. Jud. vi. 5, 3.

Nebe says, there is no serious difficulty in προῆγεν . . . ἔλθων ἐστάθῃ, moving, taking a position, &c. If we can say of a star it went before me, while in fact I went simply in the direction of the star, so we can also say, it finally stood here or there, while in fact I simply stood there or so that I saw it directly there, or perhaps over a house.

10. "And when they saw the star they rejoiced" . . .

It is not clear whether it was the going before, or the "standing" that called forth this joy. Some: the latter; some: both. They recognized their faithful guide, having led them finally to the object of their search.

Nebe: "The joy which all along had thrilled their hearts reaches a complete outburst when they see the star standing still. The view of it at the end of their long journey surprised them with peculiar joy."

11. "And when they were come into the house" . . .

This was some time after the birth—consequently the mother and child are no longer in a stable.

The Evangelist now describes the further progress of the visit. They find, they worship, they offer. The Child and the mother are distinctly mentioned. Joseph recedes in the background throughout the gospel history.

They take no umbrage at the humble abode. Not in the least do they stumble at the poverty and the lowliness of the Child, but they fall down and worship Him. Mary was not an object of worship to the Magi. If she had been conceived without sin, why should she not then have been worshiped as well as now? For she was then already the mother of the King who was to be worshiped.

The limiting of the worship to the child makes it in the highest degree probable that the Magi worshiped in the Christ-child not a human child. Their worship had a religious character. The offering seems to be conclusive of a spiritual meaning. There may have been no doctrinal idea of the divinity of Jesus, but a dim conception of the divine power resting upon him. They were not offended at his present poverty, but rather do they rejoice at it. Their offerings will thus be acceptable. The small gifts which they present will have a high value for Him. They open their treasure receptacles, or chests. It was customary among the Persians as often as they saluted a king to have a gift in their hand. The Magi took with them three, Gen. xliii. 11; 1 Sam. x. 27; 1 Kings x. 2, a genuine oriental custom of homage. Is. lx. 6. The best and choicest which their country offered, they brought to the Lord, gold, frankincense and myrrh. These products were common throughout the east and are often offered in connection with worship, gold being among the gifts usually offered to gods. Some hold that the gold here is a present to a king, while incense and myrrh are offered to God, but no symbolism may attach to the individual presents.

Λιβανος, incense, properly a tree, a species of balsam; then the gum exuding from the tree. The plant *libanah* is often alluded to in the Old Testament. Lev. ii. 1 ff.; xvi. 6, 8; xxiv. 7; Num. v. 15; Is. xliii. 23; Jer. xli. 5. In the New Testament only Rev. xviii. 13. In antiquity it was commonly used in fumigating a house and in offerings. *Σύρινα* is a similar gummy balsam, obtained either naturally or by incision from a small tree like the acacia, growing abundantly in Arabia and Ethiopia. For anointing oil the noblest myrrhs were to be used, Exod. xxx. 23. Oil

of myrrh is used as a perfume. Ps. xlv. 9 ; Est. ii. 12 ; Prov. vii. 17. It was also used in embalming dead bodies, John xix. 19. The FF. were not content to infer from the three gifts three Magi. The gifts themselves possessed the greatest significance both for the givers and for the receiver. The gold and the incense proclaimed the child King and God, the myrrh foreshadowed His sepulture. Juvencus refers the three presents to the Lord as King, as God and as mortal man. Chrysostom interprets the myrrh also as a gift to God. Some even saw in the gifts symbols of spiritual gifts. Gold: wisdom ; incense : prayer ; myrrh : the mortification of the flesh.

12. "And being warned of God in a dream" . . .

Χρηματισθέντες, literally: To manage public affairs, to give commands, answers. In Hellenic Greek, to give and receive divine commands. In Acts xi. 26 ; Rom. vii. 3, merely to call. The Vulgate translates here "responso accepto," a question on their part is presupposed by some. But the term does not always presuppose a question. The Magi had not perceived Herod's subtle policy, they were on the point of returning to him and informing him that they had found the child, when God in the night hinted to them the dark purpose of the king. A divine impulse moved them to make their homeward journey by another route. The FF. allegorized: The Magi came one way, they returned another, for those who had seen Christ knew Christ, and they returned better men than they came. And this obedience to God is another beautiful feature. Before this they offered their possessions to the Lord, now they offer themselves.

The prophetic element in the pericope must not be overlooked. These are the first fruits of the Gentiles. "As they believing seek and confess that King whom they did not see, so also we who are from the Gentiles, believing daily seek the Lord, whom we have never seen, and confess His power." The prophetic idea is however not in conflict with the literal realistic history.

This Gospel is especially adapted for the work of missions. It also gives occasion and material to treat of the glory of the Lord and the nature of true faith.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE WISE MEN FROM THE EAST.

1. Their inquiry.
2. Their answer.
3. Their faith.
4. Their worship.

WE MAY LEARN FROM THEM,

1. Earnestly to seek the Lord.
2. Firmly to believe on Him.
3. Joyfully to worship Him.

THE FATHER DRAWS TO THE SON.

1. He has placed in the heart a yearning for the Lord.
2. He awakens this yearning through His revelation in **creation**.
3. He directs this yearning by His Word to the Lord.

FAITH THE WORK OF GOD.

1. He wakens it.
2. He strengthens it.
3. He crowns it.

A BLESSED SEEKING OF THE LORD INCLUDES,

1. An eye for God's tokens.
2. An ear for God's Word.
3. A heart for God's Son.

THE ORDER OF FAITH:

Coming, hearing, seeing, worship, self-offering.

III. THE EPIPHANY PERIOD.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

LUKE ii. 41-52.

As it is the aim of the Epiphany period to represent the Son of God as the prophet, the Church has shown excellent tact in selecting this pericope for the first Sunday after Epiphany. Moses is characterized, Acts vii. 22, as "mighty in words and in deeds," and the two Easter pilgrims to Emmaus describe almost in the same terms the Lord as "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people," Luke xxiv. 19. The prophet of God is signalized by this power in deed and word. "This pericope proclaims the prophet, the Lord prophesies concerning Himself. Here is the first clear, self-conscious flashing of the light which in its time is to enlighten and transfigure the whole world. On the first Epiphany-Sunday falls the first revelation of the immanent glory of the Lord, the first awakening of the Messianic, divine consciousness in the soul of Jesus Christ, We have here the first word from the Eternal Word, the first word from the unfathomable depths of His spirit." This is evidently the kernel of the narrative. It celebrates the moment of the decisive breaking-through of self-knowledge from the unconscious childhood. It is certainly most noteworthy that Luke gives us here the only narrative of the one single occurrence known of Christ between his birth and his Baptism.

41. "Now his parents went to Jerusalem" . . .

Exod. xxiii. 14 ff.; xxxiv. 23 and Deut. xvi. 16, explicitly require the Jews to make three annual pilgrimages to the Sanctuary: at the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The object of this was not only to keep alive the feeling of attachment and the solidarity of all Israelites, the national consciousness among the different tribes, but also to preserve the theocratic consciousness and to refresh the spiritual life of the people at the holy

fountain, for the Sanctuary was the place of meeting, the place where the covenant God presented Himself to the covenant people.

This law, it is claimed, was never strictly or fully carried out. Nebe calls it a pious desire of the Lawgiver. When the people settled in other lands, when in exile the ancestral institutions fell into desuetude, the prescription of the law came to be less and less observed. Still many pious pilgrims found their way from foreign lands to the Passover and Pentecost Festivals and from Palestine also to the other feast.

The parents of Jesus walked in the ways of the law, not by constraint but from pleasure. This is shown here. Only men were required to appear at the feasts, but Mary would never let her husband go alone to the great Passover. The school of Hillel required, but would never raise the requirement to a law, that the wife should accompany her husband. Mary did this of her own accord. Yearly she accompanied him.

This imports a great deal. Knowing that their child was the Saviour of the world, and that the care of it had been entrusted to them, they tore themselves once a year away from it for at least ten days. What a sacrifice they must have offered every Easter to the God of Israel, "for this child lay upon their conscience and had grown fast to their hearts."

With a luminous example they went before Him. He was to have the training of deeds as well as of words—a lesson graciously set forth for all parents.

42. "And when he was twelve years old, they went up" . . .

Being given to a strict observance of the law themselves, it may be assumed that in the training of the Christ-child the parents would follow the directions, which obtained as an unwritten law in Israel. According to Jewish custom at a later time a child was in his fifth year instructed in the law, in his tenth in the Mishna, and in his thirteenth was fully subjected to the obedience of the law. When therefore the lad was twelve they took Him along to the Easter feast. The twelfth year was regarded as a new departure among the Israelites, a boundary year, a very important epoch of development. Samuel began to prophesy in the twelfth year, Joseph. Antiq. V, 10, 4; Solomon is said to have given his wonderful judgment in the same year, Ignat. *ad Magn.* c. 3; 1 King iii. 16 ff. So Daniel, History of Susannah. v. 45 ff.

The twelve-year-old boy was reckoned as belonging to the congregation, was called child of the law and joined in the festival pil-

grimaces to Jerusalem. The parents of Jesus, observing this beautiful custom and appreciating the blessings of early piety, brought Him in His twelfth year (for the first time) into the Holy City.

Tertullian says: *fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani*. Augustine likewise: *Christianos non facit generatio, sed regeneratio*. Even the heathen had a clear perception of the importance of early training.

43. "And when they had fulfilled the days" . . .

The great Festival lasted an entire week. When these days had expired the parents returned home, but *ὁ παῖς*, the boy Jesus, was not with them. Luke as he promised in the preface, i. 3, describes in successive order: Jesus as the fruit of the womb, i. 42; as the babe, ii. 12; as the child, vs. 40; as the boy in this verse; as the man, xxiv. 19, cf. John i. 30. "His full stature was not manifested at once, as in the case of the first-formed man, but He hallowed by participation all the successive steps of human life . . . as He was wont to adapt Himself to all the times and epochs observed in human life." "Old age alone," says Bengel, "was unsuitable to Him."

His tarrying in Jerusalem was unknown to His parents. Nebe regards this as the climax to which the preceding verses, which in the Greek form a period, lead up. The whole structure aims to bring out the boy's tarrying behind and the ignorance of His parents concerning it. There is in this something most extraordinary. Origen, somewhat under Gnostic influence, thought the Child had made Himself invisible, as He did later, appearing and disappearing from the temple, John viii. 59. Other wonderful explanations are given. Olshausen makes the charge of negligent carelessness on the part of the mother, which Meyer pronounces unwarranted, as she supposed Him to be in the company. That want of knowledge was justified. Besides, the parents had doubtless witnessed enough of the extraordinary understanding and moral development of the lad, to feel that He required no vigilant care. Some suggest that the pilgrims were so divided that the men moved in one section, the women in another and the youths by themselves.

The Evangelist, no doubt, narrates the event so as to make the impression of an extraordinary occurrence, without leading us to think of parental negligence. There is as much occasion for casting blame upon the Child as upon the mother, He having evidently not, in the exercise of filial obedience, obtained her permission. Bengel: "Jesus might have informed them of the fact by a single

word, but it was becoming that His wisdom should be proved demonstratively in their absence. For thus He showed that He was not indebted to them for the wisdom which He had, cf. 50. He gave satisfactory proof thereby that it was not they, but Himself, who was fully adequate to direct Himself, and that His subjection to them (51) is of the freest kind." Meyer: "It was an irresistible impulse towards the things of God, which prompted Him to subordinate His parents to the satisfaction of this instinct, mightily stimulated as it was on this His first sojourn in Jerusalem, a momentary premature breaking forth of that which was the principle decidedly expressed and followed out by Him in manhood, Mark iii. 32 f." Nebe holds that the conduct of Jesus was not the result of a definite purpose on His part. Otherwise, He would have observed the duty of obtaining His parents' consent. "He followed the inspiration of the moment, the instincts of His heart, the impulse of His nature, the genius which was in Him immediately without further reflection." So Lange, Meyer, Bleek, Godet and others.

It is clear that no blame for any neglect can be attached to the Child, since His mother on finding Him did not intimate what course He ought to have taken, nor did the Rabbis in the temple, who were charged with the enforcement of the command, "Honor thy father and thy mother." The parents, too, are not justly to be blamed. The Son does not charge them with any oversight, or ask why they neglected Him, but "why is it that ye sought me?" Not the losing of Him but the seeking of Him offers to Him a point of inquiry. They displayed their faith in not keeping their eyes on Him all the time. They believed Him to be in the care of His God and Father.

Nebe allegorizes that we, alas! too often lose the Christ-child in going up with Him to the feast. Worldly pleasures have become so mingled with the great feasts that they easily stifle and extinguish our joy in the Lord.

44. "But they supposing him to be in the company, went a day's journey" . . .

Συνοδία, company sharing the journey, on the road together. The inhabitants of one or more places formed a caravan. The parents were not reckless. They miss the Child during the day, evidently having carefully looked after Him, but they console themselves that He was somewhere in the procession. But when at eventide the different detachments came together to pass the night, and they looked for Him, He did not turn up. No one had seen Him. Origen says: "In the company of the multitude my

Jesus is not found." They seek for Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, but the Jesus whom we love is often, alas! too often wholly unknown to our nearest relatives.

45. "And when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem seeking him."

That must have been a sad journey. Some of the kinsfolk and acquaintances might out of sympathy have journeyed back with the sorrowing parents, to comfort them by the way and assist them in this search in the great city still thronged with strangers. The fact that they did not accompany them may be due in part to their ignorance of the character of the Child, and this is viewed as an irrefragable proof of the modest concealment of the great mystery on the part of Joseph and Mary. Christ was to grow up in retirement. Hence according to divine purpose the young Child was transplanted from Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, to Nazareth, where no one knew anything of the extraordinary incidents connected with His birth. The parents did not arbitrarily blaze abroad this mystery of mysteries, which God Himself after the glorious introduction had consigned to privacy. "As the grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, if it is to bring forth much fruit, so this mystery must be kept concealed, in order in its own time to come forth with world-conquering power. A normal development of the Christ-child would have been very difficult, a normal establishment of His Kingdom quite impossible, if the parents had not with pure lips kept this secret in their pure hearts." And as they refrained their lips from communicating to their friends, so also from communicating to the child Himself. "It was not their purpose to infatuate and poison the innocent heart of the child with the conceit of His future greatness and glory." They reared him in the nurture and admonition of the God of Israel, persuaded that He who had immediately by His word called into His service Moses and other men of God in the Old Testament, would also anoint Jesus with His Spirit and send Him forth when the time was fulfilled. The parents committed everything to the true Father of the Child.

There is a significant and immense contrast in this respect between the Canonical and the Apocryphal Gospels, the latter always portraying Jesus as a precocious, forward, presumptuous, unnatural Child.

Ἠρπύοντες αὐτόν. The present participle retains its full sense. The search began already on the way back. Possibly, they thought, He followed after the caravan from Jerusalem, or tarried somewhere along the way.

46. "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple" . . .

A long search was required, and little time was wasted, **day or night**, until the Child was found.

Meyer holds it most accordant with the text to reckon from the point at which the search began, which he interprets as beginning only after the parents' return to Jerusalem, which Nebe understands thus: The search having commenced on the morning of the third day (reckoned from their departure from Jerusalem), on the third day after they had begun the search in Jerusalem, *i. e.*, on the fifth day after they had lost Him, they finally discovered the Child of their sorrows. Grotius makes "after three days" the same as Matt. xxvii. 63; Mark viii. 31, and adds: "They made the journey homeward one day, they retraced it the second day, they found Him at last on the third." So the FF., Lightfoot, Bleek, Godet, Keil, etc. Some: The parents spent one day on the return to Jerusalem, one day in a fruitless search, and on the third day (the second of their new sojourn in Jerusalem) they found Him.

The text does not decide for either of the above views, but it may be taken for granted that as soon as the parents discovered the absence of the child, they bade adieu to rest and sleep, and at once turned back to Jerusalem. Before morning they would be in the city, and on the third day they finally found Him in the temple. Many commentators recognize the coincidence with the three days in the tomb. Bengel: "A mystical number. It was the same number of days that, whilst lying dead, He was regarded by His disciples as lost, xxiv. 21."

Ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, *i. e.* in the temple enclosure or outer courts of the temple proper. The temple was a large group of buildings, halls and chambers and synagogues being connected with the *vab*. Lightfoot mentions three consessus in the temple; one in the porch of the court of the Gentiles; one in the porch of the court of Israel; the third in the *Conclavi Gazith*, and quotes another passage from Ioma, fol. 68, 2, where a synagogue is expressly mentioned in the hall of the temple. He does not pretend to determine in which of these localities Jesus was found by His parents. Enough that they found Him, and that in the temple, not in the streets, not in the halls of pleasure. And we may rest assured that we also shall find Him if we seek Him in His temple. They found Him in the temple not engaged in sight-seeing or indulging His curiosity, but "sitting in the midst of the doctors."

A tradition that from the days of Moses to Rabbi Gamaliel, they did not learn the law except standing, according to which Jesus

would already appear formally engaged as a teacher, is rejected by Vitringa and others as unfounded in the New Testament. Some have spoken of the pulpit Jesus occupied. Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel, Acts xxii. 3. Lightfoot cites other passages which show the sitting of pupils.

"In the midst." By this clause the Evangelist doubtless means to note some peculiar glory of Jesus. "The other pupils sat *before* the Rabbis, He in their midst," "in their circle." The awakened mind, the sententious answers and questions of the youth, drew to Him the attention of the teachers.

They were delighted with Him, called Him to them and gave Him a seat so that they might have further and more intimate communication with Him. Bengel: "holding a conference with Him." Such admiration and homage on the part of the Rabbis is not incredible. The refreshing openness of nature and child-like naivete have not lost their charm, even for dry scholastics. "To find here a sitting on an equality with the teachers," says Meyer, "is not in accordance with the text," which limits the action of the child to hearing and asking questions. Thus he acted the part of a learner, not of a teacher. Bengel: "He was proposing the *questions*, and solving them in His *answers*," v. 47. Nebe thinks the questions were proposed by the doctors. But the evangelist presents the boy as first hearing the doctors and then asking them questions. Instruction was imparted in the form of a general colloquy. Legend is rich in fanciful tales concerning these questions and answers.

The suggestion of Stier that Jesus presented to the Rabbis the conflict between the spiritual knowledge He had acquired in His home, and the discoveries He made in Jerusalem where the divine word was corrupted by human tradition, and in this, by means of the Scriptures, confounded the men who held to tradition, is shattered by the fact that this assumption ascribes to a twelve-year-old lad the mature judgment of manhood, as it is also inconsistent with the position of these doctors, who instead of taking such a lad, who was assuming the role of a reformer, into their own circle, would soon have driven Him from the temple.

Ebrard suggests with psychological correctness that Jesus heard some important prophetic passages read here, and asked for explanations, correcting these with questions, and also offering answers out of the fullness of innate, intuitive knowledge, which answers were so striking that they suppressed everything the doctors taught and excited astonishment. "The questioning here is that of the pure and holy desire for knowledge." It may well be assumed

that the questions related to the Messiah and the kingdom of God, and that Jesus by His answers as well as His questions unconsciously refuted many of the errors of the Rabbis. "With the questions the boy who had been lost finds Himself, He comes to the foreboding that He is the Messiah."

He sat in the temple, where God's word was expounded to Him. He that would find Christ must seek Him in God's word.

47. "And all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and answers."

The Rabbis set much store by the remarks of young children. God's word is to be received from the mouth of childhood, says a rabbinical proverb, like God's word from the mouth of the Sanhedrin, of Moses, the blest of God. Jesus causes the greatest astonishment among the masters, and among all who heard his questions and answers. *Ἐξίστασθαι* is a very strong term, to be "beside one self," the highest degree of amazement or joy; and this at his *σίνεσις*, "understanding, and answers;" "His understanding in general, and especially His answers." The evangelist has just said that Jesus asked questions, here he adds that he also answered the doctors. These answers, even more than His questions, revealed His marvelous understanding.

Σίνεσις, the discursive reason, figures mainly in this, hence it is the reflective understanding. The evangelist's choice of terms warrants the conclusion that Jesus may have given the doctors a lesson in exegesis.

48. "And when they saw him they were astonished" . . .

Some have thought the subject here was the people who had listened to him with amazement. The subject is given in verse 46. The parents were astonished—transported with joy. They had not expected to find the boy in the temple, or they would at the first have repaired thither. They were filled with wonder, too, on seeing him sitting in the midst of the lauded masters of Israel. Nebe suggests that the parents of Jesus had failed to satisfy the thirst of His soul by bringing Him in Jerusalem to a fuller and firmer knowledge of God. His heart, like the Psalmist's, was panting after God. They were indeed truly pious, their inward man living in intimate fellowship with the Holy One of Israel, but the roots of their inner life did not reach down into the unsearchable depths, in which were found the heartroots of the hidden life of God in Christ. They judged of the youth by themselves and imagined that the measure which sufficed for them, would also be the measure for Him. But this justifies no censure. It could in the nature of things not be otherwise. The parents could not fol-

low the Lord, the soaring of whose spirit was the longer, the mightier. Still they might have had at least some foreboding of the deeper and higher needs of the lad, and offered Him means and ways to satisfy His thirst there, where God from ancient times had opened fountains of spiritual knowlege. They doubtless took Him with them into the temple of the Lord, but that which He sought for in the temple He failed to receive at their hands. Parental training must be supplemented and widened by the Church. He must tear Himself from them, impelled by the irresistible force of inward yearnings, that mysterious drawing of His deepest heart to His God and Father. He must withdraw Himself from their tutelage, if He is to enjoy the true full blessing of the Easter Festival.

Nebe finds here the dereliction of the parents, a dereliction confirmed by their long fruitless search, and by the striking answer of the boy when found. Had they possessed a clear conception of the requirements of His nature, had they sharply watched Him in the temple, had they during the whole week taken Him where He longed to be, they would not have lost Him, and even if they had, they would have known where to look for Him, where they would most certainly find Him. Their seeking of Him shows that they had not been sufficiently observant. Of course the inadvertence is measurably excusable. It is of a piece with the unbelief of His brothers, and of the Nazarenes in general.

One would suppose that Jesus should first of all have found recognition and faith in His family circle, and then in His native city; but a prophet is without honor in his own country. "The development of the Lord was, further, a gradual one; His bodily and spiritual growth proceeds, as with other children, according to the laws of nature—the miracle is lost, as it were, in the course of nature. The natural character of the progress throws the supernatural character of the beginning ever more into the background." "The inborn genius must burst the chains. Jesus does this in the temple, and it is significant that this disengagement from His parents according to the flesh takes place in the house of God. It was not an arbitrary procedure, nor done from self-interest. It was not an act of disobedience, but of obedience to God, and that for the service of God."

Mary speaks first. "The tie which bound the mother to Him was stronger than that of Joseph." So Bengel, Meyer, Keil, etc. But the ground for it may be found also in the fact that woman is quicker with the tongue than man when moved by feeling. Possibly she would better have restrained herself here. The emphatic position of *πρὸς αὐτὸν* is interpreted by Bengel as showing that to

Him she ought not to have spoken so. But Nebe thinks this clause received the position at the beginning, only to bring out in sharper contrast the conduct of the mother and that of all others. Whilst all were wondering at the youth who exhibited such extraordinary interest and understanding in spiritual things, His mother in the same moment chided Him that He failed to keep the first command with promise. The reproof which she meant to administer to Him rebounded however on herself. She acted under strong emotion which for the time clouded her mind. The pain over the lost child, the distress connected with the fruitless three days' search, had distracted her senses. She addressed her innocent child τέκνον, τί κ.τ.λ. This she said publicly before all. Τέκνον is noteworthy. The Evangelist calls Him ὁ παῖς, v. 43, no longer παῖδιον. The mother ignores this, ὁ παῖς is to her still τὸ τέκνον. She has not come yet to see that with the growing up of Jesus the relation between her and her Son must logically become altered—a realization always painful to the maternal heart. Mothers would fain always keep their sons in leading strings, even when they are fully capable of ordering their conduct and clearly know their rights.

Τί ἐποίησας ἡμῖν. Bengel: "What? not why? What hast thou done for us by this conduct?" implying that He had effected nothing by His tarrying, but the giving of trouble to His parents.

The term *per se* can be rendered "why," but she does not inquire the cause of His singular behavior, but in an exclamation of distress she indicates the anguish which His conduct brought to her heart.

"Thy father and I," why not "thy parents?" Some have thought that by the distinction she would at the same time conceal the peculiar relation sustained by each respectively, and yet allow a glimpse of it. Nebe prefers the idea that in saying "parents" she would have by the one term given expression to the pain, but she would have Him know that he had caused the father and herself, each of them, unspeakable pain.

Ὁδυνώμενοι. What thoughts must have revolved in Mary's heart during those three weary days, cf. 35! Arndt suggests that in her wretchedness she may have felt herself another Eve. As the latter had brought sin into the world, so she had lost Him who was to take away sin. Thus the sword began to pierce her soul. Luther observes that the bitterness was aggravated by the consciousness of herself being to blame. The Child had been most directly and solemnly entrusted to her, and she was held responsible for Him. Hence the storm in her conscience, the thunder in her heart, would

charge her with having lost the Child; this was her fault alone. She should never for a moment have allowed Him out of her sight. "What wilt thou now say to God, that thou didst not take better care of Him? This thou hast deserved by thy sins; thou art not worthy to be His mother. Yea, thou hast deserved that He damn thee above all others, because He showed thee such honor and favor to have chosen thee for His mother." Further on, Luther adds that she felt herself in the same sin with Eve, the mother of all living, who brought the whole human race into ruin; for what are all sins compared with this, that she has wickedly neglected and lost this Child, the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Had He remained lost, or, as He could not be lost, had God taken Him again to Himself, she would have been a cause by which the redemption of the world would have been frustrated. Luther then compares this to the loss of comfort and joy which God's saints experience, that they may be saved from presumption, the secure alarmed, the faint cheered up, and that they may learn where to seek true comfort. "Here," he adds, "is the main thing in this gospel, which teaches us how and where we are to seek Christ." The parents found Him in the temple, sitting among the teachers who taught the Holy Scriptures.

Nebe holds that these words were simply the outburst of a mother's broken heart. She did not formulate a definite reproof, she only charges her Child with being the occasion of her great sorrow. "Blame is mildly implied, but is not expressed."

49. "And he said unto them, How is it" . . .

Their question Jesus answered with two counter-questions. While not violating filial reverence for His mother, His justification of Himself against the implied censure ought to be convincing. The answer corresponds with the age of the youth; at the same time, with all its simplicity, it is not lacking in the mysterious depths which become the only-begotten Son of eternal wisdom. The answer of the twelve-year-old boy "attests itself as the word of the eternal Word."

In a kind tone He said to them, *τί ὄντι*? His reply begins with the same word as the mother's question. This is the first recorded word of Jesus. With it may be compared His last words, as well before His death as before His ascension, Acts i. 7, 8. Meyer and others render "wherefore, why is it that?" Mark ii. 16; Acts v. 4, 9.

Jesus is conscious of no neglect or disobedience. His conscience points to no sin. He has apparently received an unjustifiable and

undeserved reproof. He does not return like for like, but already proves Himself the One who when reviled, reviled not again—the innocent Lamb of God who patiently bears our sins. Consider the situation: Jesus is in the temple, the object of universal astonishment and admiration. “In that moment when the doctors of Israel place Him so high above all of His age, when all who listened to Him praised the mother that had given Him birth, He receives this unreasonable reminder from her.” Instead of answering back, He accepts everything meekly, not seeking His own honor. He simply asks, Why is it that ye sought me? Some put the emphasis on “sought.” “This word of His mother, that with sorrow she has painfully sought Him, resounds in His loving child-heart, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Sought me, sought me, how was this possible? “He now chides His parents,” says Luther, “that they wander around and *seek* Him among worldly and human affairs, and do not consider that He must be occupied with what is His Father’s.”

He did not blame them because they lost Him, but because they sought Him. “And He intimates both that He was not lost, and that He could not have been found anywhere else than in the temple.” This child-like question is not meant to excuse Him nor to repel an undeserved reproof, but to indicate that when they sought Him where He was not to be sought, they had caused themselves needless care and pain, because they had forgotten what they might have known from the earlier prophecies, and what they should not have forgotten. Even in this, Schmieder holds, Jesus did not, in the remotest degree, mean to reproach His foster-father and His mother, but in His child-like simplicity He is amazed that they did not know where He must be, and that in this way, without any occasion, they wandered about anxiously seeking Him. He Himself knew clearly where He must be, and He assumed that they would know this too. As He had not lost Himself, had not strayed from the right path, it is incomprehensible to Him how they could be seeking Him with sorrow in wrong paths. Luther and Bengel find censure in the answer of Jesus. Schmieder and Nebe think His answer contains no more than that it is incomprehensible to Him how they could have been seeking Him with sorrow. “As His parents did not understand Him, because they could not sink themselves into the depths of His divine being, so He admits that on His part He does not understand His dear parents. He cannot place Himself upon their low standpoint.” His language is not that of injured honor, or of chafing from an undeserved attack. His words are calm, consid-

erate, clear. Over the crystal sea of His heart not the smallest cloud of vexation is brooding.

“Wist ye not?” Bengel: “They ought to have known by the many proofs which had been given.” He points them to His past life. He has never heretofore given them occasion for solicitude or anxiety. They must remember that He has always been in the right way, ever engaged in what is His Father’s.

Ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς: “In the house of my Father.” So the Syriac, the Armenian, the FF., Meyer and most moderns. Why did ye not seek me at once in my Father’s house? The search of the parents was needless. They ought at once to have looked at the right place. Nebe thinks, Jesus would have said that “I ought to be in the temple of my Father.” There must have been some reason for using the wider and more indefinite term. A man may be in the house of God without being in that which is God’s. The latter is the chief thing, and if the lad had been only in the temple and not in the affairs of His Father, His absence from the family would have been really sin. Nor could Jesus hitherto have given His parents an actual proof of His being thus in the house of God, for this is His first appearance in Jerusalem since His infancy. This would be expecting from His parents something of which they had as yet positively no knowledge. Nebe accordingly prefers to take the clause generally of the affairs of God, of being occupied with God and divine things. So Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, DeWette, and Bleek. The latter adds: “this is in accordance with the *usus loquendi*, the Greeks frequently saying *εἶναι ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἐν Μοῦσαις*, cf. 1 Tim. iv. 15.” It is claimed that both interpretations may be combined, neither to be taken exclusively. The connection suggests the presence in the temple, the House of God, but He was there occupied with the word of God, and with divine things. John ix. 4. It was not the house built of stones which fascinated the boy, but the word of God, which, taught and expounded in this House as no where else, made the temple so precious to Him.

Δεῖ—as Son. This follows from “my Father.” Acting under a divine necessity He has not violated the obedience due to them. Meyer: “This breaking forth of the consciousness of the divine Sonship, in the first saying preserved to us from Jesus, is to be explained to us by the power of the impressions which He experienced on His first participation in the holy observances of the festival and the temple”—“at all events already in Messianic presentiment, yet not with the conception fully unfolded, but in the dawning apprehensions of the child. Cf. v. 52. According to v. 50, it must not have previously asserted itself thus amidst the

quiet course of His domestic development, but now there had emerged with Him an *epoch* in the course of development of that consciousness of Sonship,—the first bursting open of the swelling bud."

The Father's claim on Jesus is of infinitely older standing than that of Joseph and Mary, and He thus in referring to the divine "must be" concerning Himself, declares Himself emancipated from their control. *Δεῖ* is the key to the whole enigma of His conduct. It was not His arbitrary will, but an inner necessity, an act of the highest duty. He was ever doing not His own will, but the will of His Father. The first recorded words of Jesus refer to His Father, and in the last word on the cross He in like manner confesses Him, Luke xxiii. 46. If the clause is interpreted as "my Father's house," then He declares Himself Lord of the temple, a claim which He afterwards avowed more openly, John ii. 16; Matt. xxi. 12, 13. It is claimed that the word on the cross proceeded from a much clearer consciousness. The twelve-year-old lad had only a foreboding of His unique relation to God. This consciousness grew brighter and brighter as He matured in years and experience.

"My Father" was accepted unanimously by the older Exegesis, as His designation of God in a wholly unique and specific sense. The whole context undeniably enforces this specific view. That He named God His Father, "just as every pious Jewish child might do," would require *τ. πατὴρ ἡμῶν*. Meyer: "With Jesus in the connection of His entire history 'my Father' points to a higher individual relation. And this too, it was, which made the answer unintelligible to the parents. What every pious Jewish child might have answered, they would have understood." Keim says: "No Israelite could have vindicated such a specific claim to God as is expressed by this word. In Jesus this denotes the presentiment of an infinitely near relation and right to His heavenly Father, a right surpassing in every aspect the enjoyment, rights and duties of earthly Sonship."

Schmieder: "Jesus mildly corrects the expression of Mary, and offers her at the same time the simplest solution of her not altogether innocent misunderstanding—by asking, Do ye not know that I must be about my Father's things?" He also draws a parallel to a son who travels with his foster-father into the city where his true father lives, and shows it would be expected that he spend the time as long as he is in the city at the residence of his true father. It seems unreasonable to be looking for him throughout the strange city, everywhere else than in his father's

house. Should his foster-parents leave the city without him, they would most probably believe that he was lingering with his dear father, instead of looking for him among their neighbors.

Jesus experiences in the temple not only a presentiment of the wonderful mystery of His being. In the light shining there so clearly, there comes to Him also in the form of a presentiment the knowledge of His calling. He must be occupied with that which is His Father's. He must not be engaged with His own thoughts and feelings, His mind and will, He must at all times be occupied with that which is His Father's. Person and work in His case cannot be sundered. The presentiment over the mystery of His person includes in it the presentiment of the work of His wholly unique person. Nietzsche: "As the Christian life unfolds in a sublime obligation of childhood, whose mirror is contained in the words of Jesus: 'must I not be about the things of my Father?' so His life-work appears to our Lord as a great obligation of childhood."

"These mysterious and deep words," says Kahnis, "show in the child Jesus the consciousness of a peculiar relation to God, and the knowledge of having in this relation His life calling."

50. "And they understood not the saying" . . .

He evidently had not learned the great truth from them. Many expositors have staggered at this passage. Meyer affirms, "if the angelic announcement, i. 26 ff., especially 32, 35, and ii. 10 ff., cf. vs. 19, be historical, it is incomprehensible how the words of Jesus could be incomprehensible to His parents." But it is also incomprehensible how a man writing with a sound mind would forget what he had written in the same chapter and in the previous one, and he would hardly involve himself wantonly and culpably in the most glaring contradictions. If the head of an evangelist could take in both. *i. e.*, that divine revelation to the parents of Jesus and this failure to understand His words, it might be supposed that the heads of the biblical critics could also contain both.

Nebe suggests, if the parents of Jesus even had learned and had not forgotten that He was the Son of God, their faith was only *implicita* and not *explicita*, but this phrase, "to be in that which is my Father's," of whose profound and varied sense they had had an inkling, expresses the divine Sonship in such a way as they had never before thought of it, and even now cannot comprehend.

If for a believer the person of the Lord and His oneness with the Father is a mystery, over which He adoring wonders, so it was the case with His parents. Olshausen and Bleek suppose the parents

did not comprehend the deeper meaning of the unity of the Father and the Son. Schmieder adds, "the development of our Lord followed such a natural course that the mother herself had ceased to cherish the great promises which had been made to her at the conception and birth of this Son." A much needed index is here offered for the whole development of Jesus.

Some of the earliest enemies of Christianity, and even some modern critics, have put forward the idea that Jesus had drawn His wisdom from the esoteric wisdom of the Egyptians. Others, that He was the glorious unfolding flower of wisdom that had collected in itself all the elements of culture which at that time lay scattered. But what had He in common with the Pharisaic teaching of the Scribes? He sat at the feet of no Gamaliel. He attended no school of theology. He did not signalize Himself among His contemporaries by a diligent attendance of the synagogue at Nazareth, and intimate intercourse with the masters in Israel. Matt. xiii. 54 ff.; Luke iv. 22 ff.; John vii. 15. No Essenic ideas are to be traced in Him, no influence of Alexandrian philosophy contributed to His prophetic equipment. Even the parents, who stood nearest to the Child, even the devout Mary, could do but little. The wants of the twelve-year-old boy were not understood; His words were not comprehended; His mind, through an innate power of God, soared away beyond father and mother. Nebe: "Alone He stands here, an unknown One to His acquaintances, a mystery to His parents, a stranger in His native place, a stranger in the parental house. What a grief this must have been to the love-needing and love-cherishing youth! He must even now bear His cross. Later those who hate Him put the cross upon His shoulders, now the parents do it. But so it must be. The *Logos* in Him became flesh, the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily." "Jesus has the truth in Himself as His personal possession, but as He has become man, He has it in Himself as every man has it in himself. For a certain measure of truth is inborn also to men. For, the approval which we give to a public address is to be explained by this, that what we receive through the ear corresponds wonderfully with forebodings we bear in our hearts. Christ has the truth in Himself as His original possession, but He has not yet become conscious of it. The outer world awakens the inner spiritual world in Him; the higher the sun of His life ascends, the brighter becomes the day in His consciousness and the more unfolds the closed cup of the Rose of Sharon. The Lord is an *autodidakt*; He has developed from within Himself."

This word of the evangelist forbids the idolatrous worship of the

Virgin. "This," says Luther, "stops the mouth of the unprofitable praters who exalt the holy Virgin and other saints, as if they had known everything and had never erred. Here you see how they groped and wandered about, not alone seeking Jesus, not knowing where to find Him till they came perchance into the temple, but even not understanding the word with which He reproved their want of understanding."

51. "And he went down with them . . . was subject" . . .

Κατέβη: This simply of the local descent from the high elevation of Jerusalem. Nebe allegorizes: As Jesus went bodily with His parents down from Jerusalem, so from this summit, to which His inner life had been transported in the temple, He descended to the ruts of common existence. He thinks that there were in the life of the God-man certain epochal crisis-points of development, certain elevations above the niveau of the commonplace. Here the sojourn in the temple, later the baptism by John, then the transfiguration. "The new which revealed itself to His heart in the temple must not only be outwardly connected with what He bore in Himself, but it must become inwardly united."

"To Nazareth." Where it was supposed nothing good resided, He, the only good one on earth, now dwelt. After what happened in Jerusalem, the youth returned with His parents and was subject to them, of His own free will, of course. "Marvelous," says Bengel, "is the subjection of Him to whom all things are subject." Previously He had of course been subject to them, but it is emphasized now, when it might seem that He could have by this time exempted Himself from their control,—being mentally so far superior to them. Meyer: "That mighty exaltation of the consciousness of the divine Sonship not only did not hinder but conditioned with moral necessity in the youthful development of the God-man the fulfillment of filial duty, the highest proof of which was subsequently given by the Crucified," John xix, 26, ff.

"He came in the flesh in order to fulfill all righteousness. Here in His sojourn in the temple He showed, as a matter of fact, that obedience was more to Him than anything else. Without murmuring, He leaves the Holy place where, by being absorbed in that which was His Father's, He, in being lost to His parents, found Himself." "He continues in that which is His Father's, in that He withdraws from the house of His Father; by His child-like joyful obedience He is in that which is His Father's." For the Father has not only written on tables of stone the words, "Honor thy father and mother," but He had previously engraved them

upon the fleshly tables of the heart so indelibly that even the heathen have been enabled to see that he who in life honors his parents is, living or dying, dear to the gods.

Had Jesus of His own will remained in Jerusalem, His mind could indeed not have been warped by the scholasticism of the Rabbis, but it could not have enjoyed the free, undisturbed development which the peaceful retirement of Nazareth offered. And this obedience becomes to Him a noble school. Obedience is the perfection which He had especially to manifest in later years. Luther: "He rendered this of His own will gladly, although He was God and the Lord of Mary and Joseph. He showed them obedience in obedience to His heavenly Father and from cordial love to His parents, and as an example to all men of their obligation to obedience and humility."

Calvin emphasizes this fulfillment of the duty of childhood as a necessary part of the plan of salvation. Luther also says very decidedly: "This is the sum of to-day's gospel. Christ is Lord over all, yet for an example to us He condescends, is obedient to father and mother, that we may learn both, first, the obedience towards God, afterwards to render faithful obedience to father and mother and all authority," To render obedience is now the task of the Lord for the next eighteen years. The periphrastic form, *ἡ ὑποτασσόμενος* is no doubt employed to set forth the continuance of it for this long period. *Αὐτοῖς*: This is the last reference to Joseph.

"His mother kept all these sayings in her heart." She carried back something with her besides the lad: the word which the Child had spoken in the temple and which she did not understand, cf. v. 19, but which impressed her profoundly with His spiritual superiority. They were notable words. May we learn from her to keep the words of Holy Scripture, even if we do not fully understand them. They are words of this eternal Word. "Every word of the Scriptures is a precious stone, but precious stones are not found lying about ready ground. Every word of the Scriptures is a costly pearl, but pearls lie concealed in a shell, and too often we do not know how to open this shell." Luther says, when the Virgin sees that she has erred and not understood, she becomes so much more diligent, and keeps and presses to her heart what she hears from Christ. *Διατηρεῖν*, as in v. 19 *συντηρεῖ*, denotes careful preservation. She kept it from being torn away from her by the stream of time, which takes away so many words from our hearts. Acts xv. 29; Gen. xxxvii. 11.

52. "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature" . . .

Προέκοπτεν corresponds to *εὐξανέιν*, cf. Gal. i. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 16.

"He progressed in accordance with human nature, and the wisdom of human nature; and that in actual fact, but far above the measure of an ordinary man." The evangelist mentions first the blessed growth of the σοφία. Cf. 40. The development was normal. Precocious children are wont to fall back as they grow older. The prodigious element disappears and they remain children. Our Lord showed early maturity of spirit but he nevertheless continued to increase in knowledge and wisdom. Along with the progress in σοφία was His growth in ἡλικία (not age, which would be altogether superfluous,) but bodily size. In the case of many richly endowed and early developed children, the development of the mind is at the expense of the body. With Christ both developed in the fullest harmony—*sana mens in corpore sano*.

Some take ἡλικία in the sense of experience, but the term is not used in this sense. Bengel: "In stature of body in proportion to His years. Therefore He must have reached the due and proper height of a man." Meyer, Bleek, Godet, etc: "Growth, stature." Cf. Luke xix. 3; Matt. vi. 27 cf. also v. 40. "Luke expresses his mental *sophia* and bodily (*ἡλικία*) development." 1 Sam. ii. 26. "He prefixes *sophia* because He has just related so brilliant a trait of the mental development of Jesus."

Χάρτι: the first sense as in v 40, cf. John viii. 29; but here with reference to His coming more into intercourse with others. Luke adds καὶ ἀνθρώπους. "The advancing in God's gracious favor assumes the sinless perfection of Jesus as growing, as in the way of moral development. Cf. Mark x. 18. But this does not exclude childlike innocence, and does not include youthful moral perplexities. It is a normal growth, from childlike innocence to full holiness of life."

There is noted spiritual and physical growth, and growth in the favor of God and of men. The latter does not surprise. The doctors in Jerusalem feasted themselves on the promising youth, and He commanded the approval of His fellow-citizens. He had not yet reproofed them by His word. But Nebe thinks it may be deemed strange that the Father's favor should be increasing. "God, however, can only enter into us and dwell in us with His good pleasure as we open ourselves to Him, therefore the more fully in the course of years this divine mystery of the heart and spirit of Jesus opened itself, the more fully could the Father's good pleasure rest in the Son."

The treatment of this pericope should be concerned, in the first instance, with setting in the proper light the glory of the Lord. Secondly, the lesson may be applied to the Christian training of children, etc.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD:

1. Hidden from the world and even from His parents.
2. Revealed in word and work.

JESUS' FIRST VISIT TO THE TEMPLE REVEALS,

1. The mystery of His heart—His being drawn to the Father.
2. The mystery of His being—the divine Sonship.
3. The mystery of His work—obedience.

THE GLORY OF THE TWELVE-YEAR OLD CHILD.

1. What love to God's house.
2. What love to God's word.
3. What knowledge of God's will.
4. What faithfulness in God's service.

THE FIRST WORDS OF JESUS, A GLORIOUS SELF-ATTESTATION.

1. A testimony of His innocence.
2. A testimony of His meekness.
3. A testimony of His wisdom.
4. A testimony of His divine Sonship.

THIS CHILD IS CALLED WONDERFUL.

1. He has just become the child of the law, and sits already in the midst of the doctors.
2. He loses His parents on earth and finds His Father in heaven.
3. He stands high above His parents, yet is subject to them.

HOW DEEPLY THE LORD HUMBLLED HIMSELF:

1. Under the law.
2. Under the doctors in Israel.
3. Under His parents.

THE CHILD IN THE TEMPLE TEACHES,

1. The parents the right training of children:
 - (a) To lead them to the Lord.
 - (b) To seek the lost with sorrow.
2. The children their obligations:
 - (a) To fear and love God above all things.
 - (b) To honor father and mother in subjection.

THE TWELVE-YEAR JESUS AN EXAMPLE TO CHILDREN,

1. Of child-like innocence.
2. Of child-like piety.
3. Of child-like obedience.

FOR A BLESSED YOUTH ARE NEEDED:

1. Pious parents and faithful teachers.
2. Inward aspirations and cheerful obedience.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

JOHN ii. 1-11.

THE choice of this Lesson for the second Sunday of the Epiphany period is determined by the last words, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana . . . and manifested forth his glory." The first word of the Lord is followed by the first work of the Lord. Besides the historical element, a typical element also contributed to this selection, which was wont to be read in the earliest centuries on the occasion of this Festival. Its hidden sense is often dwelt upon at present. Some: By this most characteristic miracle Jesus demonstrated His position with reference to John the Baptist. Others go even farther: The Old Testament having culminated in John, the Lord illustrates by this miracle the great difference between the economy of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament: rigor *versus* freedom. Moses turned water into blood; Christ turns water into wine.

1. "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana" . . .

Time and place are distinctly given, yet not so precisely as to prevent considerable controversy relative to both.

"The third day." Some reckon from i. 43-45, when Jesus would go forth into Galilee. One day thus intervened between Nathaniel's calling and the wedding. Ewald: "The third day after the return of Jesus to Cana." Some put the occurrence of Jesus' arrival on the third day of the wedding feast.

This is not justified by the language of the text. Baur maintains that the day of the miracle followed immediately the day mentioned, i. 43. It was the prompt fulfillment of the prophecy, v. 51: "Ye shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," on the very next day. But Nebe claims that as those words were spoken just as Jesus was on the point of leaving Bethany in Judea beyond the Jordan, this interpretation does not leave enough time for the journey.

Lücke, Luthardt, Meyer, Tholuck, Godet and others accept the explanation that three days after Jesus said to Philip, "Follow me," closing the discourse with the promise of heaven being opened, the wedding took place.

“In Cana.” As in iv. 46, and xxi. 2, the evangelist designates it as Cana of Galilee. The Old Testament mentions Kana in Asher, Joshua xix. 28. Some have identified the latter with the former. Eusebius locates it well on toward Sidon, and Robinson found at a short distance south-east from Tyre a little village by this name. Nebe contends that the one in the text could not have been in this locality, as it would have been impracticable to make the journey to this point from Bethany in so short a time. In the neighborhood of Nazareth there appear to have been at the time of our Lord two localities by the name of Cana. The ruins of a village, now called Khirbet Kana el Jelil, are found about fourteen miles directly north of Nazareth. Another Cana, now called Kefr Kenna, is only five miles from Nazareth in a north-easterly direction. Some fix on the latter as the place of the wedding, while Robinson, Ritter, Meyer, Keil and others hold to the Kana el Jelil. Josephus, in his *Life*, § 16, refers to a Cana in Galilee which must have stood in the vicinity of Tiberias. Again he mentions Cana, where Herod pitched a camp as he made an invasion into Samaria. Lightfoot and others claim that the latter Cana lay in Samaria, and it is surmised that the Cana of our history and the one mentioned in the life of Josephus received the cognomen “of Galilee,” to distinguish it from the Cana in Ephraim. The reference to a Galilean Cana readily corresponds with a Cana which was situated between Nazareth and the Sea of Gennessaret, a Cana which lay to the northward of Nazareth. The traditional Kefr Kenna is, therefore, to be accepted, as it would be hard otherwise to have Jesus reach the wedding in the time allowed.

He had been for some time tarrying in Judea. Forty days were passed in the temptation alone. It is not likely then that He knew anything definite of the wedding beforehand. Lange's idea that He found the invitation at Nazareth on His return is not tenable. That He would bring disciples along out of Judea could not have been known to the bridegroom, and yet the Lord with His disciples was invited to the wedding.

Some assume that Jesus on His way from Judea came accidentally to Cana. He may have been sent for. He may have learned of the happy occasion while on the way. Holding Nazareth to have been Mary's place of residence, Matt. xiii. 54-56, that may be regarded as the goal of the Lord's journey, and then we may assume that Cana was so situated that He would necessarily pass through it on his way from Bethany to His own city. This would not be possible in the case of Kana el Jelil; only Kefr Kenna, John iv. 46, ff, is in entire harmony with this.

With the Jews, just as with the heathen, weddings were accompanied by a feast called γάμος or γάμοι, and these festivities lasted regularly a whole week. Gen. xxix. 28; Judg. xiv. 12; Job xi. 20. According to Hengstenberg the wedding could have lasted but one day, else it could not have been assigned to the third day. Indigent circumstances would not admit of a seven days' feast. Certainly Jesus is not to be thought of as keeping on with the feast for seven days. His servants are generally expected to retire before the dance begins. The text simply announces that a wedding took place on the third day. This was the beginning only.

"The mother of Jesus was there." John never mentions her name. He takes the name for granted as known from the other Evangelists, vi. 67; vii. 42; xxi. 2.

This is an illustration of the supplemental character of the fourth Gospel, though it is well to remember that John never mentions himself, nor his brother James. Mary became a member of his household. In what capacity Mary was at the wedding we are not informed. That she was not an ordinary guest we may readily see. She takes a sympathetic interest in the affairs of the home, and the servants acknowledge her authority. Luther supposes that they were some poor near friends of hers, so that she had to act the part of mother of the bride, for she takes an active interest in things, and is very much concerned on discovering that refreshments are running short. Other members of her family were there, v. 12. There have been all sorts of conjectures as to the name of the family of the bridegroom.

2. "And Jesus also was bidden and his disciples" . . .

His mother was there and it might be assumed, therefore, that Jesus, who on His way to Nazareth passed through Cana, would also be invited, but it need not be assumed that these accompanying Him would be invited. "That Jesus would come as the Messiah, that His companions would be there as His disciples, could not have been known in Cana." Jesus was invited simply as an acquaintance. Out of loving regard for Him His disciples were likewise invited, though some were doubtless strangers to the family. And this regard is the more notable when we consider that there was already something of a group. The number twelve does not appear till John vi. 67. Here we think of those enrolled in Chap. i., John, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathaniel, who was born in Cana. The circumstantial narrative bespeaks John's presence. There may have been others. In this way the number of guests was disproportionate to the circumstances of the family.

Extraordinary hospitality leads to serious embarrassment. But love does not stop for hindrances. It follows its inward impulse. Without any solicitude Jesus with His company is invited, and without any solicitude He accepts the invitation. Love freely accepts the gift of love.

The spirit of our Lord's ministry has a very different character from that of John. Olshausen: "The first disciples of Christ were, doubtless, all originally disciples of the Baptist. His manner of life—a rigid, penitential austerity and a solitary abode in the desert—naturally appeared to them the only right one. What a contrast for them, when the Messiah, to whom the Baptist himself had pointed them, leads them first of all to a marriage! John devoted them to a life of self-denial; Christ conducted them to enjoyment." The FF. made a great deal of the marriage feast as an image of the inward joy and happiness which Christ imparts to souls, and in which He bestows the wine of His spirit. Cf. the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Nebe: "The former master had to lead an ascetic life; he must not come to weddings and feasts, for he does not know how to turn the water into wine. He baptized only with water, and not with the Spirit, which by its rejoicing in God overcomes the pleasures of the world." "All disapproving judgments that might obtrude themselves into the hearts of the strict disciples of John then present, were suppressed by the manifestation of the glory of the Lord, which showed them that in Christ there was more than in John." To the disciples of Christ this miracle at the very threshold of their discipleship was of the utmost importance. It reconciled them to the contrast between the new and the old. At the time of the composition of the Gospel the evangelist may have had specially in his mind the surviving disciples of John, who were still inclined to rigid asceticism, and who were doubtless often scandalized at the freer life of Christians. This miracle sanctions their cheerful life, and it can always be cited as a reproof of overestimated asceticism. Nebe: "All spiritual life which has not yet come to inward firmness and strength seeks of necessity to bolster itself by a legalistic formalism, by an outward, flesh-mortifying asceticism. For the history of the Church it is therefore not an unfavorable sign, when the forms and institutions in which an outward denial of the world finds its satisfaction, gradually disappears. Faith alone is the victory which overcomes the world, and to this faith belongs evangelical liberty." Christians should possess the courage to mingle in society and purify it. Christ's going to the wedding was quite appropriate for the early bright commencement of His kingdom. In His last year He would

hardly have accepted the invitation. The times having become earnest, how would the great sorrow resting upon His heart have comported with such outward joyousness? Now everything is in beautiful harmony.

The FF., in their allegorical interpretations, largely represent Christ here as the One who is properly celebrating His own wedding. Certainly His appearance at this marriage is the proof that the Bridegroom has come.

By His presence Jesus acknowledges the holiness of this state, which God Himself instituted in Paradise. He came not to destroy but to fulfil. He bestows His special favor upon marriage, gives to the institution His own seal by a miracle. He confers the luster of His presence and the enjoyment of personal participation upon the institution which He with His Father appointed for man. Romanism, by its forbidding marriage to those who serve at the altar, has put itself here in direct antagonism to the Head of the Church.

Luther, who calls God the first "Bridesman," says: "In this Christ gloriously dignified this state, in that He Himself attended the wedding with His mother and disciples. . . . Since then Christ so honors and comforts it, it ought to be dear and precious to every man. Since it is certainly the state which God loves, we should endure everything cheerfully that is hard or trying in it, and if it were ten times harder and more trying." Bengel: "Christ does not abolish human society, but sanctifies it. Thirst can be assuaged even by water, but at the marriage feast the Lord gives wine; independently of marriage there would have been no case of need. Here is shown the great graciousness of the Lord: He takes part in the marriage-feast at the earliest period (of His ministry), whilst He is alluring disciples, being afterwards about to proceed by more severe ways leading to the cross, (both methods) eventuating in glory."

3. "And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus" . . .

Ὑστερονῶντες. Meyer: "They are short of wine." How many days the feast had passed cannot be known. Mary possessed sharp and sympathetic eyes. She notices the scarcity of wine long before it is perceived by any of the guests, and she tries to spare the bridegroom a great mortification. Many a cross comes to the household, and even the home which our Lord has entered as a wedding guest has its affliction and its needs. *Conjugium schola crucis*. Occurrences of this kind may happen especially where wine is not used daily, but a family then would feel it a disgrace.

The bridegroom is not to be censured as having reckoned without his host. Rather is he to be commended for generous impulses. The deficiency was, doubtless, occasioned in the main by the unexpected presence of so large a company. Jesus and His disciples may have been invited at the last hour, as they happened to pass through the village. There is nothing to indicate poverty. There is a master of the feast, there are servants, and evidently a considerable company of guests.

"They have no wine." What is Mary's object in making this communication? Bengel: "She would give a gentle (?) hint to her Son and His disciples to withdraw, in order that the rest also may leave before the scarcity is discovered by all." If this sense be accepted the reply of Jesus not only does not appear harsh, but is most full of love. Bengel adds: "There were more disciples than those who invited them with Jesus seem to have thought; on that account the wine was more speedily all spent; but Jesus most liberally compensates them, by giving as many vessels of wine as were about the number of companions whom He had brought with Him." The "hour" in this interpretation would be the time for His departure.

Nebe holds Bengel's view inadmissible, and thinks that Jesus' answer to her would still be unsuitable. Meyer and Bleek interpret her words as an indirect appeal to provide relief, which might be furnished in an ordinary natural way. Hence the direction v. 5. To this Nebe objects that if she had intended to get assistance from the outside through money or good words, she would not have applied to her Son who was unacquainted with the circumstances, but she would have given such practical directions to the servants.

Chrysostom understands her to intimate to Him to perform a miracle. He had indeed thus far performed no σημεῖον; but she had kept in her heart the angelic words of the annunciation, and His birth, she knew of His baptism and concomitant circumstances, of John's announcement of Him, and His calling disciples, and she doubtless attributed to Him miraculous power, and as He was now gathering disciples she expected that "the hour" had about arrived for the manifestation of His Messianic power. She seems to have understood by "the hour" the moment for declaring Himself. Her mind is filled, proudly, perhaps, with the thought of miraculous help. She remembers all the promises. She expects great things from her Son. From the disciples she has learned what transpired at the Jordan, and of the words to Nathaniel, "thou shalt see greater things than these," and what Hē had said

v. 51. She hopes that these words—which were hardly placed just before the marriage by accident, would now be fulfilled. “She hopes and desires this so much the more as the whole appearance of Jesus made upon her the impression of having undergone a great change,” Mary was justified in such an expectation as the great prophets of the past had also wrought miracles, and the people expected from the Messiah especially the working of miracles on a large scale. Cf. Is. xxxv. 5, 6; Gen. xlix. 10, 11.

Jesus had, of course, heretofore revealed extraordinary gifts, and the mother, swayed by her observations and hopes, expects now some extraordinary action which will reveal His true character to others also.

Nebe thinks Mary’s words too indefinite and general to admit of such a precise meaning. Luther recognizes the reserved character of Mary’s language, submitting everything to His counsel and His hands: “She feels and laments to Him the shortness, desires help and advice from Him with humble and modest appeal. She does not say, Dear Son, get wine for us, but simply, they are short of wine. It is an appeal to His goodness, as if she meant to say, He is so good and gracious that asking is not necessary, I will simply inform Him what is lacking.” Modesty and joyous confidence are expressed in her words. Knowing His tenderness and love, reverently she only calls His attention to the shortage. This modest reserve and indefiniteness Nebe holds to be inconsistent with an explicit appeal for a miracle.

She expects Him to do something which will relieve the straits, but what, she humbly refrains from saying. And had He asked her, What wilt thou have me do? she was hardly prepared with a definite answer. Not only the procuring of relief, but the devising of it, she leaves entirely to her Son, who is also her Lord. This corresponds to true Christian prayer. We call upon the Lord in our distress, but we should not prescribe the means and way by which God is to help us. That is encroachment upon His sovereign Majesty. Nebe thinks Mary is not chargeable with such an offense, though almost every believer is. Yet there seems to have been something in her words or her manner which displeased her Son. Her faith was defective. The Lord is present, and yet she thinks it necessary to call His attention to a distress about to occur. “Cast all your cares upon Him, for He careth for you.” Mary had not reached that stage. She calculates how much wine is on hand and counts the guests, but forgets that one of the guests is the Only-begotten of the Father.

4. "Jesus says to her, Woman, what have I" . . .

"What is there (common) to me and thee?" Thy thoughts are one thing, mine another. xiii. 7. The answer undoubtedly conveys a rebuke. Some: He harshly repels her. "He disclaims any participation in the grounds on which the request is based." Meyer calls His answer "a rejection of fellowship." Augustine: "That in me which works miracles is not born of thee." Nebe: "Judgment must begin at the house of God, for His own ones shall shine as lights in this dark world, but if they are to shine rightly they must beforehand be thoroughly trimmed."

"Woman." The harshness of His reply, recognized by all expositors, is found in the formula "what is there to me" &c., and not in the term woman, instead of mother. Bengel: "This appellation held a middle-place, and was especially becoming for the Lord to use, xix. 26,—perhaps it also was peculiar to Him. The Lord had regard to the Father above all things; not even did He know His mother according to the flesh, 2 Cor. v. 16." Especially was the appellation of mother unsuited to this question, "what is there to me" &c.

Ἦναι was a title of respect answering to *Κεῖσε*. Cf. John xx. 13, 15. The term in Greek may have at all events contained more tender respect than our term woman. Woman is used for mother, Is. xlv. 10. Profane Greek offers examples of the endearing use of the term.

It is surprising that Jesus never gave to Mary in direct address the sweet name of mother.

The Reformers found in this address a repudiation of Mariolatry. Surely by this term He does not acknowledge her as His mother, cf. Matt. xii. 48. Henceforth He stands no longer before the world as Mary's Son, but as the One sent by the Father into the world. In the consciousness of His higher wonder-working power and will, in respect of which He is *ἀμήτωρ* He omits the use of *μήτηρ* even on the cross. "He rejects any interference proceeding from feminine weakness, even when coming from His blessed virgin mother. His period of subjection to her is at an end. He has now become Lord even of her. She was blessed in Him through believing obedience. As she sustained so tender an earthly relation to Him, it may have been the more difficult for her to enter the higher relationship, hence this earnest severe reply. When the 12-year lad said, 'I must be about that which is my Father's,' He sundered the ties of flesh and blood which bound Him to His earthly parent, in order to form a new bond of fellowship between Him and His parents. Now on entering upon His Messianic call-

ing He fully sunders the natural ties which connect Him with His mother, and how much sweeter, purer and more blessed the new bond of spiritual fellowship."

Some think Jesus points to this new fellowship by the words *τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί*, a well-known form of speech among the Hebrews, to which the classics offer a single parallel—in Gellius. Cf. Judg. xi. 12 (Josh. xxii. 24); 2 Sam. xvi. 10; 1 Kings xvii. 18; cf. Matt. viii. 29; xxvii. 19; Mark i. 24; Luke viii. 28. Hengstenberg says: "The form is used when a relation designed by another party is rejected as improper or impertinent, be it friendly or unfriendly. In the nature of the case the form involves blame." The Lord, by these words, draws a line of separation between Himself and His mother; points her to definite limits which she dare not pass. He maintains most decisively the freedom of His decisions and actions.

But wherein does her mind not correspond with His? Some have thought He was so abrupt because of the ambition He discovered in her. Should He here exhibit His power of miracles He would reflect glory on her. His impatient reply then corresponds with that given to Peter.

Some vindicate her against such an imputation. Mary had simply not realized that her Son had outgrown her admonition. Others: She could not wait for the time of the revelation of His glory; while not prescribing, she is impatient, and seeks to stimulate Him not to delay any longer. To this He must offer decisive resistance. Nebe: "A gentle yielding here would ever thereafter have brought Him not only into an embarrassing, but a wholly false position. He must expose Himself to the evil appearance of unfilial conduct, in order to show Himself the obedient Child, the Son unconditionally fulfilling the will of His Father." This was her first meeting with Him after He had been anointed by the Holy Ghost and become the Master of a group of disciples, and she must learn that in what henceforth devolves upon Him she no longer sustains to Him the relation of a mother to a son. Hence, too, as Von Hofman suggests, she ought to recognize in that miracle which He performed in consequence of her words, something more than the mere fulfillment of her wish. Jesus gently chides her for "an unseasonable intermeddling in His Messianic call." Meyer: "He rejects her interference in the consciousness of the call which here is given Him to begin His Messianic ministry of miracles."

He is conscious of a superhuman independence of all human counsel. He works not at human dictation. His hour for action is fixed by the Father. Strenuously repelling her, as required by

the dignity of His holy office, He yet exhibits great tenderness in the words, "My hour has not yet come." Here already is revealed a glory full of grace and truth. With one hand He repels, with the other He gives her a significant hint.

The prophetic element is contained in *οὐπω*: what cannot yet be, will take place when His time has come.

"My hour." His actions are conditioned by His hour. The expressions, "my hour," "His hour," is used by John throughout with very great emphasis. vii. 30; viii. 20; xii. 23; xiii. 1; xvii. 1. Some have maintained that all these passages point to the time of His death. This Meyer denies, holding that its reference depends on the context. Others understand by *ἡ ὥρα* in John the hour of revelation of His being, the hour of His glorification. Cf. v. 11. Nebe thinks the two views are not in conflict. "For according to the profound view of the fourth evangelist the glorification of the Lord consists not merely in a glory attaching to Him from without, but much more in a glory to which He transforms Himself by His devotion to death." The hour of His glorification in this sense culminated upon the cross.

The general reference of this term to His death may be accounted for by the fact that His death is the subject underlying the narrative. Nebe claims, the glorification of Christ in an eminent sense begins with His sufferings, xii. 27 ff.; "with the resurrection opens the epoch when His immanent glory displays itself also outwardly."

Others take "hour" as the appointed time for supernatural action and self-manifestation by the exercise of miraculous power. Meyer: "Jesus, conscious of His close communion with the Father, sees clearly that this His first manifestation of Himself as Messiah in the working of miracles, stands, even with reference to the time when it is to begin, in close connection with the divine appointment, and He feels that the moment, cf. xvi. 21, *ὁ καιρὸς*, for this first Messianic display of power is not yet present when His mother refers to the want of wine." Evidently the true import of "hour" is here conditioned by the purpose of Mary's communication.

But why was it not yet "His hour?" Some explain, by the method of God's gracious dealings in not imparting to any one until he realizes his need. Grace does not feed those who are full and satisfied, but those who are hungry. Euthymius: "The hour had not come because the people at the wedding had not yet believed that Jesus could help and had not approached Him with this object." Many: The hour of the revelation of His glory, which

Meyer thinks is anticipating v. 11. Luthardt calls it the figurative prolepsis of Christ's subsequent full revelation of Himself before the eyes of men.

Jesus says, "my hour has not yet come," and yet, in a very little while, He does just what Mary is supposed to have desired: He produces an ample supply of wine and manifests forth His glory. His very answer implies His intention to provide help, though not immediately, and this may have prompted Mary's direction to the waiters whose services He might require. She had, no doubt, ideas of His glory which were in conflict with the nature of His mission. In the collection of disciples she saw that the mystery of His being and of His work was no longer to be concealed, and that the crisis had come for Him to announce Himself and to enter upon an outwardly glorious activity. She probably looked for a far more magnificent display of the powers of the unseen world, a brilliant inauguration of an earthly kingdom. The time for such a display as was suggested by the thoughts of her heart had not arrived. It had not come when He charged the servants to fill up the water-pots. He works, indeed, a miracle, but invisibly, quietly, secretly. None but the domestics and, perhaps, the disciples knew what had transpired, v. 9. His answer implies that His kingdom at present comes not with observation, that He does not present Himself nor His kingdom with the trappings of outward glory, but reveals them to the eye of faith. Cf. i. 50; v. 20. An hour will come when His immanent glory will shine forth without a veil. "That hour the Father will inaugurate with the words, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again," xii. 28. The hour which is in Mary's mind has not yet come. Still she gathered from His words or mien that so far His mind was in accord with hers, that help must forthwith be provided.

Note yet the principle of order, law, system in the divine economy. Even the Son of God does not overstep the line and the time marked out for Him, but under all circumstances submits to the divine appointment of time and space.

5. "His mother said unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you" . . .

She seems to construe the "no" of Jesus into a "yes." Some assume an ellipsis here of a hint or a word to Mary indicating what He would do. Luther says, faith is presented here in the right conflict. Here is a lesson for us. "Harsh and unkind as seem His words, she interprets in her heart everything not of wrath or as lacking in goodness, and continues firm in the thought that He is gracious." The answer may appear so repellent to us that we

do not recognize the hidden assent, but Mary must have recognized it. Her heart remains clear, and her intellect.

Firm in her confidence in the helpful sympathy of Jesus, she turns to the servants and gives them pertinent directions relative to some wish or command on His part. She promptly corrects her own mistake and submits herself in the obedience of faith to the word of her Son, preparing the way for the work He may do. All that was subject to her management she now subjects to Him. Nebe infers that she correctly understood His reference to His "hour." Her Son will not perform a demonstrative or ostentatious miracle, He will merely reveal His glory in a *semeion* (miracle), and for this human agencies will be required. Wine is wanting, and since Christ will secretly provide a supply, she instinctively gives directions to the servants by whom the wine is brought to the guests.

6. "And there were set there six water-pots" . . .

Ἐκεῖ: in the feast chamber, or possibly in the vestibule or court. Not only before meals, but during meals, ablutions took place among the Jews. Hence, vessels containing water were kept convenient. Matt. xv. 2; Mark vii. 2 ff.; Luke xi. 38. Lightfoot offers numerous proofs from later sources. These ablutions had no reference to external cleanliness. They were imposed from religious considerations.

We cannot reckon the capacity of these "water-pots," as we know not what measure the evangelist had in mind. *Κεῖμενά* indicates that they were broad and capacious rather than high. Meyer: "In conformity with his Hellenic tendency, John gives the Attic measure, which, however, is equal to the Hebrew bath." The Attic metrete contained about eight and seven-eighths gallons. Each, (*ἀνὰ*, distributive) vessel contained two or three metretes. The entire quantity was 106 to 160 gallons. Some have used this to impugn the historic character of the narrative, but it is in keeping with the generous nature of all the miracles of our Lord, who ever gives abundantly. The miracle was one of blessing, of divine help, and the divine Giver does not stint the gracious act. What was left over would serve as a present for the marriage pair "while the possible abuse of it during the feast itself was prevented by the presence of the Giver." The quantity was suggested by the six vessels lying there, a number which in itself has no significance except as showing to what extent the Jews carried their washings. Not measuring merely the amount of the need, Jesus would not think of keeping within the exact quantity required, by changing

the contents of only one or two vessels into wine. When He fed the 5000, and when He fed the 4000, there was a surplus. His miracles of grace are ever marked by measureless kindness.

The attempt to prove that the wine of this miracle was not wine cannot claim the support of a single recognized Biblical scholar. Many things, with reference to modern notions of intoxicating beverages, must be considered, such as climate, customs, stage of moral advancement, &c. Wine is not the only gift of God which is perverted into a temptation to evil, and it may be taken for granted that He who of His own will lay down His life for the salvation of men, is not responsible for their destruction.

7. Jesus saith . . . "Fill the water-pots with water" . . .

The vessels were probably empty. Jesus soon turns to those to whom Mary had spoken. All that is related is the filling in of the water and the drawing out of the wine. Meyer: "The transformation is accomplished in the time between vv. 7 & 8." "It might be placed after the drawing out, consequently after v. 8, so that only so much as was drawn was converted into wine. But the minute statement of the number and large size of the vessels is manifestly intended to draw attention to the greatness of the miracle in a quantitative point of view." The process is of course incomprehensible—or it would not be supernatural and miraculous.

Calvin suggests that Christ's direction to the servants may have sounded ridiculous. There was no lack of water. But divine power appears all the more glorious from unlooked-for success. When the servants draw wine after having poured in water, no suspicion of a genuine miracle remains. These servants were in the fullest sense witnesses of the miracle, having poured in the water, and drawn out the wine. Jesus seems not to have found it necessary in this first miracle to demand faith as a condition. Mary had faith, as shown in her direction to the servants.

Rothe has shown that the idea of revelation, from an inward necessity requires miracles. Sin has alienated man from God and has closed those organs by which he would know God. He has become a psychic creature, a natural man, whose heart cleaves to this world, and whose mind is open only for the sensuous. If God is to be revealed, He must manifest Himself unmistakably to the outward senses, and through these move the whole man. Miracles are the tuning-hammer which strikes the chords of the human heart in preparation for the action of the Holy Ghost. "Only under the foil of miracles does revelation come to pass."

As the miracle is to serve a specific revelation, it must sustain a certain spiritual harmony. The miracle is to prepare the way to the heart for a certain revelation. All revelations have indeed a common goal. They meet in one centre, redemption. And redemption is restoration. To redeem is to break the fetters of one bound, to restore the captive to liberty—it is a restoration to the state of integrity. Redemption presupposes something, a created but fallen being. Hence miracles, the inseparable accompaniments of redemption, require also something as presupposed. And as redemption frees this given man from sin, strengthens and glorifies his nature, so we may expect that miracles in a corresponding manner advance that which is on hand, which is presupposed, to a higher form of existence. Nebe holds only those miracles normal, where a great change is effected on a given substratum. There is no creation from nothing. All the miracles of our Lord bear this stamp of affinity to the nature of redemption. They are not creative products, but without exception they require an element on which they are accomplished, they modify a given substratum. This is the case here. The same happened in the feeding of the 5000, where the five loaves and the few fishes were at hand. So in securing the coin from the mouth of the fish for the temple tax; so in the restoration of life a dead body is given.

Not only is a material element presupposed, but an ethical, personal condition. The miracle is to serve revelation. Revelation does not aim at an exhibition of power or glory. God does not reveal Himself for His sake, but for our sakes. Through revelation He would redeem us from sin; and sin is a power whose roots are within us—it resides in the heart. This evil power within us is to be broken and destroyed by redemption, and since miracles are the form under which the revelation of redemption is accomplished, and as form and content must harmonize, it may be taken for granted that miracles require also a condition in the inner man. Miracles, if they are to stretch and tune the chords of the heart, require some chords to be yet remaining; the heart must still be susceptible, capable of opening toward God, receptive for God's word and God's work. This is faith—*fides quae apprehendit*. Where there is no faith to respond to the miracle, the miracle does not materialize. God can only work a miracle when there is a prospect of results. Hence, the gospel narrative joins faith and miracles continuously in the most vital connection. Matt. xiii. 58; Mark vi. 5 f.; Matt. ix. 22, etc. A personal, ethical condition is the prerequisite to a miracle.

Mary's germinating faith is revealed in her direction to the ser-

vants, and a similar faith is shown by the servants. Their faith is tested by the command to fill up the vessels with water. They may have already imagined that He proposed to do something with reference to the deficiency of wine, the amount on hand having been consumed. His direction, however, simply showed them that He would not allow the feast to be interrupted or terminated. Had they followed the promptings of the natural man, they would have raised objections. In faithful obedience they do **what** Jesus commands them. So complete and hearty was their obedience that they filled the vessels *ὡς ἔνεω*, they went as far as they could. Meyer thinks that this is stated for no other purpose than to give prominence to the quantity of the wine. But Nebe holds that sufficient prominence was given to that in v. 6, and that these two words set forth the joyful obedience and zeal of the servants.

To the plea that a miracle-working God contradicts Himself, Nebe replies that God has appointed laws for nature, but has not placed Himself and His activity under their yoke. For God is not nature, God is spirit, God is love. In order to distinguish Himself from nature, to manifest Himself in His love, He works miracles. In a supernatural manner God brings salvation. Nor should we say a miracle is a single act, a single interposition of God. Every miracle is a link of the chain by which God, through the almighty power of His saving grace, seeks to draw humanity out of the bondage of sin into the blessedness of God's children. Every miracle is an integral constituent of the history of revelation, a sure signal that another great hour in the kingdom of God has struck.

8. "And he saith to them, Draw out now" . . .

Nebe: "The Lord further tests the faith of the servants. Draw out now from the vessels you have just filled and bear" He does not tell them why they should bear it to the table-master. What the servants have filled into the vessels shall be tasted by the head-waiter—upon whom devolved the charge and testing of the meats and drinks, the direction of the servants, the entire arrangement of the repast—to see if it may not supply the place of the failing wine. That was asking considerable from the servants: to take what they had drawn and pass it over as wine and that to the chief waiter. Some have held that the *architriklinos*=*sumposiarchos*, who with the Greeks and Romans was selected from among the guests to preside. Most moderns make him no guest at all, but chief of the servants. According to vv. 8 and 9, he seems not to have been in the guest-chamber. The servants in taking the contents of the ves-

sels to their chief that he should set it before the guests, would, if they had followed their reason and their senses, have kept away from him with this stuff. Had he been a guest he would have had them punished for their mockery. Were he himself but a slave, or a professional feast-master, he would hardly have condoned such frivolity on the part of his assistants. But without hesitation or fear, they proceeded to the table-master with what they had drawn from the water-pots. It was a severe trial, nobly borne, an exhibition of beautiful obedience.

The drawing was altogether general from any or all of the vessels. Meyer: "All the casks were filled, the water in all was turned into wine." The drawing out was done by means of a vessel, a tankard, out of which the master of the feast would fill the cups upon the table.

9. "When the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine" . . .

A miracle has taken place in secret, unobserved. They had poured water into the vessels up to the brim, and what they now draw out is no longer water, it has become wine, the best of wine. The rationalist Paulus explains what occurred as a wedding joke, Jesus as a guest having brought into the house as a present a quantity of excellent wine, and as the store in the house began to fail, He gave a wink and the servants brought His wine mixed with water before the guests. "Mary had brought the wine with her as a wedding present, she gave her Son a sign to bring out and distribute the gift." Some suggest that Jesus had charged the water standing in the eyes of all, with certain ingredients producing a very palatable flavor of wine. Meyer justly observes: "Instead of the transmutation of water, this makes a transmutation of history."

He adds: "We must abide by the simple statement that there was a change of substance effected by the power of Jesus over the sphere of nature, in conformity with a higher law of causation," wrought as an act of abounding kindness. The water was converted into, became, *γεγενημένον*, wine. And this was a *semeion*, an actual miracle, making manifest the glory of the Lord, awakening and confirming the faith of His disciples. Meyer adds: "Every exposition which explains away the miraculous element, contradicts the word and purpose of St John, infringes on his credibility and capacity for simple observation, and places even the character of Jesus in an ambiguous light." "And this holds, too, against Lange's absurd notion of a sort of transfiguration scene elevating the company to "a higher tone of feeling, in which they so lost

all taste for the earthly, and drank common water for the best of wine." The evangelist narrates simply that the water became wine.

Straus' mythical explanation, resolving the fact into a legend derived from the analogies of the histories of Moses, *Exod. xv. 23 ff; xvii. 5 ff; Numb. xx. 10; 2 Kings ii. 19 ff.*, and claiming that the Lord must surpass the magnates of the past, contradicts the trustworthiness and genuineness of the Gospel.

Serious ethical arguments have been urged against this miracle. DeWette calls it a miracle in the domain of luxury. Schweizer says: "It is ethically almost incomprehensible." The quantity is regarded objectionable, as the guests had already imbibed freely. It is thought incongruous for Jesus to manifest thus His glory, where but an ordinary form of distress occurred, a distress not imperilling body or soul. But the measure of supply corresponds with what in His mercy God does daily and richly. And God's infinite kindness is not limited to cases of distress.

Hengstenberg thinks the first miracle must needs be of this character. The revelation of the glory of the Lord would be incomplete if the miracle had been on a small scale. Cf. *Ps. lxxv. 9*. "It became Jesus to show Himself the rich Son of the rich Father."

Luther says, Jesus was not displeased with the expenses of the wedding or with anything connected with the wedding, adornment, festivity, eating, drinking, according to the custom of the country—which has the appearance of extravagance, waste and worldliness—so long as everything is done in moderation and becoming to a wedding. Because these festivities were customary among the Jews He would not condemn them, unless they go beyond moderation. "As long as things go on decently and orderly, I leave to a wedding its rights and customs." He gives in fact decided encouragement to dancing. Young children dance without sin. Be like a child and dancing will not hurt you.

Nebe concludes, no ethical argument against the miracle can be maintained. We praise the Lord that right in His first miracle He made it clear as the sun, that when He opens His hands He gives not sparingly, but richly, "exceeding abundantly."

"And knew not whence," assigns the reason for calling the bridegroom. The servants knew they had drawn it from the water-pots, but he did not, having been elsewhere, *v. 8*, and the insertion of this gives prominence to the reality of the miracle.

Architriklinos is repeated because of the parenthesis. *Γεγενημένον*, perfect, "had become wine and now was wine."

The servants had, it seems, very properly kept quiet about the whole procedure. As the Lord directed concerning His other miracles that they should not be noised abroad, so here the people, who only too fondly seized the letter of prophecy and dreamed of the grand feast the Messiah would prepare, would soon have been carried away with the idea that Jesus would set up a kingdom of worldly luxury and glory. The miracle was wrought in secret, and it was to remain secret. The guests were possibly not apprized of it. Bengel: "The ignorance of the table-master proves the goodness of the wine, the knowledge of the servants the truth of the miracle."

Regarding the bridegroom as the giver of this excellent wine, the *architriklinos*

10. "Saith unto him, Every man setteth out first the good wine" . . .

He, as a professional taster, perceived that this was wine of an extraordinary quality. In the spirit of the occasion he may have spoken half in jest and half in earnest. *Μεθυσθῶσιν* means, if not to be actually intoxicated, yet to have drunk copiously. But it warrants no inference as to the condition of the company at the time. The reference is to what is customary in the world, with no application to the present company or occasion. When men have become intoxicated they no longer appreciate the goodness of wine. The palate has lost its keen discrimination. Till now, from the first, they have been drinking what in comparison with this is inferior wine. They are still capable of judging. There is certainly no countenance given to drunkenness and no reflection on the sobriety of this company. Jesus would never have remained in a company of drunken persons, much less have provided more wine for them, and that of the strongest quality. He does nothing with a view to its being wasted. On "thou hast kept," Bengel observes: "He speaks as one ignorant of what had taken place, v. 9." The expression of the feast-master is, doubtless, a faithful portraiture of the world. In its sphere the maxim holds, the longer the worse. It gives first its best, with which to intoxicate men, afterwards the bitter dregs. First laughter, then weeping, that is the order of the world. In the kingdom of God the order is reversed. The worst first, then comes the good, the better, the best, in an ascending line. The world leads down into the abyss of hell, the Lord to the blessed heights of heaven, *per crucem ad lucem, per aspera ad astra*. The true gospel banquet keeps the best till last.

11. "This as the beginning of his signs did Jesus . . . and manifested" . . .

The Evangelist designates this miracle as the commencement of his miraculous activity, it is the first miracle in general, and He designates the miracle as a *semeion*. The most usual terms for a miracle in both Old Testament and New Testament are *τέρας*, *δύναμις*, *σημεῖον*. Nebe says, the most general conception under which miracles may be comprehended is *τὸ ἔργον* or more especially *τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ*. If it is a work in an eminent sense, the work of God par excellence, God's special immediate act, then the miracle must be a *dunamis*, power, for an extraordinary power is displayed in it. This mighty power of God to which the miracle owes its occurrence, makes it a *teras* for us, an event inspiring us with wonder and astonishment, "an amazement wakening portent or prodigy." Again, a miracle is not intended to affect only our outward senses, it is not its own object or aim, it points to something beyond itself, something higher. It is the accompaniment of redemption. It has a significant, a symbolical import, it is a mirror of some spiritual truth, "a parable expressed in act." Hence it is called *semeion*. Phillippi says *semeion* has more an objective reference, *teras* more a subjective one.

Trench: "These three terms are in like manner employed of the same supernatural works wrought in the power of Christ, by his Apostles, 2 Cor. xii. 12, and of the lying miracles of Antichrist no less, 2 Thess. ii. 11. They will be found on closer examination not so much to represent different kinds of miracles, as miracles contemplated under different aspects and from different points of view. The same miracle is on one side a *teras* and on another a *semeion*, different qualities in the same miracle. *Teras* and *semeion* are often linked together in the New Testament, John iv. 48; Acts ii. 22; iv. 30; 2 Cor. xii. 12, and times out of number in the LXX. *Teras* is never in the New Testament applied to these works of wonder except in association with some other name."

Sometimes the three terms are applied together. *Semeion* seems to express the teleological nature of the miracles in general, and here in particular. In this term the ethical end and purpose of "the Signs" comes out with the most distinctness. "It is involved and declared in the very word that the prime object and end of the miracle is to lead us to something out of and beyond itself. It is a kind of finger-post of God . . . valuable, not so much for what it is, as for that which it indicates of the grace and power of the doer, or of the immediate connection with a higher spiritual world in which he stands." See Trench: New Testament Synonyms. While this is John's favorite word for miracles, it occurs but occasionally in the synoptists.

What then is the spiritual truth of which this *semeion* is a plastic representation? the spiritual import of this change? It manifested His glory and the disciples believed on Him. The miracles had for their object His own glory as well as that of the Father. They manifested, shed forth, the majestic, divine, blessed glory of Him through whom all things were made. *Doxa*, glory, is an accessory idea of light. The Logos or absolute Light radiates His lustre. By the flesh the Light is veiled, but in the miracles and in His words its brightness breaks through, cf. i. 14, the divine glory immanent in Him, which was revealed in word and works, enabling men to see into His heart, and to recognize in Him by the eye of faith the incarnate Logos.

Some: It clearly expresses to His disciples the relation between Him and the Baptist, the cheering wine instead of the purifying water. Water is the proper element for the Baptist, wine for the Lord. The first disciples of Jesus were disciples of John. They might stagger at their Lord's free enjoyment of social pleasures. Their old master was in the desert. Their new one appears at a wedding. He led them to practice asceticism. Jesus brings them to a feast. By this miracle, which attested His union with God, He removed any cause for stumbling. He reconciles the contrast, and it was proper to present from the first the contrast between the spirit of John's work and that of His own. So effectually was this done that they understood Him and got a deeper insight into the nature of God's kingdom. The transformation of water into wine signalizes the transition and the progress from the Baptist's stage of preparation to the Messianic activity and glory. They have infinitely more in Jesus than in John. Some have charged that this symbolical interpretation is far-fetched, and think that some word of interpretation would have been given had such been the aim. But no word of explanation was needed.

Nebe thinks it unlikely that the phrase, "six water-pots lying according to the purification of the Jews," has purely an archaeological and historical meaning, and not also a symbolical and typical one. The six pots stood there for the service of the Jewish purification. They represent Judaism in general, its toil and burdens. Judaism is like so many work-days without a Sabbath, like so much work-righteousness without the peace and joy of the Holy Ghost. Now the Sabbath, the day of the Lord, has come. Such is the distinction between the two economies. There law, here grace. There external purification, here inward enjoyment, a blessed life. Still no creation takes place, but the substance of

the water passes into wine. So the Old Testament is to be transformed into the New, and this transformation is effected by Christ, who here reveals Himself as the true Messiah. In Jesus Christ the law has its fulfillment in the gospel. Water becomes wine. Law turns into grace. Instead of commands we receive gifts. Sacrifices are replaced by Sacraments. The song of Moses becomes the song of the Lamb. The true children of the old covenant become believers on the Lord who reveals His glory.

Some have recognized here, too, the elements of symbolic prophecy. Von Hofmann: "The heavenly marriage supper, where Jesus will drink the fruit of the vine with His disciples, etc., and change the water of purification into the wine of gladness." Steinmeyer: "The dominion which the kingdom of God will achieve by its triumphant march over the earth. The kingdom of God makes the old new, transforms everything." Baur: "The wedding itself is turned into the joy of the Messianic marriage feast. The Messiah is Himself the Bridegroom who regales the guests with the fulness of His gifts, and allows nothing to be wanting that pertains to their joy."

To some the miracle is the mirror in which Jesus presents the beautifying power of the Messianic spirit, or the riches of His love and power.

This manifestation of His glory did not fail of its aim. They "believed on Him." Meyer: "The faith which they already had, i. 35-52, was only introductory. . . . Now, upon the basis of this manifestation of His glory, i. 14, came the more advanced and fuller decision, a new epoch in their faith, which, moreover, still continued susceptible of and requiring fresh additions, even to the end." xi. 15; xiv. 11. Faith needs and receives constant invigoration. In accordance with the promise, i. 51, "thou shalt see greater things," they had a mightier display of His immanent glory and came to a higher faith, a fuller trust, a deeper insight into His divine power and grace.

The Christian is ever in course of becoming. He must grow from day to day in Him who is the Head. "In the disciples," says Luther, "faith grew, the more the light which had risen to them grew before their eyes. The more the Lord revealed His glory, the more faith reveals itself in them."

The practical treatment of the pericope is concerned first with the glory of the Lord, which is manifested here in contrast with the Old Testament theocracy. Secondly, it presents the sublime relation of Jesus to the Christian home.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE FIRST SIGN OF THE LORD.

1. A sign of grace. 2. A sign of power. 3. A sign of faith.

BEHOLD THE GLORY OF HIM WHO,

1. Rejoices with them that rejoice.
2. Regards not His own flesh and blood.
3. Helps in time of need.
4. Humbly conceals His glory.

WHAT IS TAUGHT BY THE FIRST MIRACLE?

1. Love of humanity is the impulse to the miracle.
2. The greatest distress is the hour for it.
3. Obedient faith is the prerequisite of it.
4. Revelation of the glory of Christ is the result of it.
5. Increase of faith is the aim of it.

THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST'S GLORY.

1. He is Lord of all men and all creatures.
2. He is Servant of all men and all creatures.

CHRIST PRODUCES TRUE JOY.

1. He sanctifies our joy by His presence.
2. He preserves our joy by His help.
3. He completes our joy by the revelation of His glory.

CHRIST THE TRUE HELPER.

1. He is prepared to help before we ask.
2. His hour only comes, when the need is sorest.
3. He works not alone, but requires your coöperation.
4. He helps not only the body, but also the soul.

CHRIST'S PRESENCE IN THE HOUSE, A TRUE BLESSING.

1. He sanctifies our joys.
2. He shares our cares.
3. He ends our needs.
4. He strengthens our faith.

TO MAKE YOUR HOUSE A TEMPLE OF THE LORD,

1. Invite the Lord to it.
2. Confide to Him your needs.
3. Acknowledge His gracious work in your house.
4. Collect a company or congregation in your house.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Matt. viii. 1-13.

THE first miracles of which Matthew gives particulars are found in this Pericope. The Ancient Church aimed, it appears, to set forth in the Epiphany Season the earlier miraculous activity of Christ. The distinction that the miracle of the previous Lesson reveals Christ as the bringer of joy, and the present one as the appeaser of pain, is hardly sustained, for, at Cana Christ is revealed as He who puts an end to all distress and want.

Nebe holds this Pericope to begin a new departure. The first words of Jesus told of His relation to God, the first miracle told of His relation to the Old Testament. Now the economy of the New Testament begins to unfold His relation to humanity. By the power of His word He is to produce life where death reigns.

The Lesson consists of two narratives. In the exposition of the first cf. Mark i. 40 ff. and Luke v. 12 ff.

1. "When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him."

The people attracted by the power of His word, followed Him wondering. On the mountain He revealed only one side of His pre-eminence. "He taught them as one having authority." Now they are graciously rewarded with the vision of another side of His glory. The miracle enforces the truth of what He has been teaching them.

2. "And behold there came a leper" . . .

Some assume that the leper had from a distance listened to the teaching on the Mount, and this gave him such a deep impression of the power of the Lord, that his heart was moved to address his plea to Him. But Luke says, "When He was in a certain city"—from which it is inferred that Matthew does not give a strict chronological order. According to Luke he was "full of leprosy," which some interpret as a term of medical accuracy, others as showing the progress of the disease. Exod. iv. 6; Numb. xii. 10; 2 Kings v. 27.

This disease is a fearful plague in the east to this day. "It lacerates the body with scales, tetters and sores." It is a living

death, a poisoning and corrupting of all the humors, a dissolution little by little of the whole body, so that one limb after the other actually decays and falls away. Lev. xiii. 14. See the Encyclopedias. It is said to be contagious and to communicate itself to the third and fourth generations. It is viewed as a visitation from God, incurable by human means. The victim was rendered Levitically unclean and excluded from the congregation, but he was not excluded from the synagogue or Christian assemblies. Thrust out from the neighborhood, lepers had to tear their clothes, bare their heads, and call out to every one approaching, so as to keep him away, "Unclean, unclean." Lev. xiii. 43 f.; Numb. v. 2; xii. 10, 14 ff. They were regarded in effect as dead persons. Leprosy was the type of death. The same means of cleansing were employed for it, as those for uncleanness contracted by contact with death, means never used except in these two cases. All the ordinances relating to it were symbolical and typical.

This leper sighs for help. Mightily impelled by his heart, he transgresses the barriers of the law. He is not content like the ten in Luke xvii. 12 ff., to stand "afar off" and lift up his voice, but he presses through the crowd, "*προσελθὼν προσκίνει*," and throws himself at Jesus' feet. Luke: *πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον*, "falling upon his face." Expositors differ whether this act of the leper was simply an act of outward homage, or one of divine worship. The FF. held the latter view. Calvin: "*a priori* we cannot tell the character of this *προσκύνησις*. The context must decide, and the context requires us to recognize that the leper saw in Jesus something more than a mere man, the Rabbi of Nazareth." The worship he offers is more than ordinary human obeisance. Meyer holds that "*kyrie*" expresses the reverence that is founded on the recognition of a higher power. The leper sees in Jesus a superior being.

This humble reverence before this higher being moves him to make his petition hypothetical and not categorical. "If thou wilt." Not doubting the Lord's power, he rests the event with entire resignation on His mighty will alone. Faith exclaims, If thou wilt, not if thou canst; Mark ix. 22. He is uncertain as to the will, and herein strikes the central chord of all true prayer, not as I will, but as thou wilt. So far from reflecting a shadow on his faith, this is a bright ray from his heart. There is no question as to the requisite power. But that leaves his case still in suspense. The uncertainty may have been grounded in the deep consciousness of sin. Still, none of the Synoptists intimate that the leprosy was in his case the penalty of personal sin. Some

explain: I believe that thou dost will whatever is good, but I know not whether what I desire is good for me. Luther says, To pray in this manner concerning things pertaining to the honor of God and the salvation of our souls would be wrong, for in that sphere we cannot doubt the will of God, but in temporal things it is different. One may be sick, poor, wretched, despised, and still be saved. Our distress in such things may do us good. Hence one asking for help should believe that God can and will help, but he should submit his will to God's will, ready to bear his cross. The prayer is most appropriate. The petitioner doubts solely whether He who has the power, will deem it beneficial or wise to exercise it in his case.

"Thou canst." In the early part of His ministry the chief object of faith was the omnipotence of Jesus.

"*Καθαρίσαι*" from the foul disorder that was polluting him. Some interpret that Jesus should examine him and pronounce him cleansed. But he would not have proposed that to Jesus, since the declaration of being cleansed was the official duty of the priests, nor would Jesus have usurped the functions of the legal ordinances. The further course of the narrative also conflicts with this.

3. "And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying" . . .

This is not a medical examination. Origen: "By this touch Jesus would show that to the pure all things are pure." Chrysostom: "Herein He shows Himself Lord of the law, reminding us of Elisha's treatment of Naaman." The humility of Christ is also revealed. He does not recoil from touching what is loathsome, giving us an example of true self-denying love to one's neighbor. Mark: "Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand and touched him." What an ineffable example of compassion, to lay the hand on one whom no one dared to touch, whom the law required to keep at a distance from every one! Ambrose sees in it also the index of His majesty, the conscious power of purifying and healing.

Jesus "touched," likewise, the bier of the young man. He puts Himself in immediate contact with that which a Jew dared not touch if he would remain clean. But no impurity cleaves to Him. He is so anointed by the Holy Ghost that He can contract no defilement.

The touch may be viewed also as the bearer and medium for the word which follows. Some have viewed the healing power as flowing into the leper from the tactual hands. It certainly was a

proof to him that the Lord had no fear of this enemy. He would be its victor, not its victim. Since personal faith is requisite, Jesus does everything on His part to bring about such personal communion between Himself and us, and then, with words that have a majestic ring, He says: "I will, be thou cleansed." "I will" corresponds to "if thou wilt," a prompt echo to the mature faith of the leper. "The expression, *θέλω*, implies the highest authority." Our Lord performed His first miracles immediately, that He might not appear to have any difficulty in performing them; but after He had established His authority, He frequently interposed a delay salutary to men. Chrysostom notes that this is the only instance in which Jesus uses *θέλω*, and reasons that it was intended to convince the public and the leper of His authority, but of that the leper was persuaded in advance.

Observe the parallel between the two clauses *ἐὰν θέλῃς . . . καθαρίσαι* and *θέλω, καθαρίσθητε*. And contrast *θέλω* with the reply of the King of Israel on reading the letter of the King of Syria respecting Naaman. "Am I a God, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" 2 Kings v. 7.

Nebe: Where such a faith committing everything to the Lord makes request, there the request whose "if" shows that it had not yet firm ground for its feet, will soon find a sure foundation. "If thou wilt" is an appeal to Jesus heart.

Will I help? There can be no question where such faith addresses me. "Be cleansed." Not as rationalists would interpret: "I find thee clean, thou wilt be cleansed;" but be thou clean this very moment. No one ever spoke thus. And the moment He speaks "the leprosy was cleansed," cf. Mark and Luke. Nature obeys her Lord with the utmost promptness. The cleansing took less time than the recording of it. The command and the cleansing were simultaneous. They were one. Just as the rolling angry sea instantly became calm when the Lord commanded, so leprosy flees the moment the divine fiat is heard.

4. "And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man". . .

Like inhibitions at Matt. ix. 30; xii. 16; xvi. 20; xvii. 9; Mark iii. 12; v. 43; vii. 36; viii. 26, 30; ix. 9; Luke viii. 56; ix. 21. In this instance the personal welfare of the cured man may have been the primary consideration. His journey to Jerusalem and his sojourn there may have occasioned the restraint. He must make no delay in this sacred duty, and avoid every hindrance which might arise. In general, however, Jesus discountenanced during His early ministry the publicity and notoriety likely to result from

His miracles, because of the national sentiment concerning the political rule of the Messiah. In the expectant and excited state of the public mind, His miracles would be perverted into the proclamation of His Kingship by the masses and the outbreak of revolution. Attention must not be directed primarily to the outward side of his Messianic work. Men are not to believe on Him just because of these miracles.

He would have as little noise made as possible over His miraculous power, that the minds of the people may not be diverted from His proper and essential work, the world's salvation. A fanatical popular outbreak must be guarded against, the consequences of which may be inferred from Mark i. 45; Luke v. 15. He accordingly charged those who recognized Him as the Messiah, to refrain from spreading abroad this truth. The hour for that had not arrived. The general belief of His Messiahship would be prostituted by the Jews to the assertion of political freedom and the realization of worldly hopes. He will not encourage these false representations. His personality must be kept in the background until men could learn from the nature of His work and teaching the realization of true Messianic hopes. John vi. 14 f. His teaching activity was for the present of paramount importance, and all embarrassment to this must be forestalled, as well as a premature termination of it through the action of the rulers. To the objection that the miracle was wrought before the eyes of the multitude, and thus the public was already apprised of it, some reply that only those standing nearest could have seen and heard what transpired—the leprosy would scatter all to a distance—and these even may not have been convinced of the miraculous or actual cleansing.

Some object that a prohibition so uniformly disregarded, Mark i. 45; Matt. ix. 31, which had indeed usually the opposite effect, Mark vii. 36, would hardly have been constantly reiterated by our Lord if this had been His purpose. We note, however, that in Samaria, where the people did not share these fanatical and revolutionary sentiments, Jesus openly avowed his Messiahship. John iv.

Some find the ultimate ground for the inhibition in our Lord Himself, in His self-denying humility. He shrinks from ostentation, from fame, from human glory. Lowly of heart, and with the spirit of true charity, He would not let the left hand know what the right hand is doing. As He has just taught the multitude, so His own benefactions were not done to be seen of men, were not to be blazed abroad for the sake of honor and praise from men. He would "do good by stealth."

Others: The healed leper, hard as it might be to repress the joy of his heart over his cure, must keep still about the matter until he is pronounced clean according to the form prescribed by the law. Prior to that he must not conduct himself or pass himself as one cleansed—tell no one what has transpired. Jesus encourages the strictest observance of the law. This accords with the directions to the messengers in the Old Testament not to salute any whom they met on the way, 2 Kings iv. 29, and the like directions to the seventy, Luke x. 4. The text hardly justifies this. Hilary: "The chief interest related to the people." Beza: "The people were to look upon Him not as a miracle-worker, but as a divinely sent teacher."

The same prohibition may have been given at different times from different considerations, since Jesus always adapted Himself to circumstances. On one occasion He directs a healed man to go and tell his own household. Mark v. 19. Cf. Matt. xii. 16 ff.

"Tell no man." The language in Mark is much stronger, implying great concern to have the man withdraw as promptly as possible. Another command, a positive one, is added, "Show thyself to the priest and offer the gift," etc. Lev. xiv. 2, 10, 21. It was the priest's office to declare a leper cleansed and cured. The article implies no more than the particular priest on whom the examination devolved. It has been claimed that this priestly examination could be made in any locality and by any priest, but such a view overlooks the fact that offerings had to be presented, and for these the sanctuary was necessary.

At the first examination two birds were offered. The priest took two birds, along with cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop, slew one bird over an earthen vessel with living water, dipped the living bird and the other articles into this, sprinkled the leper seven times and pronounced him clean, and then let the living bird go. At the second examination, which followed a week later, there was required an offering of two he-lambs, a ewe-lamb of a year, and three-tenths deals of flour with oil. Christ, who by His miracle shows Himself Lord of the law, subjects Himself to the law and those whom He delivers, fulfilling all righteousness. As long as its ceremonies were not abrogated, Christ solemnly upholds them.

Luther sees here an example of love, in that Jesus did not take away from the priests what God had granted them. Romanists have used this in support of the confessional. Sin is compared with leprosy, and we are to go to the priest to be cleansed by him from our sins. Luther holds that what God commanded the Jews concerning leprosy does not concern us. We have no such priests,

and even if we had, the priests did not cleanse the lepers, but *after* they had been cleansed, and could show the priests a nice clean body, they gave them the testimony that they were cleansed. But the confessional was used as a means of obtaining forgiveness. We are washed from our sins when with faith we cleave to the Lord Jesus and His word, and believe that in His name we have forgiveness.

Note the phrase "offer the gift." The Lord requires thanks for the benefits shown us. Not for His sake, whose is the earth and the fullness thereof, for our sakes this is commanded. Ingratitude is most base, and pernicious to the soul. To break its power we must not hold on to our gifts, but give them back to the Lord.

The man is to report to the priest and present the offering "for a testimony to them." The phrase given by the three synoptists was a part of Jesus direction. Some take *αὐτοῖς* = priests, Jesus thus showing His regard for the law. Some: A testimony against them, should they regard Him hostile to the law. He strictly commanded it to be obeyed. Some construe it into a testimony for Jesus, the reality of the cure and with it his Messiahship. But better: The testimony was not for the priests but for the public. These ceremonies were required for the official announcement of a man's cure to the public. The pronoun stands for the people in general. The presentation of the leper to the priest and the acceptance on his part of the offerings, testified to the people that he was really cleansed, and was again admissible to society. Meyer: "Tell no one, but show thyself cleansed to the priest, that he may testify to the public thy cure." Lev. xiv. 57. Nebe objects that only the people around the Temple could know of these ceremonies, which guaranteed the cure. He thinks, too, that the word has a more pregnant sense in the Gospels. John iii. 36. It certainly was a notable thing for the priests to have such testimony of the presence of the Messiah and his strict enforcement of the law, and they in turn would be enabled to give testimony to these facts before the public. Luther finds the principal ground for the command in the sphere of apologetics. The Lord by this command would have His miracle publicly attested even by His enemies. When the priest accepts the gift from this one and gives him a testimonial that he is clean, this is to the effect that he and all men should accept Christ and believe in Him as the true Messiah. For here stood the prophecies showing that when Christ should come into the world He would do such things. In gracious love to them Jesus sends to the priests of the temple testimony of His saving power. He cannot preach to them,

so He sends them a preacher. For at least eight days he must remain in their charge at Jerusalem, during which he would report to them the great things Jesus had done and they would have the proof of it before their eyes. They would thus come to believe on Him or be found inexcusable. There was little faith in Jerusalem, the centre of the theocracy. He does what He can in sending from a distance His witnesses in order to avert the destruction of His people.

Another miracle of healing is joined to this one, a miracle doubtless identical with the one recorded Luke vii. 1 ff. Both ancient and modern expositors have almost unanimously accepted their identity. In support of this view they quote especially the verbal agreement, in particular that of the discourses between Jesus and the centurion, cf. Matt. v. 5; Luke vii. 1; Matt. v. 8; Luke v. 6; Matt. v. 9 and 10 with Luke vv. 8 and 9. The circumstances with both evangelists are on the whole quite similar, the miracle with both occurring as Jesus returned from the mountain to Capernaum. Luke agrees also with Matthew in the boy being healed without Jesus seeing him. So far as there are differences in the description of the disease, etc., they are unimportant. The divergence that Matthew reports the centurion coming himself to Jesus, while Luke speaks of two embassies being sent to Jesus, was explained already by Augustine, on the principle that what one does through another is ascribed to himself as the moral and intellectual author. Chrysostom held that the centurion first sent messengers and finally went himself. Bengel: "If the centurion had come in person our Lord would not have praised him, as He did just afterwards, in his presence, cf. v. 10; xi. 7. Others were, indeed, praised by Jesus in their presence but not until after previous humiliation and not so singularly . . . and in contradistinction to all Israel." Again, the same reverence which acknowledged the unworthiness of having the Lord come under his roof, would prevent the centurion from going to Him in person, cf. v. 8; Luke vii. 7, 10. "He appears to have come out of his house in the first instance, but to have gone back before he had reached our Lord."

A wide distinction has been sought between *ὁ παῖς* of Matthew and *ὁ δοῦλος* of Luke, but elsewhere also we find a slave called *ὁ παῖς*.

5. "And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum . . . a centurion" . . .

From the mountain Jesus returns to Capernaum, where He had taken up His residence. Cf. ix. 1, "His own city," and iv. 13; Luke iv. 31. Capernaum is not mentioned in the Old Testament. The name is supposed to mean "seat or house of consolation."

The place of consolation is chosen for his residence by Him who was expected as the consolation of Israel. It was not a large place, but lying on the great highway to Syria it enjoyed a large trade. Evidently, though small, it was a place of importance, cf. John iv. 46 ff., situated on the northwest shore of the lake of Genessereth, wherefore called "by the sea," Matt. iv. 13; cf. John vi. 17. The words of Christ, Matt. xi. 23, have been fulfilled, as the very site of the "exalted" city cannot be established with certainty. Some regard Tel-Hum as the ruins of Capernaum. Robinson locates it further south at Khan-Minyeh.

What now was the outward and inward position of this centurion? Some make him a Roman officer stationed at Capernaum. The situation of the place on the great commercial route between Jerusalem and Damascus may have required a garrison to be stationed there. Nebe thinks that, since Josephus knows nothing of such occupation, and as we are acquainted with no particular ground for stationing a military force here, the Jews being quiet and Herod Antipas who ruled there enjoying the confidence of the Emperor, there seems to be no reason for making this man a Roman military officer. The centurion was in the service of Herod, the king. This does not determine that he was a Jew. From obvious considerations, the king would find it advisable to admit foreigners into his army. Cf. Josephus, *Vita*, § 22. The centurion was a Gentile by birth, v. 10, but his sojourn in the Holy Land proved a great blessing to him. He recognized something of the pre-eminence and glory of Israel. Even if he did not unite with them as a proselyte of the gate, he certainly stood on very favorable terms with the Jews. He respected their religion and promoted their worship, having from his own means built them a synagogue, Luke vii. 3, 5. If he had actually embraced their faith altogether, "the rulers of the Jews" would, doubtless, have named this as another incentive in their intercession for him with the Lord.

6. "And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy" . . .

Like the leper he addresses Jesus as *Kyrie*, which is an acknowledgement of His higher power and personality. He comes not from personal distress. His servant is extremely ill. *Παις*, not son, as some expositors, but slave according to Greek and Hellenistic usage, *puer*. Luke vii. 17; Matt. xiv. 2. Meyer: "Either he had only one slave, cf. v. 9, or else he refers to that one in particular whom he had in view." "My" does not indicate that he was the favorite slave, simply that he was the one for whom he was

now especially concerned and for whom alone he was seeking relief.

A touch of the humanity of the centurion is here given—that he has a heart for his slave, and makes such extraordinary efforts for his recovery. That he should have such concern for a son is natural, but such sympathy for a slave was, in those days especially, extremely rare; and it was not the loss of a chattel that made him so anxious, but his consideration for the sufferer. This slave, according to the principles of the Jewish law, was regarded as a fellow-man, as a member of the household, whose joys and sorrows were in part those of the family. Though we have no longer slaves, there is a model here for human sympathy which is not to be bounded by one's blood and kin, or by any conditions whatever.

Βέβληται, cf. ix. 2, “is laid down,” therefore, lying. The perfect denotes the existing condition.

A paralytic, *δενῶς βασνιζόμενος*. Ewald thinks this participle refers to demoniacal torture, and argues that the paralytic was a demoniac, his paralysis the result of demoniacal possession. For this there is elsewhere no warrant.

The centurion makes no direct request. Perhaps he felt himself unworthy of the favor. Some: he betrays in this already his great faith. Such is his confidence in the loving, sympathetic heart of Jesus, that he deems it unnecessary to importune Him with entreaties. It is superfluous to ask for His assistance to the poor sufferer. It is sufficient that He hear of the distress. This is the form of a petition from a military commander to the Lord, a man without rank or station.

The soldier is a believer, he bows his knees in supplication before Christ. No station excludes grace. “Even in a man whose breast is encased in triple armor, the tender plant of grace and love may expand. Jesus sees in this captain the advance of the heathen from all parts of the world.” He certainly leads the advance of a host which the Lord has won from the banners of an army to the banner of the cross. Nebe thinks the profession of the soldier is under special obligation of gratitude to the Lord.

7. “And Jesus saith, I will come and heal him.”

The heart of the centurion was enough of a prayer—our hearts are to the Lord like an open book—and He anticipates here the petition, which is unlike His usual procedure. This language of the Lord may have been intended to bring out the faith of the centurion. Bengel: “He elicits the profession of the faithful, and thus as it were anticipated them.” The centurion is a heathen—so is

the Syrophœnician, yet how unlike the treatment accorded them respectively. In the one case He proposes to do more than is asked. In the other He subjects the suppliant to a struggle, yet in both cases the aim is the same: The exercise, the profession and the triumph of faith. It is to be remembered, too, that the manner of their approach differed. She, though a heathen, boldly laid claim to His interposition as a right, and His response was designed to humiliate her until she lay at His feet content to accept anything. With the centurion there is no demand, no presumption. He refrains from presenting personally his petition. Deeming himself unworthy, he sends intercessors. There is no need here of producing humility, rather of overcoming a false humility. Jesus therefore offers to honor the house with His personal presence. For Himself there was no need of going, but the man shall learn that as a heathen he is not absolutely excluded from Christ. Jesus had doubtless also consideration for the people, that they might receive a wholesome reproof from the assured and evident faith of this heathen. A two-fold end is secured by this wonderful physician. By His proposal to enter the house of the centurion He removes his erroneous notion, and at the same time offers to the people around Him a drastic saving medicine. Notice the emphatic *ἐγώ*; also, how others implored His personal presence and even touched Him.

8. "The centurion . . . Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof." . .

Iva represents here the infinitive construction, though Meyer denies this, holding that it is always telic. He reads: "I am not sufficient (worthy enough) for the purpose that thou shouldst go." John i. 27.

Marvellous humility! A man of distinction, whose roof was not a mean one, a heathen held in exalted estimation by the Jews, feeling most deeply his own unworthiness in the presence of this great miracle-worker! This feeling arose not from superstition, but from faith. A military officer is generally the impersonation of pride. Men in authority are not given to speaking of their unworthiness. How well this protestation of unworthiness sets off the statement of the elders of the Jews, Luke vii. 4, that he was worthy. Augustine: "By saying that he is unworthy, he shows himself worthy to have Christ enter not his house, but his heart." He is a sinner, therefore God and justice give him a claim on Jesus, for He is the sinner's Saviour. Is he wicked? then again he is the proper subject for Jesus, for the holy One will make him holy. "This is characteristic of faith," says Luther, "that it creates

humble hearts, which, freed from their proud conceit, cling exclusively to the grace and mercy of God. This is comforting, that when we must confess we are poor, miserable sinners, we yet need not despair, but cleave to the promises of God and seek His grace. This is the right faith and the right humility: that man is alarmed in view of his unworthiness, and yet does not despair. This is well pleasing to God, and what He will have from us. Ps. cxlvii. 11." Humility is the lowest round of the ladder. You must pass out from yourself if you would enter the kingdom of God.

Δόγω. So Luke vii. 7, Dative of instrument: Only speak, command, "with a word," that he become whole, "by way of expressing a contrast to the proffered personal service." The centurion declares his belief that the disease will yield to the Lord's command. Extraordinary humility is accompanied by extraordinary faith. Bengel: "The centurion replies by this glorious word, *ισθῆσεται*, after our Lord had modestly said, *θεραπεύσω*. The former implies the notion of healing, applies to the work of the physician; the latter has the signification of attending upon, refers to an attendant. The latter means help, tend, treat; the former, heal. The latter refers to the infirmities cured; the former, to the persons cured. As used by our Lord, the distinction lies only in the mode of expression. The leap with which such faith springs from humility is extraordinary. How, asks Luther, did he know that Jesus, who was so much despised by the Jews, possessed such power? He certainly believes Him possessed of divine power; He can do what is supernatural, and that without a motion of His hand or bodily contact. If He but speaks, it is done. What greater honor could have been given than to ascribe to Him power over every evil, pestilence, fever, sickness, placing in the hand of Christ, death and the devil with all his power. And this very faith makes him so humble that he reasons: In this Man, God Himself must dwell. Therefore, I and my house are not worthy to have Him come to us.

He had doubtless heard much concerning Jesus, but hardly that He effected cures solely by His word. His faith is not derived from others. It is the product of his own mind, *i. e.*, wrought in his heart by the Holy Spirit. He is the first in whom faith reached this stage. Luther: "The heathen and the soldier becomes a theologian and begins to argue in so beautiful and Christian a manner as would do credit to one who has been four years a doctor. This we might also do had we the humble eye of faith that here below sees images and parables of that which is above, lessons which the analogy of faith discovers in the book of nature."

9. "For I am a man under authority, having soldiers" . . .

How sententious this reasoning! From his own position he argues that a word will suffice. I can command soldiers and slaves and they implicitly obey. Surely thou canst give orders to disease and it yields to thy behest. Some recognize the implied antithesis of the supreme dominion of Jesus, who could issue commands to the waves, to winds, to disease. Humility and faith are again combined, the former is revealed by "under authority." He does not say, as a military officer I too can issue effectual commands, a word of mine compels obedience, but he first with great delicacy mentions the fact of himself being under authority; he knows what obedience is, and then that others are subject to his command. He briefly alludes to the first, the second he presents in detail. He was probably the chief commander at Capernaum, but the mere word of his superiors sufficed for him.

Some: Even though I am under authority, others implicitly obey my word and execute my command. How different it stands with You! No one is over You. You exercise sovereign power. Every creature is Your servant, therefore speak but the word. Origen: "I have under me soldiers and slaves, Thou hast angels as soldiers, and all saints as slaves, etc." Chrysostom: Impersonal powers are the executors of His behests. Luther: "If I a poor man under the power of others can cause my servants by a word, so that they go and do what I tell them even in my absence, shouldst not Thou, then, possessed of such great power and subject to no one, be able with one word to accomplish whatsoever Thou wouldst?" This indicates the originality and firmness of the centurion's faith. He does not consider the objections which might arise from the difference between human subjects, and unconscious disease. His faith leaps over these. He reasons from the smaller to the greater, and even apart from this he may not have forgotten that the will of man offers more rebellion than an unconscious disease.

In the reference to the soldiers and a servant Nebe finds an additional justification that $\delta \pi α ι ς = \delta \delta ο υ λ ο ς$. Had the centurion plead for his child, he would have instituted the comparison of a child's obedience.

Paulus understands, he would have Jesus send one of His Apostles, as Elisha did Gehazi with his staff. Some, that demons were the cause of the disease. Some: sons of the deity, ministering spirits, laws of nature. Meyer: "From the context it simply appears that he looked upon disease as subject to his authority." But Nebe thinks as the centurion in his comparison emphasizes

the *causae mediae* by whom his commands are executed, he must have thought of similar *causae mediae* in the service of Christ corresponding to these persons. Bleek: "Jesus had subject to his command higher powers and spirits, through which without His personal presence His will might be accomplished."

10. "When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said unto them"

Faith and unbelief were both the objects of Christ's wonder. Mark vi. 6. Some stagger at Christ's wondering, as if it conflicted with Christological premises, but Christ's human nature with its limitations was as much a reality as His divine nature, and His amazement was real, not feigned. He had thoughts and feelings like other men. Cf. Luke x. 21. Origen: "In the sight of God nothing is wonderful, nothing great, nothing precious, except only faith."

"Such faith" as the centurion's the Lord had not found in Israel. He had not enjoyed intercourse with Jesus like the Jews. He was not in possession of the SS. and was a stranger also to the promises. Yet He shows a heart more susceptible and open than the hearts of the people with whom God had been dealing for centuries—an example and earnest of the faith with which the Gentiles would surpass the Jews. The latter demanded external signs. This heathen asks for no visible support or symbol, but is satisfied with a solitary word. It was to honor this faith that Jesus proposed to go to him. This He commends: the entire surrender to His simple word. The Wonder-worker is Himself confronted by a wonder and greatly affected by it. Here is a miracle greater than His own. That which is a wonder to Him, is much greater than that which is a wonder to us. What transpired in the centurion's mind was as much more extraordinary than giving light to the blind or cleansing the leper, as the soul is more than the body.

Luther adds: "These bodily miracles He wrought only for a time and that for the sake of establishing and advancing the Church, and if now, after His doctrine has long been accepted and powerfully confirmed, one should still want such signs, it would be equivalent to saying, I doubt whether Baptism is a sacrament, whether the doctrine of the Gospel is true. But the signs which are full of wonder to Him, these continue, namely such sound and mighty faith as that of the Roman centurion."

"No, not in Israel." Did his faith surpass that of the Virgin and the Apostles? Some have thought that the reference is only to the great mass, which were called the people of Israel, but

Luther thinks we ought to take the words of the Lord for what they say. We contravene no article of the creed in holding that the faith of the centurion had no parallel in Mary and the Apostles. Hence we are not to twist the words of Christ with our interpretation. Such interpretations result from a carnal sense, inasmuch as we measure the saints of God not according to God's grace but according to their person and worthiness, which is contrary to God who measures only according to His gifts. At the time of the declaration such faith had not been found. God may give a great saint little faith, and a little saint great faith, so that one may ever esteem the other better than himself, Rom. xii. 10. Calvin with a Romanistic leaven adhering to him excepts Mary from the comparison. Origen and others except the Old Testament heroes of faith. Jesus simply speaks of what He found among Israelites. The centurion's faith may be unhesitatingly pronounced superior to that of the Apostles who were trained for Christ by John the Baptist and who became full believers only after the miracle of Cana.

11. "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west" . . .

Instead of "Amen" ("verily") v. 10, Jesus prefaces this declaration with "I say unto you," which is paraphrased by Origen, *testor, annuncio, praedico vobis*. The centurion is to Jesus the advance of the host which shall come from the Gentiles. Why does He make the announcement with such emphasis? It contains nothing new. The prophets had long before foretold such a change; nevertheless, the Jews had lost sight of the idea, and to them it was incredible and absurd. They claimed the monopoly of salvation. How deep-seated was this carnal delusion is seen in the history of the apostles, especially that of Paul.

This prejudice our Lord would counteract with an energetic "I tell you." He will beat it down not only among the unbelieving mass, but among the apostles. The advance of the army of heathen believers stands already in the Holy Land. Let Israel consider what belongs to its peace. Let the apostles prepare for communion with Gentiles. Πολλοί from the east and west shall come; He does not say τὰ ἔθνη, the Gentiles. He avoids giving offence to the hearers. He communicates the bitter truth as gently as practicable, yet so that they understand it. He not only softens the declaration by the expression itself, but by reference to the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

By this euphemism for the heathen, as those from the east and the west, Jesus enters the domain of the Old Testament, especially

Mal. i. 11; Is. xlix. 12; xlv. 6; lx. 4. By these two parts the whole world was designated. The heathen shall sit at the feast in the kingdom with the patriarchs. Splendid festivities are a common metaphor for the kingdom of heaven, Matt. xxii. 1 ff.; xxvi. 29; Luke xiv. 15 ff.; xiii. 28; Rev. xix. 9, 17; 1 Cor. xv. 50; cf. Prov. ix. 1-12; Is. xxv. 6—which had insinuated itself especially into the Messianic dreams of Israel. The Messiah will inaugurate His reign, unexpected, with a magnificent feast. As the highest type of bliss, Lazarus is represented by Jesus as feasting with Abraham. The Targum represents God as spreading a table for the Jews, “that the Gentiles may see and be ashamed.” Our Lord, *per contra*, says: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will not feast with their children after the flesh, but with their children after the spirit. The wall of separation formed by the law shall disappear. Faith in Christ bridges the chasm between Jew and heathen. In Christ Jesus they are called to be one.

Vv. 10 and 12 make it clear that the centurion was not a proselyte. He is viewed as a pledge that many Gentiles will become believers and enjoy with the patriarchs the most blessed fellowship of the kingdom. Cf. Heb. xii. 23; xi. 9.

They “will come and recline,” in spirit and by faith—a distinct prophecy, which has a glorious fulfillment. This fellowship of the heathen with Abraham is to take place in the “kingdom.” See the exposition of the Lesson for the second Sunday in Advent. This fellowship includes the present and the future. For the kingdom includes both worlds. The believer is in fellowship with all believers and with all the spirits of the just made perfect. His faith unites him with Christ, the Head, and with all the members of the body. Many will enter the kingdom, a multitude whom no man can number. Yet the Master says not “all,” but “many.”

12. “But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out” . . .

The kingdom here must be the same as the kingdom of heaven in the previous verse. Those will be cast out for whom according to the original promise the kingdom was destined, and who, if they had not in unbelief repudiated it, would have had in view of their descent from Abraham the first right to it and would have been first admitted, cf. Rom. ix. 4, 5; xi. 16 f. Guardedly Jesus does not say “the Jews,” but with touching rhetoric “the sons,” sons in point of fact, cf. Matt. xiii. 38. The direct heirs, “children,” of the kingdom.

Some lay stress on the fact that they constituted the kingdom under its Old Testament form, but that was only a figure or

shadow of the New Testament. Some: they are called the children of the kingdom, so far as they belonged to the community in which God's gracious purpose was realized. Meyer: "Its potential subjects." The article describes them summarily in a body.

Not only do the natural heirs of the kingdom fail to enter into its life and light, they will be thrust out into the darkness that prevails outside the illuminated halls of the palace in which the feast takes place. Notice *ἐκβληθῆσονται*. They are within, but they shall be cast out from the banqueting hall. They are sons of the kingdom not only in so far as the promises were given to them. God really prepared the kingdom, and actually founded it, in the midst of Israel. The Church was developed from the Synagogue; the New Testament kingdom was latent in the theocracy of the Old Testament. Salvation is of the Jews. John iv. 22.

Now they are without in the darkness, far from the living joy which is wont to be called light. The darkness "envelopes not only the eye but the mind with the greatest obscurity." The nearer any one has approached to the light, the deeper the darkness which overtakes him. This has happened to Israel. They are excluded, Matt. xxii. 13; xxv. 30, are outside the brilliant scene of the marriage supper. *Ἐξώτερον*: LXX., Exod. xxvi. 4; xxxvi. 10; Ezek. x. 5. It is not found in Greek authors. It is positive, not comparative, and contains no reference to special degrees of infernal punishment. External darkness becomes the fitting home of those who have enveloped themselves in internal darkness. The withdrawal of the light from them, may satisfy as the meaning of the text, but better in view of what follows: "The place of those who are excluded from the blessedness and glory of the kingdom of God, designated a place of darkness in contrast with the radiant splendor of the kingdom of God."

Light is a universal symbol of joy and life; darkness, of sorrow and death. God is light. Salvation is a life in God, and, therefore, a life in light. He that is cast out from God and His kingdom must, therefore, enter into darkness. And this abiding in darkness away from God is something awful.

"There will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth," the wail of suffering, and the gnashing of teeth that accompanies despair—a description of the misery that reigns in hell. Matt. xiii. 42, 50; xxii. 13; xxiv. 51; xxv. 30.

The double article is noteworthy: the weeping, the gnashing. Grief here is not yet really grief. The grief, the pain, the anguish, comes in the future world. The standard of suffering will be reached there. Thus the article would represent the highest potency.

Better: "The well-known misery of hell." The twofold expression of the misery need not be taken of twofold sufferings, heat and cold, or a twofold punishment, penitence and rage, grief and fury: "weeping from grief at the good they have lost, and the evil they have incurred," "gnashing the teeth from impatience and bitter remorse and indignation against themselves, as being the authors of their own damnation,"—"as also from a spiteful and malignant feeling against others," and especially against God who cast them out. "The soft will weep, the stern will rage." Acts vii. 54. Nebe thinks not a twofold temperament in persons is assumed. One and the same person may give way now to weeping, either from regret or from the agony of pain, now to gnashing of teeth. A climax may be intended. Bleek: "The two terms are expressions of the bitterest pain, of despair and of impotent rage."

13. "And Jesus said unto the centurion . . . As thou hast believed, so be it done to thee" . . .

How richly Jesus pours His grace into the open vessel of faith! Faith is the measure of the gift, the humbler the fuller. Water flows from the hills, it fills the valleys.

Ως. The result corresponds with the faith, according to the conditions He has furnished. His help is always ready. Faith is the hand that lays hold of it. Luther sees here a consolation for all who would be Christians, that the Lord posits everything on faith, and says nothing more than: according to thy faith be it done unto thee. Not in this case only, but in much greater distress, whatever you ask for, if you will but believe, you shall receive what you pray for. This statement is, therefore, to be taken as a general proposition or doctrine of faith, in which there is given the promise to every one: as thou believest so be it done unto thee. A great fundamental truth of universal application is thus set forth. A true picture of God is here presented—an expression of His heart and will "and as thou wouldst see my face, so thou seest it in this word. Here and in no other picture, I portray myself to thee as I truly am."

"The self-same hour," emphatic. In the very hour when Jesus was uttering these words at a distance the slave became whole, and of course through the divine power of Jesus operating upon him from a distance. John iv. 46 ff.

The difficulty in the practical treatment of this lesson arises from having to treat both cures together. But there are points of unity. The one Lord heals both sufferers, and again one faith characterizes both applications.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

TWO NARRATIVES, BUT ONE TRUTH.

1. The world is a lazaretto.
2. The Lord is the only Physician.
3. Faith is the only remedy.

CHRIST THE TRUE HELPER.

1. He can help.
2. He will help.
3. He helps him who believes.

CHRIST THE DELIVERER FROM PAIN.

1. He delivers from sin and all evil.
2. And that through the word of His grace.
3. All who in faith seek His help.

THE SINNER IS SAVED,

1. Upon the humble prayer of faith.
2. Through the almighty word of grace.

THE ESSENTIALS OF TRUE FAITH:

1. Humility. 2. Confidence. 3. Courage.

THAT FAITH IS PRAISED WHICH,

1. Bows humbly before the Lord.
2. Trusts in His word.
3. And is active in love.

A WONDERFUL HISTORY OF FAITH:

1. Its birth in distress.
2. Its growth in humility.
3. Its union with love.
4. Its dependence on God's word.
5. Its attainment of salvation.

THE LORD IS OUR HELP.

1. His love is universal.
2. His power is almighty.
3. His demand of faith may be complied with by all.

CONDITIONS OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER.

1. The submission of one's own desires to the will of the Lord.
2. A reposing with the whole heart on the word of the Lord.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Matt. viii. 23-27.

THIS Lesson follows rightly the last Pericope, inasmuch as the evangelist reports it almost immediately after the two which constitute that one. The miracles in this chapter follow in climactic order. Some have characterized the progress so that, while in the former Jesus shows Himself as the purifying High Priest, in the present one He manifests Himself as the King, but Epiphany has to do with Jesus only as the Prophet. Nebe: "The first Sunday after Epiphany presents the Prophet in his first word, the second in his first work in relation to the Old Testament, the third in his activity delivering from the death of sin, while the fourth exhibits the relation of this Prophet to the kingdom of nature." Cf. Mark iv. 36 ff; Luke viii. 22 ff.

23. "And when he was entered into the ship, his disciples followed him."

Mark gives the connection more precisely. Jesus had repeated to the people a number of parables. When evening arrived He entered into the boat and other boats followed Him. Bengel: "The article refers by implication to v. 18. Jesus had indicated His purpose to pass over the lake (Gennessaret) and the boat had in the meanwhile been made ready by the Apostles, who were accustomed to navigation." The disciples entered the ship with the Master. "Jesus had a migrating school, and in that school His disciples were instructed much more solidly than if they had dwelt under the roof of a college, without any anxiety or temptation." Expositors are divided whether just the twelve are meant here, or fewer, or more. Vv. 25 and 27 are understood as implying the company of others also. Matthew himself was not called till Matt. ix. 9. There followed such as had attached themselves to him as disciples.

24. "And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea" . . .

Ἰδοὺ notes the suddenness of the great σεισμός. The latter is not properly a designation of a mighty wind, but means originally an earthquake. Paulus accepts this rendering. The bottom of the sea was shaken by an earthquake, and this, as is usual, was

accompanied by a tremendous commotion of the elements. The whole mountain formation surrounding the sea is of a volcanic nature. The other evangelists call the phenomenon *λαίλαψ ἀνέμων*. Beza: "A most violent storm." The root significance of *σεισμός* is found in a terrible concussion of the atmosphere.

As most of these followers were familiar with the sea they might easily have discerned some indications of a coming storm, and in such a case they would have kept the Master from encountering great danger, but the hilly surroundings of the lake make it liable to sudden violent gusts of wind. Robinson, iii. 571. Geike, ii. 161 f; cf. also Thompson, *The Land and The Book*.

Expositors have speculated on the cause of this tempest. Some: The sea rages and storms because Judas Iscariot is in the ship. It refuses to bear this son of perdition. It would swallow him up. Others ascribe the tempest to Satan, who rages against the Lord and His infant church. Others: Jesus Himself was the author of the storm. His disciples, overcome with terror, would demand His aid and give Him occasion to manifest His power to them and strengthen their faith. The event was designed to be educational. The disciples are to learn not to be overwhelmed by calamity, nor to become presumptuous from good fortune. But this does not accord with the general image of Christ portrayed by the Gospels, nor with the language of the text: "Lo, a great storm arose." There is not the least intimation that this storm had any origin different from other storms, that it was conjured up by Jesus. At the end of the Lesson He commands the wind and the sea to silence. The supposition that He had specially roused them to this commotion for the sake of lulling them, makes a strange comedy. He treats the tempest as an antagonistic power, not as a force called into action by a previous command.

Nebe maintains, as true man Jesus does not order the course of the clouds. As at His baptism He did not cause the clouds to open above Him, as upon the mount of Transfiguration He did not envelop Himself in the cloud of glory, but His God and Father did this, so here also. God the Father brought about this tempest, and for a wise purpose. When Jesus entered the ship there was no storm. The weather was fair. But as soon as He had embarked with the disciples, a great tempest arose upon the sea. A maxim may be deduced from this. Thus it will ever be. When Christ enters the ship it will not long remain calm; storm and tempest will follow. It will most certainly happen as Christ Himself says, Luke xi. 21: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace, but when a stronger than he

shall come upon him &c.,” tumult and strife and conflict ensue. Everything was quiet until Christ began with His preaching and miracles—then the storm broke from every side—Pharisees, Scribes and High Priests conspired to kill Him, Matt. x. 34 ff. The world will endure everything but the preaching of Christ.

The ship was covered with the waves. It was in imminent danger of sinking. The peril was allowed to reach its height before the Saviour interposed. An uproar in the sea, an uproar in the ship, an uproar in the hearts of the disciples, and yet “he was asleep.” Origen exclaims: “O! wonderful, stupendous thing! He who never falls asleep is sleeping, He who rules heaven and earth is sleeping, He who never slumbers nor sleeps is said to be sleeping.” Some: He sleeps *in corpore*, but he watches *in deitate*. But Christ was man not only *in corpore*. He was a psychical, a complete man. Weariness is not merely a bodily experience, it is psychical as well as corporeal. He was exhausted through mental and bodily excitement, and both constituents of His humanity are being refreshed by sleep. Sleep affects both the mental and physical parts, the former more than the latter, for the bodily functions, respiration, digestion &c., continue. It is a resting of the spiritual functions, “the return of the spirit from the outward world of phenomena within itself.” Had Christ in the ship been asleep bodily, while His mind continued active and even enjoined the elements to rave, this would have been no sleep at all. Jesus sleeps in reality “wearied by the various labors of the day.”

When the peril was at its height the Lord was asleep—unconscious of fear, sublimely secure of power, and later in v. 26 “He marvels at the fear of man even in the utmost peril.” Nebe: “Nothing forbids accepting in Him a full, genuine sleep. The whole Christ, the whole God-man, slept. *O res mirabilis et stupenda!* we may well exclaim, as we contrast the uproar all around with the Lord at rest.” The child of God may sleep peacefully while the sea tosses and roars, its waves rising mountain high and covering the ship. The Keeper of Israel who never slumbers nor sleeps is its Father. The Lord would teach us to believe, says Luther, that we be not so timid and fearful, but composed, and free from anxiety before the rage of the devil, even though he do his worst when we are weakest. He Himself remains so without anxiety or fear before His enemy, that He seems to feel too secure and incautious. Though knowing what the devil has in mind, He lies down in the lower part of the ship to take a sound sleep, confident that His enemy cannot injure Him. “We know the faithful heart of our Lord. He has written our names in His hands. He has promised

not only by the words of His lips, but He has sealed it by the miracles of His power, that He will not forsake us in the hour of distress. Here His disciples are in imminent peril; the waves have filled the ship, and Jesus lies there, without any concern for them, sleeps on as if now that He was to rise in His might, He were resting on His laurels." Hence Luther truly says: "While the sleep was genuine and natural, it must like all His works contribute to the faith of His disciples. Never was their faith more sorely tried."

Christ still pursues this course towards His people. In times of persecution He seemingly withdraws, as though He did not care for them, and calmly and quietly sleeps unmindful of the storm—and withholds strength and peace and rest. He lets us struggle and toil in our weakness, that we may learn that we are nothing at all and everything depends on His grace and power. 2 Cor. i. 8, 9; Ps. xxxv. 23 f; xlv. 24 f. The devil's subtlety is also manifest here. He knows his time and opportunity to attack Christ and His Church—when and where Christians are weakest and most easily dismayed.

25. "And His disciples . . . awoke him, saying, Lord save us" . . .

A brief, abrupt, prayer, showing terrible fright. The asyndeton indicates excitement: "We perish." Bengel: "It is a proof of candor in the disciples to have recorded their own weakness: this was not, however, difficult to them, since after the coming of the Paraclete they had become other men." They do not want to appear better than they are. They show themselves here as real beginners in faith. No doubt their faith felt quite secure as they entered the ship, in the cool of the evening, their Lord peacefully and profoundly sleeping in their midst. But faith does not consist in feeling. Had some one asked them as they set sail, whether they believed, their answer would have been *yes*, not perceiving that they were trusting in the calmness of the sea, that their faith was resting upon what was seen. But when the storm comes and the waves strike into the ship, their faith has vanished, for the calm and stillness in which they trusted have gone. Nothing remains but unbelief. This sees no more than it feels. Life and security it does not feel, but the waves pouring into the ship and a sea that threatens destruction; and as they think of these, their terror and trembling cease not. The more they look at the scene the more death and dismay press upon them and threaten to devour them.

While these words show the weakness of the disciples' faith, they also indicate its reality. Faith and unbelief wildly intermingle.

In the ship carrying Jonah, when a mighty tempest arose the mariners cried every man to his own god, Jon. i. 5. The disciples are perfectly familiar with the sea, they have tried everything in their power to effect their escape. There is no longer any hope. All human help is at an end, and so they turn to the Lord, who knows nothing of the sea or of seamanship. In their supreme distress they resort to Him. He is to help where no human help avails. What works of His they have already seen! What convincing proofs of His power and glory He must already have shown them that in this moment when all is giving way under their feet, faith holds itself unshaken in their hearts! He can help. If He would only awaken from His deep sleep, help would already be at hand.

Luther: "They still have one refuge, that they need not utterly despair. They run to Christ, awaken Him, and plead for His help. For faith, however weak, holds firm like a wall and opposes itself, like David against Goliath, against sin, death and every danger. It does not despair, but seeks help where it is to be sought, with the Lord Christ, crying, Lord, help, we perish." But for this they would have had to despair and to perish. Of course these words also betray the weakness of their faith. Luther: "Had their faith been strong and firm they could have said to the sea and waves, Dash against us as you may, you have not the strength to overturn our ship, for we have the Lord Christ on board, and should you even succeed we will find in the midst of the sea a tower whereon we may sit safe and secure. We have a God who can protect us not only on the sea, but beneath all waters. Faith takes courage in the jaws of death."

26. "And he saith . . . Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" . . .

The first cry of distress awakens Jesus, and no aspect, though never so unexpected, never so dreadful, disturbs the cheerful peace of His soul. He does not first compose Himself—He is perfectly calm, self-possessed. Fear is foreign to Him. In all that happened to Christ on earth He never evinced fear of any creature. Fear is the daughter of sin. The sinless, the perfect Jesus, who is conscious of being in fellowship with God, has His God and Father ever at His right hand. Wherefore should He fear? Calmly He looks into the tempest, and strangely His words are first directed to His disciples. They are behaving worse than the elements. They indeed awaken Him, not the fury of the sea. They, therefore, as the chief object of concern, receive the first correction. "The sea which is raging, as if it would swallow them, is not raging against them, but for them. These waves

striking against the boat are to speak a word of thunder into their hearts. Wind and sea are to serve this end. Just as they were on the point of being lost they are rescued. That they might realize the greatness of the danger and the greatness of the miracle, Jesus falls asleep. Had He watched, they would not have been frightened. He slept so as to give occasion for their faint-heartedness. This must reveal itself so far so as to be forever brought to an end. The athletes of faith must have no fear. Luther: "Are you my disciples and have so little faith? Or do you suppose that I am nothing, can do nothing, or know nothing of the devil's purpose against you and Me, and that he will soon over-power us? It is the grand power and art of faith to see what is not visible, and not to see what is visible, yea what presses and urges."

Δειλοί, ὀλιγόπιστοι. These terms are synonymous. Mark v. 36. The fault He finds with the disciples is their timidity and fearfulness, their fright lest this terrible fury could destroy them. *Noli timere, Caesar est in navi*, said Julius Caesar to a boatman, who was to take him across the Adriatic in the midst of a storm. The disciples should have remembered who was in the ship. This boat is a second ark moving across the towering waves of the deluge. Why be concerned for this ark? God has not only closed the door and shut in these disciples, He Himself in the person of His only-begotten Son is in the midst of them. The Son of God cannot perish. His kingdom cannot go under. "Oil remains always afloat on the waves. He who is anointed with the holy oil and those who have the unction from Him that is holy, can only triumph, never sink."

"They ought not to have had any fear—ought to have been persuaded of His power and willingness to save. Not the greatness of their fear, but their fear in itself was censurable. It had its ultimate source in their lack of faith. Where the Saviour is on board and men are afraid of perishing, there cannot be much faith. Jesus always attacks an evil at its root, hence He addresses the frightened disciples as *ὀλιγόπιστοι*."

Τότε: Jesus calmed first the minds of His disciples, then the sea. Mark reverses this order. Calmly He chided the disciples for their disturbed little faith; rising up He rebukes the raging winds and the tumultuous sea. A majestic spectacle. *Ἐπιτίμησε:* more than command. Ps. cvi. 9; cxix. 21, cf. Matt. xvii. 18; Luke iv. 39. He rebukes and commands the violence of the elements as their Creator, He treats them as His own subjects and agents. As their Lord He commands winds and sea. He charges them with unseasonable violence. He commands with threatening. Mark

gives the very words He employed, *σιῶπα, πεφίμωσο*. He threatens with His displeasure not only the wind, which of course had stirred up the sea. Had the wind at His word even subsided, the lashed billows would still have tossed and raged for a long time. So He rebukes the sea also—not to grow calm gradually, but in the very moment that He required the wind to cease the sea must become smooth and calm. Not in vain does he threaten the elements. Immediately a great calm ensues. What never happens naturally—the storm-tossed sea comes to an immediate calm. The wind and waves roaring like lions lie down like lambs at the feet of the Lord. At His word they obey. All creatures recognize their Creator. They to whom it is commanded, must know the Commander.

It is absurd to claim that the evangelist means to relate here anything short of a miracle. The rationalist theory, that Jesus discerned indications from which he prognosticated that there would soon be a lull in the storm, that it would end as suddenly as it began, is ridiculous. The disciples who were so terribly frightened knew more of these indications than their Master. Suppose our Lord were capable of playing such a role, who would ask men to put faith in Him? Lange: "The change occurred simultaneously with His arising and speaking." This conflicts with the narrative which makes the word of Jesus the cause of the change. See especially in Mark. The two are not coincident, a preëstablished harmony making the word of the Lord a word of truth, but the word alone is the efficient cause.

Some: His words imply no more than a firm confidence in providence. He had been praying, and felt assured of an answer. Strauss imagines a myth: the passage of the Red Sea is the original of this sail across the lake. In other instances the myths usually surpass the Old Testament history, but here the New Testament reproduction falls away below it. There they passed the sea without any vessel; here they were aided by a boat. A miracle must here be confessed; the next verse is conclusive against all explanations on natural grounds. Those who were witnesses of the event were struck with amazement. It was a miracle attesting the Messiah's dominion over nature. Even man's relative dominion over nature is not exercised through physical force, but by that intelligence which sets in motion spiritual forces. The word is the most immediate manifestation of the spirit. God works through His word, and upholds all things by the word of His power.

So the Son, the Word through whom all things were made, exerts by the word His power upon the creature. Nebe: "That

Christ exercises Lordship over nature is a precious pledge for the present and the future. Nature must even now serve the attainment of His saving purposes, and in future the supremacy of the Lord and His people over the world will show itself not in single miracles and signs, but in all things, over every realm and force of nature. This miracle is a representation in advance of the ultimate glory with respect to nature."

27. "But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man . . . the winds and the sea obey him."

A powerful impression is produced by the majestic miracle. "The men:" the disciples? Origen, Chrysostom and Jerome deny this, holding that the disciples are never designated thus. Others: the people, to whom the miracle was reported. But the evangelist does not report what happened later, as the result of this miracle, but what the eye-witnesses testified. Meyer: "The persons in the boat besides Jesus and His disciples, not the disciples themselves." So DeWette, Bleek and others, holding that "men" most naturally refers to other subjects than those just mentioned. Calvin: "Christ had not yet become known to them." Meyer admits, however, that according to Mark iv. 41 and Luke viii. 25 the disciples made the exclamation. It is not likely that the ship was of such size that it would hold, besides Jesus and the disciples, a considerable number of others. Why should such be on board? Not as sailors. There were enough disciples who understood sea-faring. Nebe, Von Hofmann and others: The disciples, referring to Luke ii. 15 (Greek). In the stilling of the tempest Jesus disclosed with *eclat* His divine power and glory. Respecting this "God manifest in the flesh," men said, etc. Thus the distinction between Jesus and His disciples may, by this term, be sharply set forth.

Ποταπός: Not *quantus*, but *unde*: from whence? Not as a question, *qualis*, but *talis*. They declare Him to be one whom the winds and the sea obeyed. It may be taken as a mere exclamation.

Whence is He? He is supposed to spring from human flesh, yet He shows great miracles transcending all human works. As man He sleeps, but as God He commands sea and winds. And now the fear of astonishment at the greatness of their Lord seizes the disciples. Till now they had merely seen Him exercise His power over the human conditions, now the display of His unlimited power over the raging elements leaves a yet more profound impression upon them.

The Pericope should in the first instance not be treated allegorically, but as actual history.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

JESUS THE AUTHOR OF TRANQUILITY.

1. He stills the heart.
2. He stills the elements.

JESUS IS LORD OVER NATURE.

1. It hears His word.
2. It gives heed to His word.

THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST'S MAJESTY.

1. The greatness of the storm.
2. The greatness of the disciples' distress.
3. The end of both by the word of the Lord.

WHAT MANNER OF MAN!

1. The Deliverer of His own who call upon Him.
2. The Lord of the world, which obeys His word.

THIS VOYAGE IS A TYPE,

1. Of our earthly life.
2. Of our spiritual life.

THE STORMS OF LIFE ARE,

1. Trials of our faith.
2. Stimulants to prayer.
3. A glorification of our Lord.
4. Occasions of praise.

CHRIST THE PROTECTOR OF HIS CHURCH.

1. The Church needs a protector.
2. The Church desires a protector.
3. The Church rejoices in a protector.

* THE CHURCH OF THE LORD,

1. Maintains a struggle with the world.
2. Conquers by the word of the Lord.
3. Triumphs unto the praise of the Lord.

NO GROUND FOR FEAR.

1. The Lord is with us.
2. Prayer awakens His help.
3. His help comes by His word.

WHY ARE YE SO FEARFUL?

1. Because of the security induced by good days.
2. Because faith is so weak.
3. Because Christ is not recognized as Lord of all.

WEAK FAITH BECOMES STRONG WHEN IT,

1. Seeks the Lord.
2. Submits to the chastening from the Lord.
3. Has regard to the word of the Lord.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Matt. xiii. 24-30.

THE progress of thought is obvious. The last Pericope showed Christ as Lord of nature triumphantly putting to naught all attacks from without; this one teaches that His kingdom has to contend also against foes within, but that they cannot prevent its growth and in the end will be wholly overcome. In the exposition regard must be had to Christ's own elucidation of the parable, vv. 37 ff. Luther says, since Christ Himself explains the ground, the good seed and the tares, this Gospel seems to be easily understood; but expositors have differed so much that it is after all not easy to hit the true meaning.

24. "The kingdom . . . is likened to a man which sowed good seed" . . .

This is the second parable of the series in this chapter. For the meaning of "parable" in general see on the second Advent Pericope. Alexander: "An illustration of moral and religious truth derived from the analogy of human nature." Sometimes the word is used in an indefinite sense for every form of figurative speech. Specifically a parable is an account of a fictitious circumstance, according with the facts of nature and illustrating spiritual truth. "The proper meaning is not that expressed by the words, but must become clear from the intended application." A distinction must be observed between what a parable was intended to teach and what it may be made to teach. Aug.: "The plowshare alone makes the furrow, the string alone produces the music." An occurrence of actual life, a history out of the ordinary world of man, is the ladder on which the parable conducts the man of God to the survey of the mysteries of the kingdom. What it reveals to true believers, it is often meant to conceal from others, v. 11. Παρέθηκε, not of a repast. He set before them in discourse, Exod. xix. 7, LXX. 'Ωμοιωθη, lit: "the kingdom of God is made like." It is not a self-product, but is dependent on another in its development and entire history. A higher will orders and determines all. The Aorist is significant. What the parable sets forth, has, alas! already occurred.

The kingdom of heaven is now likened to one who sows, and that sower is the Son of man, v. 37. Though others are occupied in sowing, Christ is, in the last instance, the only sower. So far as others truly sow, they sow not in their name or for themselves or of their seed. The Lord directs them to sow, gives them the seed-corn, and He it is who gathers in the harvest. The subject is not confined to a comparison of the kingdom with a man sowing, but to the whole circumstance portrayed in the parable.

"Good seed," sound, possessed of germ vitality, and likewise clean, free from admixture of weeds. Only good and pure seed is sown by the Son of man, the word of God, v. 19, which is quick and powerful, mixed with no pernicious errors, the pure, unadulterated word of God.

Ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, ἐν not εἰς: He is Himself in His field. He stands in the midst of His field prosecuting His work. Ἐν points to the incarnation of the Son of God, and ἀγροῦ to the fact that the field belonged to Him before He sowed it. John i. 11. He sowed it because it was His own property. The field = the world, v. 38. The Donatists and the Puritans cite this as proof that tolerance does not refer to ecclesiastical, but political fellowship. But there was as yet no church, hence the sower scatters his seed upon the soil of the world, the only field accessible. The Jewish theocracy did not suffice for a field. The kingdom is to extend as far as "the sun does his successive journeys run," xxviii. 19. "The world is the ground and soil on which the kingdom of God is to be built up. The whole world is to be sown with the seed of the word, and as far as this great broad field is sowed and covered over with the seed, so far is the Church established in the world." Nebe: "This field in which tares intermingle with the wheat is the temporal, finite, defective, form of the manifestation of the kingdom; the barn into which the wheat is gathered is its perfected form."

25. "But while men slept, his enemy came" . . .

The Son of man is not allowed to possess in peace His field sowed with the wheat. The seed taken into its bosom is not suffered to grow undisturbed and to ripen. The enemy, the devil, v. 39, follows close upon the work of the sower. The Lord who came into the world as its Light, to testify of the truth, speaks explicitly of the great enemy, both His and ours. The devil is not an old superstition; his personality and work are attested by Him whom even rationalists profess to accept as a Teacher. He who has delivered the human mind from the thralldom of error and supersti-

tion, recognizes Satan as personally and persistently opposing His work. To His disciples, who were to establish His kingdom in all the world, He declares unmistakably, the enemy is the devil. He cannot be dissipated into the principle of evil. "Mere principles effect nothing unless they have personal bearers and representatives." The bare idea of evil could not have compassed the fall of man, except through the medium of a personality. Opposed to the person of the Son of man there appears here another person, "His enemy." The two are polar opposites. "The devil is the enemy, in particular, of the Son of man, who has sown his field. He is, in the first instance, the enemy of God, and because of that he is also the enemy of man, for man is the work and glory of God." "As creature he cannot oppose his enmity directly against God, so he wreaks his malice on God's workmanship."

Ἐπέσπειρε: "He oversowed cockle among the wheat." Nebe holds it to be obvious, from the whole parable, "that the subject is not Satan's sowing in Paradise, but his work on realizing that the Son of man has sown His good seed into some heart." He does not wait for this seed to perish on the stony ground, or amid the thorns; he proceeds at once to cast among the seed sown his own noxious "zizania." Chrysostom: "The enemy cannot pull up the good seed by the roots, nor is he able to choke or to burn it; only through cunning can he rob the Lord of a joyous harvest from His wheat field." *Ζιζάνια*: "A kind of darnel, bastard wheat, resembling wheat, except that the grains are black." It may be mistaken for wheat, but it has an injurious, benumbing, poisonous effect alike on the brain and the stomach. "It is the only poisonous graminous plant," a fit symbol of the envenomed deadly malignity of the arch-foe, who was a murderer from the beginning, and who is intent on the destruction of the first sower of the life-and-strength-imparting wheat.

"Among the wheat." Not in a corner of the field, but over the entire world, wherever the seed of life has been sown, where the wheat stands the thickest, he scatters from a full hand his wretched weeds. As the Lord is not content to sow only a part of the field so the enemy, too, is intent on the whole earth. Wherever the gospel goes there goes its blighting counterpart; the seeds of error follow close on the seeds of truth. The same vessel which carries Christ to the heathen, bears also anti-Christ—the missionaries and the rum casks. "Nowhere," says Luther, "does Satan love to sow weeds so much as in the midst of the wheat, and nowhere is he so fond of casting stumbling blocks as among true Christians."

He does not care to dwell in dry desolate places, but aspires to

sit in heaven, to defile pure and lovely spots. He wants to sit and rule in the Church. The libertine seeks a virgin. He delights in corrupting the pure.

Ἐν τῷ καθεῖδειν, κ. τ. λ. Some: The sleeping shepherds and bishops are at fault; their negligence afforded the enemy his opportunity. They failed to watch and pray against the terrible danger. Luther says, there may be security among the people, even when the word is most earnestly proclaimed. He says again, the devil can disguise himself so as not to seem to be a devil at all; false doctrines may be disseminated where no one suspects it, where God is supposed to be enthroned, and Satan a thousand miles away, so that nothing is seen or heard except the word and name and work of God. Satan has no match in guile or cunning. He had experienced most painfully even at Wittenberg, how quickly after the good seed has been sown, Satan can broadcast his noxious errors. Carlstadt's work was done under the guise of piety, under the pretext of enhancing the progress of the kingdom, yet it threatened the destruction of the evangelical harvest.

The servants would hardly have been so brazen as to ask, v. 27. "whence hath it tares," if these were but the result of their own sloth and carelessness. And the master would certainly have reproved them on coming with a question which their guilty conscience should have answered. Meyer: "This little detail forms part of the drapery of the parable (cf. xxv. 5), and is not meant to be interpreted, as is evident from the fact that Jesus Himself has not explained it." Bleek: "It happened in the night-time, while men were sleeping, and no one saw it." Nebe, while admitting that this clause contains nothing essential to the parable, holds it to be more than a graphic designation of the night. The Master shows that without any fault of man the seeds of evil fall into God's field. The law of man's being requires sleep. It is a necessity of nature that with the most careful watching and praying, bodily sleep will set in, and the enemy profits by this opportunity—when we cannot prevent it. He comes unseen, unnoticed, and so secretly does he also steal away. "Went his way," without waiting for the morning, when men would discover him. He conceals himself effectually. He works in the dark.

Jesus says, v. 38: "The good seed are the children of the kingdom, the tares (scattered among them by Satan) are the children of the wicked one;" v. 41, "all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity." Olsh: "The children of the kingdom are not viewed as entirely dissevered from evil. Nor the children of the wicked one as wholly dissociated from good." They are in

contact with each other and sustain such a connection with each other, that an absolute, reciprocal exclusion is not to be thought of. The wicked one, the enemy, is not viewed in the SS. as a self-existent power, an adversary of equal rank with God. He has no creative power, he is not the *causa sui*. He is a spirit created by God, he cannot work as an absolute cause. "He can only transform what exists, pervert what is capable of perversion."

Alike the children of the kingdom and those of the evil one derive nutriment and growth from the soil of the field. The former have so received the word into themselves that by its creative power they have come to a new birth. The seed has come to form and being in them and they are called the children of the kingdom, not only because they are the heirs of the kingdom, but because the kingdom is their mother. Their antipodes, then, are called children of the evil one, that is they are the product of the seed sown by him, they are of their father the devil. John viii. 44. Nebe: "The kingdom—or church(?)—here appears as the *alma mater* from whom the children are born and not merely nursed. She deserves this designation, because the word of God, the seed of eternal life, is committed to the hands of the Church and by her is sown into the hearts of men."

Others close their hearts against the Lord, and receive into themselves the evil seed, they cherish error and unrighteousness, cast into their hearts by the enemy. These germs of the evil one they suffer to take root within them, and they promote its growth by their God-given powers, and at last become firmly united to him. "Sin is no longer subject to them, but they become subject to it."

The children of the evil one, Jesus (v. 41) calls *σκανδαλα*, stumbling-blocks, those who give their neighbors occasion for stumbling or ruin; and "them that work iniquity," all sinners. "Scandals are caused only through open sins, but not only are crass sinners, but also the finer ones, of the evil one," souls within the church, and souls without. "As Satan sows the tares in the midst of the wheat, everything must be considered tares which is not derived from the pure, unadulterated word of God, whatever springs from evil. There come here upon one heap heretics and schismatics, the dead orthodox and the sanctimonious pietists."

26. "But when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit . . . the tares also."

Both tares and wheat are subject to the laws of growth. So long as the field was green the tares were not discovered. They were sown stealthily and at first resembled the wheat, "so that even men

with the spiritual insight of Apostles are blind here." There has been but One who needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man, John ii. 28. Nebe claims that the Apostles regarded at first as good wheat, Ananias and Sapphira, "the two noxious plants sown by the enemy into the Paradise Garden of the Mother Church," for the whole Church was of one heart and one soul. All errorists at first disguise themselves until they have obtained an audience, then they pour out their poison. They come not with sheer lies but with half truths. They make pretensions of greater sanctity, like the false prophets at Ephesus, Colossæ, and at Zwickau in the Reformation. The devil's seed, set on destroying life and character, does not at first appear in its real form. "Sin must play the hypocrite, affect refinement, culture, &c., if it would succeed. The naked flesh must hide under a fig leaf, deceit must conceal itself under the mask of honesty." Evil knows that it is no match for the good, hence it passes itself as good seed; "it knows its impotence and feels its judgment." But this deception is short-lived. "The more the wheat develops, the more obvious is it that tares are not wheat. *Dies diem docet.*" By their fruits ye shall know them.

Here ends the first division of the parable, establishing the fact that there is no field, however large or small, on which tares are not found among the wheat; and that this holds true of the Church—that wheat is never found alone, the tares are always intermingled with it. "In this life many hypocrites and wicked men are mixed up with the Church, which is properly the congregation of saints and true believers." Aug. Conf., Art. VIII. "Donatists and Puritans follow a phantom of the brain, and cannot quote this passage as their guiding star." There was a Judas, a devil, among the chosen twelve. The Apostolic Church with all its abundance of spiritual treasures was not without spot or blemish. "Church history offers the most incontestible proofs that the tares have become most terribly manifest in those very circles which deemed themselves pure and perfect."

27. "And the servants, . . . Sir, didst thou not sow good seed? . . . whence then hath it tares?"

The servants are the preachers. They are amazed, says Luther, but "they do not venture to pass judgment, and would fain take the most favorable view, since those also bear the Christian name." They are faithful servants, who do not judge according to their own opinion, but repair first of all to the mouth of their Master. Neither do they give themselves up to subtle inquiries and speculations as to the origin of the tares, but have recourse at once to the

true source of light. Nebe reminds us, what errors would have been avoided if Christian philosophers had imitated these servants, in order to solve the sphinx of history, the enigma of enigmas: *πότεν τὸ κακόν*? if instead of following their own thoughts they would have repaired to the word of God.

Greatly surprised and distressed over these tares, they present a twofold question. It is incomprehensible whence these tares have come. The field on which they are found is no public common, or wild, a tract lying open and uncultivated, without a proprietor to care for it. It was the exclusive property, *ἐν τῷ σῶ ἀγρῷ*, (note the emphatic possessive pronoun), of their Lord. He has treated it as his property, cleansed it, manured it, cultivated it. But more yet. He did not forbear bestowing upon it something from Himself. He has sown on it His seed, His good seed. And yet here are tares. Nebe says, they did not reach the conclusion reserved for the philosophers of our day, that the Master in order to determine and to possess Himself must have a non-ego beside or over against Himself, that the tares are a necessary point of transition for the development of the wheat. They were content with the foolishness of God's word, which sees in the tares not the good wheat in process of development, but something foreign and exotic, something opposed to God.

28. "He said unto them, An enemy has done this" . . .

A brief, clear, positive answer. "On most questions the word of God offers always the briefest and most definite answers." *Ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος*. The sower was called a man—so now his adversary is also a man. The figure is taken from human life. Nebe sees here the key for the greatest mystery upon earth. Sin is not to be traced exclusively to man. Sin in man results from sin in the spirit world. The difference between the two is that sin in man is not produced purely by man's own will. Man was seduced. A foreign will determined his will—not indeed without fault of his own—into false paths. Hence redemption is possible to man. A foreign will may break the influence of the evil foreign will and restore the misled creature, while the fallen angels are bound with eternal chains, since they fell purely of their own will. Against the offence revealed by the world, when it holds that no good comes from preaching, Luther defends both doctrine and preachers, declaring that in the mass which is the good ground and which has the true doctrine there are many tares and evil ones. This is not the fault of the doctrine, which is pure and wholesome; neither is it the fault of the preachers, who earnestly desire and labor to have the people

become more pious. It is the fault of the enemy, the devil, who like a wicked neighbor when one is asleep and free from anxiety, does not sleep but comes and sows tares in the good field. Hence every Christian, every preacher, ought to despair of ever finding a church composed solely of saints. Wherever God builds a church, Satan follows with a chapel hard by. Luther points to the experience of Paul, John and others, "who hoped that they had pious Christians and faithful laborers in the Gospel, and found them the veriest knaves and the bitterest foes."

The servants have heard enough. The enemy has sought to dishonor the field of their Master and to injure His wheat. They are indignant over the malicious one and jealous for the honor of their Lord. "Shall we gather them," root them out? True, earnest, faithful servants, they are concerned for the interests of their employer. They do not consider it their business to inquire into the origin of this enmity. Why speculate over the origin of evil, or ask how an angel could fall, how Lucifer became an enemy of God? The knowledge of the origin of sin would be no remedy for it, no weapon for its destruction. The contest with sin must be carried on with other weapons than words of wisdom.

The servants are ready for a vigorous attack upon the tares. This wretched crop of malice, indignation prompts them to weed out at once. Some: zeal and love impelled them. They desire to serve the kingdom, and they are concerned for the good grain which must suffer from the growing weeds. Neither love nor anger allows them, however, to forget that they serve a Master, that it is not for them but for the Master to determine what is to be done; they do not blindly rush to the field and rashly clean out the abominable thing. The matter is becomingly submitted to the Lord. As Jesus in the exposition does not say who these servants are, nor explain the "gather," it is clear that the point of the parable does not lie in the prohibition. It is a subordinate feature, yet it has doubtless great significance for the church.

29. "But he said, Nay, lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat" . . .

Nebe contrasts the composure of the lord with the excitement and wrath of the servants. Possessed of royal majesty, his "plastic repose" shows that although sin still boldly rears its head, it yet lies crushed under His feet. What is sin other than an impotent assault against the Lord, a futile, hapless contest with the Almighty? Not to be misunderstood, the Master utters a categorical, emphatic "no."

The servants distinguish the tares from the wheat. Their simi-

larity at that stage is not such, that the wheat may be mistaken for the weeds. Nebe notices the great dissimilarity between the spirit of the New Testament and that of the Old Testament, which here must neither be mistaken nor concealed. Cf. Luke ix. 55.

Christ clearly forbids the use of the sword against heretics, but He does not forbid the exercise of church discipline against public offenders. This is not only commanded, but applied in the New Testament, even to the point of viewing a hardened sinner as a heathen and a publican, Matt. xviii. 17, and excluding one from fellowship. 1 Cor. v. 13. Pastor Harms expressed doubts whether any should be excommunicated, thinking it better to let them excommunicate themselves when the word becomes unendurable to them, but the Apostles did not thus interpret the "no" of their Master, nor did Luther. The servants proposed to visit swift and total destruction upon the tares, uproot them from the soil, where alone they could exist, and commit them to the flames. "They would by force remove the wicked out of the land of the living, draw the sword against them." Jesus on another occasion said, "Put up thy sword." That weapon has no place in matters of faith. There is no warrant for taking men's lives in order to save souls. *Ecclesia non sitit sanguinem*. With clear insight into this principle, Luther distanced all his contemporaries, stood far above the views of his age. Melancthon as well as Calvin failed here. Luther maintained that the church can put men under the ban, out of the church, but she receives them back when they repent and seek mercy. They are to be shut out as heathen, that they may come to know their sin and reform and prove a warning to others. Men must not be placed beyond the reach of God's word, which may soon move a heart to repentance. Luther warns that by executing the offender in the church, we become guilty of a two-fold murder, first in the temporal death of the body, second, in the eternal death of the soul. This is not doing God a service, employing force in his kingdom. God's Word alone can make men good. These, be it remembered, were servants not of an earthly kingdom, but of the kingdom of heaven. But even Luther, like Augustine, forgot in a measure his principles, and held that the state might proceed "against those who blaspheme the honor of Christ, hinder the salvation of souls, and create divisions among the people, when they refuse to be corrected and to cease their preaching." Over against this Nebe justly maintains: "The state must not enact the role of the church, neither the church the role of the state." The two spheres must be kept apart. Each has set for it its distinct task. The state cannot move against the foes of

the church, until they attack the state itself, or attack the church in her external existence and external rights.

The Lord justifies this emphatic "no." If the servants are anxious for the wheat, He is still more so. The tares, however, do not cause His greatest anxiety respecting the wheat, rather does the fiery zeal of His servants. They are in danger of rooting up the wheat itself, by their proposal to clean it of weeds. "From love for the good wheat the Master of the house concludes to bear with the tares upon his field." Whether they would pull up much or little wheat along with the tares matters not, for a single soul is of infinite value with God. Some: There is a deceptive similarity between the tares and the wheat. They may easily make a mistake. They have not the discernment of spirits. Blind zeal has more than once plucked up the wheat and left the tares standing. Lange: "The servants of the sower have shown a thousand times in history, that they could not sharply enough distinguish the tares from the wheat." Ignorant zeal promotes the purpose of the enemy. The purest doctrine is anathematized as tares, the children of the kingdom are cast out and burnt. Bleek warns against the exclusion of those, of whom it may still be hoped that what is impure and sinful in them will yet be overcome by the continued influence of the kingdom, and the better element in them will triumph. Nebe reminds, however, that with not a syllable did the Lord intimate that the servants made a mistake in seeing tares where there were none. He knows that their discovery was correct, their eyes distinguishing very clearly the tares from the wheat, just as clearly as the reapers will. "The tares appeared also," the distinction between the two growths was quite evident.

Augustine and Luther: "Many who were tares may become wheat, wicked ones may come to repentance, if they are patiently borne with." Or, "Some good ones among them, who may yet be converted, would be condemned and destroyed if they were excluded from the church and from fellowship with the wheat." "Among the enemies themselves are concealed the future citizens." Church discipline, it is admitted by all, must be exercised—with patience, of course. *Fiat hoc cum dilectione, non ad eradicandum, sed ad corrigendum.* The tares, be it remembered, were sown in the midst of the wheat. They take root just as the wheat does, and, as if conscious of the danger which threatens them, they seek to intertwine everywhere their roots with the roots of the wheat; so that the tares cannot be plucked up without injury to the wheat, the roots of both being so completely intertwined. Luther: "For the sake of one pious man you must often shield seven rogues."

Where I know a Christian, I should rather spare a whole land who are not Christians than to pluck up one Christian with the tares."

For the sake of ten righteous, God would have spared Sodom and Gomorrah. Utterly different as are the two species in character, their roots are interwoven in the same soil. The luxuriant growth of the field products in the East is not to be overlooked. There is, indeed, seldom a godless man who is not closely connected in flesh and blood with some child of the kingdom, and such child of God is not always able to bear the judgment inflicted on his kinsman, though knowing it to be just. That, too, which is condemned in one's neighbor has also its roots within us. Hence, if the tares are to be utterly removed, there would in the end remain not a vestige of good wheat on the great wide field. Sin attaches to us, and the more we apprehend divine grace the more we realize this. Luther says, "If no weeds are to be tolerated, then no church is possible. To pluck up all the weeds means the destruction of the Church. The fanatics who insist upon having a church of pure wheat alone, demonstrate by their exaggerated holiness that they are no church at all." "For the proud and those inflated by the conceit of their holiness are the farthest removed from the church, which confesses herself a sinner, and which tolerates the intermingled tares, *i. e.*, heretics, sinners, ungodly ones. As the fanatics will not do this, they separate themselves and pluck up the wheat with the tares, and so become anything but the Church."

30. "Let both grow together until the harvest . . . Gather the wheat into my barn."

The master kindly relieves the servants of all solicitude. They have made no mistake about the character of the tares, nor of his abhorrence of them even though they grow on his own field. There is no fellowship between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, between tares and wheat. The field is to be purged, the kingdom shall lay aside this "poor-sinner-garment," and be gloriously arrayed in pure white, without spot or blemish, but not by one stroke will the kingdom of God be made spotless. What thousands of years intervene between the fall of the first Adam, and the appearance of the second Adam for redemption. If these thousands of years were required for the preparation of redemption how dare we hope that the appropriation of it will take place in overwhelming suddenness? Christ occupies the center of history. Patience is demanded. His kingdom passes through a process of development, slow indeed, but sure of a glorious ending.

"Let both grow together" are words of reassurance to the

greatly disturbed servants. The wheat continues to grow, despite the tares. The danger lies not in delay, but in haste. They are ignorant of the indestructible vitality which inheres in the seed sown by the Master. They underestimate that seed, and overestimate the seed of the enemy. "Evil has no power of life, no durability. Sin ends in death." The tares are a parasite, a fungus, which does not feed on itself, but draws its life from another. Sin lives on its antithesis. Nebe: "Wheat and tares not only grow outwardly alongside of one another, but each stimulates the other to right growth." The greater the opposition of evil, the greater the progress of the church. This was experienced when the world mustered all its intellectual and carnal hosts against the church in the first Christian centuries. She experienced another Pentecostal era in the Reformation, when all the legions of Pope and Emperor were directed against the truth. Conflict is the law to the children of the kingdom, for the development of the powers of the world to come imparted to them. Power grows by opposition. Let both grow (struggle) together. These, says Luther, are words of comfort, urging us to patience. Do not worry over what you cannot help. What cannot be cured, must be endured. Leave this to God. "The passage treats of the patience of the saints, who are constrained to endure offenses and evil men in the church." This does not mean that we let them entirely alone, let them be undisturbed as tares; we are to put them under the ban, do what we can. 1 Cor. v. 9-13. Christ did not let Judas alone; when he would not be corrected He caused him to go out. "If we should by our indulgence give countenance to those living in sin, we would actually be tearing up the wheat, and let the tares grow as rank as they please." Christ speaks of the growing, not of the sowing and the planting. You are to let both grow, not to sow and cultivate both. The enemy sows the tares while men are asleep. It does not follow from this that with open eyes we are to permit the tares to be sown where we can prevent it. Only when it is sown or is growing among the wheat, shall we let them both grow together.

Patience with the tares! *Habet deus suas horas et moras.* He has fixed the time when patience will have an end. "Let both grow until the harvest." "The world is something that has come to be, something created, it is also something developing; germs are deposited in it, potencies are grounded in it, these are to be developed, realized." But this development is not a progress *ad infinitum*. "There comes a time when all is ripe for the harvest."

"The harvest is the end of the world," v. 39, "the consummation of the age," the last day. "And in the time of har-

vest," is added by way of emphasizing the proper set time for the separation. The season fixed for this very work of gathering out the tares will at last have come. Then will the Lord assign the task to the reapers, the angels, v. 39, who accompany the Son of man in His glorious Advent, not simply to adorn the resplendent triumph of their King, but to take an active part in bringing about the *συντέλεια* of this age. "They assisted as ministering spirits in sowing the good seed and guarding it, and they will have a corresponding activity in garnering it." Chrys.: "The Son of man does not come at the end with His own activity alone: behold His unutterable love to man and how He is disposed to grace and averse to judgment; when He sows He sows alone, when He punishes He punishes through others." The reapers are not the servants who offer to weed out the tares. Not men, but angels, shall execute the final judgment—because, says Nebe "the judgment extends to all who have ever lived upon earth, alike the living and the dead."

"Gather first the tares." Nebe: "The conqueror holds the field. The ungodly have for ages contended against the righteous, the conflict was hot and often wavered, but the victory of the righteous is beyond question, palpable, manifest. They hold the field. The time of the harvest yields in fact the most perfect theodicy. Sin, which by cunning and force had usurped a place, aye the chief place in this world, shall be dispossessed and cast out as a shameless intruder."

"Bind them into bundles." Nebe points to grades in damnation corresponding to grades in glory. "Punishment is the rebound of sin upon the sinner; the more conscious and wilful the sinner's disobedience, the more terrible the rebound." Goebel finds indicated in these bundles "the large mass of tares." They are thus collected and bound in order to be burned. Thorns and weeds are generally burned up. So these tares shall be cast into the furnace of fire, y. 42, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. The tares have at last reached their proper destination—in the garner of him who sowed them into the field of the householder. That garner is the fire of hell. Then they are to gather the wheat, thoroughly freed now from all tares. The full security of the wheat henceforth is seen in the store-house to which it is consigned. "My barn," says the Master, the building provided for the wheat, Matt. xxv. 34. In that treasure-house which the boundless mercy of God has filled with the fullness of grace upon grace and glory upon glory, the wheat itself shall now rest as a faithfully guarded treasure, as a jewel, a precious gem of the king-

dom, shining in the kingdom of their Father, v. 43. "The kingdom of their Father is the *ἀποθήκη* into which the righteous are received." Stier finds in this singular, primarily, "the purified church upon earth;" finally, "the transfigured earth itself." Nebe: "The church itself will then be ripe; the kingdom of God will have come."

Luther: "Who could have thus explained the parable? Who would have thought it, that the wheat should shine as the sun, and the tares burn like hay, and both forever? Hence, not in vain does He cry out at the close, He that hath ears, let him hear. This is something else than what the world speaks of. And here is the time to *hear* and not to think. For these things cannot be comprehended by speculation, but only by *hearing*; those who hear not know nothing."

The practical treatment of the Pericope may set forth individual details of the parable, the history of the wheat and the tares, the procedure of the Lord, etc.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

WHAT DOES THE PARABLE OF THE TARES AMONG THE WHEAT TEACH?

1. Whence the tares come among the wheat.
2. Why the tares are suffered among the wheat.
3. How long the tares will continue among the wheat.

TO WHAT THE PARABLE ADMONISHES US:

1. To have no fellowship with evil; it is from the devil.
2. To refrain from forcible interference, lest we endanger the wheat.
3. To await with patience the judgment of the Lord, who will Himself conduct His cause to the goal.

THE GOOD AND THE EVIL ARE MINGLED WITH THE CHURCH.

1. This mixture is not of God, but of the devil.
2. It must not prompt to carnal zeal, but to loving forbearance.
3. It will not continue forever, but only in time.

WE BELIEVE ONE HOLY CHURCH.

Hence, 1. We do not seek this church in this world.
But, 2. Await it in the world to come.

THE TARES STAND IN THE MIDST OF THE WHEAT.

1. Intelligible, yet unintelligible.
2. Tolerated, yet not tolerated.

THE PROHIBITION OF PLUCKING UP THE TARES.

1. Because while sown without our knowledge, not without the knowledge of God.
2. Because they are so like the wheat, and so grown together with it.
3. Because they do not choke the wheat, but promote its growth.
4. Because the Lord hath reserved the judgment to Himself.

THE HISTORY OF THE TARES.

1. Sowed by a wicked enemy.
2. Discovered with great sorrow by God's servants.
3. They continue to grow under the divine forbearance.
4. They find in the fire their deserved reward.

THE HISTORY OF THE WHEAT.

1. The Lord sows it.
2. The devil threatens it.
3. The angels garner it.

TOLERANCE IN MATTERS OF FAITH.

1. Is not natural to man.
2. Is by no means indifference.
3. Rests on obedience to God's word.
4. Commits all things to the judgment of the Lord.

SIN DOES NOT ANNUL THE DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. It does not have its source in God.
2. It must praise His patience and grace.
3. It falls at last under His stern judgment.

B. THE EASTER CYCLE.

1. The Prelude. LENT.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

MATT. xx. 1-16.

THIS is one of the most difficult parables. Notwithstanding all the diversities of interpretation a satisfactory result has hardly been secured. Its selection for the opening of the Easter Cycle is explained by Nebe on the ground that the ancient Church began in large part the Church Year with this day, which was likewise the day for the beginning of catechetical instruction. "These two points of view combined with the stereotyped Patristic exposition of the parable rendered the appropriateness of this Scripture for the day quite obvious." While he rejects the ancient exposition (cf. Nebe for a review of the ancient interpretation) he is unwilling to lose the Pericope at the portal of the high Easter-tide. "It opens to the whole church the most magnificent perspective. The Ancient Church began the Church Year with the Easter Cycle, because she recognized in the Easter Festival the queen of the Festivals, in the Easter event the crowning work of God, on which rests in the last instance the salvation of the world. She was in this entirely right. The word of the cross is the pole-star of the New Testament preaching; Jesus Christ, who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, is the Alpha and the Omega. This period, therefore, opens to the church the entrance into the Holy of Holies of our faith; it reveals to her the Mediator of the New Covenant, the Atoner, who is both High Priest and Sacrifice, the Mercy-seat in His blood. How appropriate then the earnest exhortation to be a true laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, to cultivate the proper and acceptable disposition, which consists in this, that one does not serve the kingdom of God for base gain or reward, but dismisses all pursuit of gain in order to possess in the kindness and grace of a merciful God, life and full satisfaction."

1. "For the kingdom . . . a man that is a householder, which went out early" . . .

This parable should not have been detached from the closing words of chap. xix. Although Matthew alone gives the parable, both the other synoptists (Mk. x. 31; Luke xiii. 30) point to the situation with which it stands connected. "For" shows it to be an elucidation of "many shall be last that are first; and first that are last," cf. v. 16. Schaeffer: "The previous words of the Lord had contained a solemn warning against that spiritual pride or religious self-complacency which may arise in Christians. 2 Cor. xii. 7. It is the main purpose of this parable to teach that no amount of labors in the service of God, nor any long period of time devoted to that service, nor any result produced by human instrumentality, can impart to any man a right and title to the gifts of God." Peter and his colleagues are taught that "while their fidelity shall be rewarded, priority in the time of their call, and important results of their labors, do not entitle them to higher reward than others may receive, who are called after the age of the Apostles, but who exhibit equal faith and love." 1 Cor. xv. 8-10. A longer period of service offers no advantage, a shorter no disadvantage. It is taught, too, that while indeed the Jews were the people originally chosen by God, other nations who long were suffered to walk in their own ways, Acts xiv. 16, "should at a later period also receive a divine call, and constitute a peculiar people, to whom even greater privileges should be granted in the Christian church than those which the mere descendants of Abraham had ever enjoyed. 1 Pet. i. 11-12; Heb. viii. 6. The relative condition of the Jews and the Gentiles will be changed.

The parable grew out of the discussions which followed the interview with the rich young man, xix. 16 ff, on whose "sorrowful" departure Jesus had observed, "how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Peter, not without self-complacency, replies, "Lo, we have left all," we have made every sacrifice, and asks for an acknowledgment of their claims, for a definite specification of their reward: "What then shall we have?" Jesus does not ask His disciples to follow Him for naught. The Twelve receive assurances of twelve thrones awaiting them (xix. 28), and their recompense is not wholly reserved for the future. It is both temporal and eternal. "What the believer loses of earthly good for the Lord's sake shall be recompensed to him not only by everlasting possessions, but by manifold more in this time, and in the world to come eternal life. Luke xviii. 30. Still the Lord does not encourage but reprove a self-seeking, mercenary spirit. He earnestly warns His disciples

against the dangerous temptation to make gain out of godliness. He erects, accordingly, a danger signal in this parable. The key to the parable is contained in Peter's self-seeking question.

"Kingdom of heaven." Cf. Lecture on the Gospel for the second Sunday in Advent. The householder is the leading feature of the parable. The kingdom is, however, represented, not merely by the person but by his procedure and the consequences of it. The relation of sovereignty, not the paternal relation, is to be illustrated. xxi. 33. In v. 8 the householder is "lord," the owner and absolute ruler of the estate, God, the "uncontrolled Lord and Creator of all things," who confers undeserved blessings according to His sovereign right and will. "His vineyard" which symbolizes "the kingdom," recalls a whole series of sacred imagery from the Old Testament. Isa. v. 1; Ps. lxxx. 9 ff.; Jer. xii. 10; Hos. x. 1. Thiersch: "No form of agriculture is so laborious as that of the vintner, neither is any fruit so precious as that of the vine. Hence the Lord compared more than once the labor of His servants with the labor of the vineyard. They shall be prepared for indescribable pains and cares, but in the end the result and the reward will be precious."

The sovereign "householder" does not work as "the absolute active energy," but He employs in His service, makes tributary to the ends of His kingdom, whatever is found in His house. Not by physical instrumentalities, but by the power of His Spirit, He administers His house and assigns to every one his work. "The honor of God does not consist in His doing everything alone, but on the contrary, in His doing alone as little as possible, and in having other beings serve Him and His kingdom," He seeks "laborers" for His vineyard. Some understand the Apostles, bishops, shepherds. But who is not called to labor in the kingdom? Is it not the privilege, the duty of all men to serve God in His vineyard? Schaeffer: "The vineyard of each individual is the work assigned Him by the Lord in reference to His own soul, the good of others, and the glory of God."

"Early in the morning," "as early as human beings existed." Nebe: "This sets forth the burning zeal of the householder for His vineyard. His great concern is to have His vineyard cultivated and rendered fruitful, and therefore he does not leave the employment of laborers to subordinate spirits, but imposes on Himself the task of engaging laborers, and at morning dawn He goes about to hire laborers for ("into") His vineyard."

2. "And when . . . with the laborers for a penny a day he sent them into his vineyard."

While a parable like a diamond casts its lustre in many direc-

tions, the expositor must restrain himself from tracing a spiritual sense in each detail of the parable. The day divided into twelve hours signifies neither the duration of the world, nor that of the New Testament dispensation, nor the space of life allotted to a man, nor the period longer or shorter from his call to his death, nor "the time from the first calling of the Apostles to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit." Nebe: "The hours symbolize nothing more than the greater or lesser wage, to which the laborers are entitled to think that they are."

"When he had agreed." God asks nothing gratis. He rewards the smallest service of the unprofitable servant, even the cup of cold water handed to a thirsty one. He finds laborers, but they do not instantly hasten to the vineyard. They do not consent to serve the householder until they have made a contract for their services. Like Peter they ask, What shall we have for the whole day's labor? They seek a reward. Here lies the essential distinction between those first called and those called later. The latter, relying on the householder, responded promptly without a word as to wages, whereas the former stipulated for terms, for a specific amount, the pledge at once of their reward and of their contentment with it, a voluntary contract to which appeal is made by the steward when at even they murmured at the inequality of his bounty. "God makes His will known and affords to men the means and opportunities to accede to it." The terms on which the agreement was based (from which, *ek*, it proceeded) were a penny (denarius) a day=14 cents, the usual wages for a day's work. The relative value of this is without significance. Some in fact question whether the penny has its spiritual counterpart. Mey.: "The blessings of the Messianic kingdom." Beng.: "One amount of wages in the present and future life, equally offered to all. xix. 29, 31." Others: "those gifts which God's grace bestows in this life, such as the great privileges granted to Jews and Christians respectively." Olsh. gives "the immediate object of the parable to be unquestionably this, that the Apostles might be taught how their earlier calling of itself conferred on them no peculiar prerogative, and how those faithful laborers in the kingdom of God who were called at a later period (and who sacrificed much less), might be placed on an equal footing with them according to the free and unconditional award of divine grace."

Luther summarily cuts the knot by relegating the "penny" to the drapery of the parable. "We must consider not what the denarius imparts, not what is the meaning of the first or last hour, but what the householder has in mind, how he will have

His goods esteemed above all works or merits, yea, them alone; how wonderfully God in His kingdom upon the earth judges and works, causing the first to be the last and the last the first. The sum of this Gospel is, therefore, that no man is so high, or will get so high, that he need not fear that he will be the very lowest. Again, no one has fallen so low, or may fall so low, of whom we dare not hope that he may become the highest, because here all merit is done away with and only God's goodness is praised, and it is firmly established that the first shall be the last, the last shall be the first."

Nebe holds that the "penny" is too prominent in the parable to be devoid of spiritual meaning. He quotes Luther as teaching: "If we are to interpret minutely, the penny must point to temporal good, the liberality of the householder to the eternal good." "When it becomes clear that works justify no one before God, men will despise those who have done little, and take offense that they are to have no more for all their pains than those who stood idle. They murmur against the householder, revile the Gospel and become hardened. Thus they lose the goodness and grace of God and they must be content with their temporal reward and be condemned; for they served not for infinite grace, but for wages, and these they receive and nothing more." vi. 2, 5, 16. The others rest content with grace and will be blessed over their having a sufficiency of temporal good; for all depends on the good will of the householder. Stier holds that the penny represents in distinction from eternal life, undoubtedly "a temporal good, not necessarily of an outward or earthly nature." It is quite obviously that reward—not necessarily connected with eternal life—that enjoyment or compensation, toward which the sordid question of Peter, xix. 27, is directed. Such a reward the grace and righteousness of God will in general conjoin with service in the kingdom, so that no one's labor for Him will go unrewarded." Nebe: "The Lord in a single sentence, in answer to his question savoring so strongly of the hireling spirit, What shall we have? showed Peter what the laborer in the kingdom may expect. In this life already the householder requites His servants their labor in behalf of His kingdom; but His kingdom is the kingdom of heaven; in heaven also therefore does He propose to reward with eternal life the labor done for Him in this world. There is a two-fold reward: one here, temporal, transitory, and one yonder, eternal, imperishable. But the two rewards are not so related that they must always go together, that he who receives the temporal reward must likewise receive the eternal. The temporal

reward is, by no means, a guarantee of the eternal. One may receive a temporal recompense and yet absolutely forfeit eternal life. The Lord would picture clearly, before the eyes of His disciples asking for pay, this mystery of the kingdom of God, and at the same time reveal to them the cause of the forfeiture of the abiding reward on the part of the workmen in the kingdom. Not the character of human work determines whether men receive or lose the eternal reward. Not a syllable is uttered regarding the work of the first laborers, whether it was good or bad, whether it will compare with the work of those engaged at a later hour or not. Nothing depends on that. God sees the heart, and he who does his work sheerly for the sake of reward, in view of the promise given for this life, finds no grace before that God who is love; quite naturally, for he did not love Him, did not work for Him from love, only from self-love, from hope of gain, from self-seeking."

"The parable says to the disciples, and then to all who with them ask the King, What shall we have, then? a great reward is sure to you, it will be paid you to the last farthing, but eternal life, the mercy and good pleasure of God, you will never more attain by working for hire; you forfeit the best reward when for the sake of gain you are active in God's kingdom."

Godliness is, indeed, profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that to come; but a godliness which seeks only gain is not true godliness. According to Nebe then, the *denarius* denotes by no means the reward, *per se*, but "a very specific, tangible, measurable reward, the complex of those goods and blessings which accrue to men from membership in the Church, from an outward incorporation with the kingdom of God. These goods and blessings are quite manifold: participation in word and sacrament, Christian training, customs and culture. The Christian church has exerted its influence over the home, the school, the state; in all these communities first consecrated by the gospel, every Christian man shares without distinction much that conduces to the inner satisfaction of the human heart."

3. "And . . . about the third hour, and saw others standing in the market-place idle."

The third hour = about nine o'clock in the morning. Nebe: "The Householder has His times and seasons to engage men for His vineyard. He does not run to and fro at all hours in search of others who at the first hour were not found in the market-place, where men go and wait in expectation of employment. There is no hurrying or scramble, as if the vineyard would perish if the requisite

number of laborers were not promptly secured. The Householder knows His vineyard, knows His own resources, knows that by a word He could accomplish all Himself without any workers. Hence, He takes His time, and visits the market-place when the appropriate hour is at hand, nine o'clock in the morning, when the largest number were wont to be gathered there, many, of course, for pastime."

While many deny a spiritual import to the market-place, some make it the world, whatever is outside of the vineyard; the world with its wild confusion and tumult, its quarrels and litigations. No special significance attaches to the circumstance that men were found "idle."

4. "And said unto . . . Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I" . . .

"Unto those also." Meyer: "The point of similarity ("also") is, that as he had invited the first, so he now invites these also." In God's service all may find employment. Nebe: "These idlers are creditably distinguished from the first called. The householder makes no specific agreement with them, as with the first, what their wages will be, he only promises that they shall be treated with fairness. He has fixed their reward in his own mind, but he purposely keeps that to himself, that he may test the disposition of these people. If they, like the first ones, seek only reward, the question will soon be heard, 'What shall we have, then?' They stand the test." Taken strictly, their wages would amount to three-fourths of the sum promised to the first laborers; but a mercenary spirit is inconsistent with that genuine love of God which submits all our affairs to divine wisdom and goodness.

5. "Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise."

He did the same thing as he had done in the preceding verse, sending them into the vineyard and promising them also simply what was equitable. These also were not mercenary, nothing being said of negotiations with them respecting their wages. "The householder makes no contract; he gives them nothing but his word that they will find him a just man." All these laborers confide in His word, as Peter himself on a former occasion, which did him more credit than his present inquiry. Luke v. 5. Now he makes no unquestioning surrender of himself to the word of the Lord, but means to make sure of his reward. To the shame of Peter these are represented as saying in their hearts: "At thy word we go into the vineyard, we depend solely on thy word, we trust, we confide in thee." Nebe finds this confiding readiness to enter

the vineyard without a contract, heightened by the fact that the favorable hours for labor are passed, the cool of the morning is gone, the sun in mid-heaven is pouring down his fiery rays. Work will now be very oppressive. "A mercenary heart would not only have asked, What shall we have? but would have demanded consideration for the sweat in prospect, would have made capital of the fact that the lord of the vineyard had urgent necessity for laborers. But these men do not think of hire. They almost seem to grieve that they could not have gone to work earlier, as if they loved work not for the sake of the reward which it yields, but because of the blessing which is conjoined, *per se*, with labor." Even though the Lord of the vineyard should not requite us with the last farthing for all our service in His kingdom, we owe Him the deepest thanks of our hearts, that He calls for our assistance, that He opens the portals of His kingdom and points us to the field of labor, where we can exercise the energy of body and mind, which without such exercise would be our undoing.

6. "And about the eleventh hour . . . found others standing . . . Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

Nebe: "The Householder is not satisfied: the building up of His kingdom rests heavily upon His heart; even at the eleventh hour, when but one hour for work remains, we find Him again in the market-place, where He still finds unemployed men." He addresses them somewhat harshly, "Why stand ye," etc. Not only is there emphasis on the whole livelong day, but "every word contains a sharp reproof." It is unaccountable to Him that they have remained idle up to the hour with which the day closes. They might have found work if they had only sought it aright. "The householder has passed by them three times already, but here they have stood the whole day long, and none of them offered themselves to him as laborers; they wait for the work to come to them. And really it does come to them. The householder himself addresses them. We should despair concerning the call, the conversion, the salvation, of no one." "Who could believe that the householder should any longer want these people in his service? Not only is the day declining, but they seem fitted for anything else rather than productive labor in the vineyard. And three times he has passed by them. They have lived through three great seasons of awakening, and this hour they have not been awakened. But who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counselor? In the last hour He remembers these lost ones."

7. "They say . . . Because no man hath hired us. He saith . . . Go ye also into the vineyard" . . .

This applies especially to the Gentiles, who, in contrast with the Jews, were called at a late period of the world. Cf. Deut. iv. 32-34. Schaeffer: "The Gentiles possessed no knowledge of Christ and His atoning work; neither had they any knowledge of the divine purpose of receiving them into the Messiah's Church (Rom. xvi. 25 f.; Col. i. 27)." The householder does not take up their excuse. Briefly and bluntly he directs them to proceed also to the vineyard where the others are at work.

Their reply, "No one hath hired us," is not to be understood as expressing a mercenary spirit, for the householder enters into no contract with them, only telling them—if the last clause is genuine—that they, like those engaged at earlier hours, will be justly dealt with. With this they are content. "They, too, trust his word and rely entirely upon his promise."

Nebe finds some very definite purpose in the proceedings with these as over against those engaged for service at the third, sixth and ninth hour. Bengel, too, makes but two classes: "All are reckoned amongst the first who came before the eleventh hour." "These last laborers were by no means men not subject to censure. If the Lord would enter into judgment with them, He would find much in them to condemn; but one thing they cannot be charged with, that which attaches to the first laborers and deprives their labor of its intrinsic value, namely, self-seeking, the greed for gain."

Enough of laborers have thus been secured. Their length of labor varies greatly. "Their merits relative to the kingdom of God are exhibited clearly and distinctly by the different hours of the day, which may (Meyer) "mark the different periods at which believers begin to devote themselves to the service of God's kingdom."

8. "And when even . . . the lord saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, their hire, beginning from the last unto the first."

Nebe, in harmony with the spiritual sense, which he assigns to the penny and to the different hours, the latter giving to the laborers various claims on the measure of reward from God, differences of merit respecting His kingdom, holds that "even," the close of the day, is a vital feature of the parable. "It must come in order to make a reckoning and to strike the balance," "that the sentence of the righteous Judge may be delivered." Bengel: "A prophetic allusion to the last judgment." Meyer: "The time of the second coming."

The sentence the householder does not deliver himself. That

office is committed to the steward. Luke viii. 3. God hath committed all judgment into the hands of the Son, because He is the Son of man. The steward is charged to "call the laborers and pay them their hire," the wages agreed on. According to human ideas of justice the reward would correspond respectively to the great differences in the time of their service. Nothing is said of this by the householder. It is assumed that each is to have the same amount. The Son, who is one with the Father, fully knows His purpose of grace. He is to pay their hire. This is a recognition of the actual work done by the laborers in the vineyard; it pre-supposes thorough labor, otherwise the householder could not be held by the contract. No reflection whatever is cast on their fidelity or their industry. They bore the burden and heat of the day, toiling faithfully from morning till night. "And yet the eye of the lord of the vineyard does not rest with pleasure upon those servants, as is evident from the noteworthy direction to begin with the last."

Some hold that the last were paid first so as to evoke the complaints of the first laborers. "When the greed of gain once dominates the heart, it will want to know not only what it receives itself, but also what the others receive. Even if those first employed had been paid first, they would not have moved till they had seen what the last received. Unless they knew that, they could not rightly enjoy their own pay.

Here already the tables are turned, very much to the prejudice of the first laborers. The last already have a preference; they become, in fact, already the first. Those who entered last are the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor. Experience ever confirms this feature. The greed for gain does not suffer the laborers to enjoy the result, the blessing of their labor. They get their penny, but no enjoyment with it. Nay, they are dissatisfied, they want additional wages. Whilst he who does not labor for the sake of wages finds a reward already in the product of his labor, the wages of the mercenary ever slip from his hand, because these wages never satisfy his demands, are viewed only as part payment of the great sum due him." Luther imports here the equality which prevails in Christ's kingdom in contrast with the world. Over against the distinctions of rank, station, calling, etc., all are on an equality in the kingdom of grace, prince, noble, lord, servant, wife, maid, for neither has a different gospel, faith or sacrament, Christ and God from the other. Hence, he makes it the principal thing of this Gospel, that we draw from it the comfort that we Christians are all equal in Christ.

9. "And when they came . . . about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny."

These even who have no great claim on the kingdom, whether from the brief time they have been active for it, or the small measure of strength vouchsafed them from the Lord, receive the full reward in this life, they share in the whole of the rich blessings of the church. The penny is with them not an equivalent for work done, it exceeds all merit.

10. "But when the first came, they supposed . . . receive more; and they likewise" . . .

Luther explains that the last who were made first, obtained temporal good gratuitously because they first sought the kingdom of God. Matt. vi. 33. "The first ones sought the temporal, bargained and served for it, therefore they forfeit grace and with a hard life deserve hell. The last do not assume that they deserve a penny and they obtain all things. When they first see this they are deluded with the idea that they will receive much more and they lose all. The last do not, accordingly, reckon on their deserts, only on the goodness of the Lord."

Quite naturally the first believe that they should receive a very considerable reward, when they see even the last receiving a penny; but the longer they saw the steward paying out, the more they had food for reflection, for they perceived that those engaged at the ninth, the sixth and the third hours, obtained one by one the penny. This should have led them to ask seriously, How the Lord comes to offer to all the laborers the same compensation? Is not the labor in the vineyard meritorious, does it not furnish a claim? Is the *denarius* to be a gift of grace? But the service of the Lord did not bring these laborers enlightened eyes or pierced ears. They had a sense only for the pay, for the sake of which they served. This absorbed all their senses and thoughts. They labored in the vineyard of the Lord, but nothing of the Spirit of the Lord came to them; they stood for a whole day in His service but when the "even" came, they stand before the Lord, in whose work they were engaged, quite as strange and as cold as early in the morning. The external relation to the Lord has not become an internal relation. The love of gain lying on their hearts like a ban, has not admitted of their coming into a living and loving relation to the Lord. With the conclusion of their labor therefore terminates also the relation between them, for the perishable mammon and not zeal for the kingdom of God was the bond of their fellowship. They received every man a penny; these first ones, too, received it. It was not simply offered to them; they did not decline it or fling it back, they took it. They murmured after receiving it. "The

denarius is viewed as something which may be received by men without their being saved. These first are evidently dissatisfied with their penny. They are sullen because they did not receive more than a penny, sullen towards their fellow-laborers because they too received the penny, sullen against the householder, who by giving a penny to each laborer wiped out in short fashion all distinctions between the first and the last." As the others received more than they deserved, they hoped that they too, might receive more than the stipulated amount. Not only the penny but any additional payment they viewed as wages, not as a free gift.

They give vent to their chagrin and anger not only in their features and their eyes, but in words.

11, 12. "And when they had received it, they murmured . . . saying, These last have spent but one hour, and . . . equal unto us, which . . . the burden of the day and the scorching heat."

Bengel notes that "the intermediate laborers did not murmur, for they saw themselves likewise made equal to the first."

These "murmured," "expressed their discontent in a low sullen voice." Luke xv. 28-30. This forbids "the penny" from being viewed as eternal life. The murmuring discloses a wicked spirit alike towards God and the brethren. The householder is charged with injustice, and envy begrudges to the fellow-laborers their generous reward. They were originally content with the penny, but when they discover that this was the general reward, it only vexes them. Their conduct has a parallel in that of the elder brother. Luke xv.

The lord not merely mentions the complaint of the first, but also specifies the reproaches which they cast against the householder—a fact which shows that the murmuring is a significant feature of the parable. "Their complaints show that the steward was quite right when he degraded the first to be the last, when he excluded these 'called' from the 'chosen.'" Nebe deems it important that these murmurers express their dissatisfaction, since they thus become their own judges and vindicate the justice of the householder by their grievances and complaints.

"These," contemptuously. Luke xv. 30; xviii. 11. Their envy and ill-will towards their associates, whom they disdain to acknowledge as brother-workmen, breaks out in the first clause. They have spent but one hour—it is implied in the word used (Acts xv. 33; xviii. 23; 2 Cor. xi. 25) that they were not specially industrious even then. They passed an hour in the vineyard. Even what credit attaches to them is disparaged by the complainers. At all events, their hour's work in the cool of the day bears

no comparison to the burden which they have borne and the heat of the midday sun which they have endured, and, therefore, does not entitle them to the penny. Bengel: "Envy is frequently more anxious to take from another than to obtain for itself." They not only endured all the hardships which necessarily attach to an entire day's labor, but they were exposed to an extraordinary hardship from the hot wind, the scorching blast which was wont to rise about noon. "The householder, consequently, treated them inconsiderately, unfairly. He has unjustly placed the last on an equality with them." Luther: "Our flesh and blood seeks to have its labor and honorable Christian walk paid for, or will do nothing at all; looks envious and sullen when it sees that another, who has been a Christian hardly a year or a half, is to have just as much in Christ as one who has toiled and labored all his life."

13. "But he . . . Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny?"

"To one of them," a sample representing all, perhaps one who had been more demonstrative. "Friend." As he refrained from entering further into the excuses given by the last in v. 7, so here he answers the accusations of the last in a mild, friendly manner, similar to our expression, My good friend, xxii. 12; xxvi. 50. *Ἐταίρος*, "one with whom an association of any kind, even unfriendly, had existed for a longer or shorter time," while *φίλος* implies a heart relation. The householder, notwithstanding the unjust imputation, remains "calm, courteous and firm." "He might well have asked the laborers whether in their labor they had experienced nothing but burden and heat, whether they did not realize in the inner man a blessing in the work itself; he might have reminded them that their complaint put it beyond all question that they did not throw their whole heart and all their energy into the work. Such representations would indeed have been futile. He puts the matter in such a light before them as to place himself in the position which they have assumed in their charge against him. As God will show Himself merciful with the merciful, so also will He show Himself froward with the froward, 2 Sam. xxii. 27." The moral bearing of man toward God determines the bearing of God toward man. They from the start reckoned on the basis of right or justice, they made a formal agreement, they remained standing on this basis to the last, they make no appeal to the grace and generosity of the rich lord, but protest against his procedure as unfair and unjust. The steward meets them on this basis and shows how untenable is their protest. No violation of right, no injustice, can be alleged where men

receive the full reward to which they had agreed. It was a purely business transaction, without any reference to special favors. From the standpoint of justice they had no case. No man was ever wronged by God.

14. "Take up that which is thine, and go . . . it is my will to give unto this last, even as unto thee."

"That which is thine" is contrasted with "mine own," v. 15, "disposing of my own property." The householder will have nothing more to do with these mercenaries. He bids them, be gone, go your way. This expression, not addressed to those who came at the eleventh hour, is tantamount to their dismissal from his service. He will want laborers in his vineyard from day to day, but he proposes to have no more trouble with these. He will never hire them again. They will henceforth sustain no relation to him. Nothing is to be done with them. They experience no change of mind, no benefit whatever in his vineyard. Nebe: "They are still the old men, unconverted, yea, hardened, and grown worse than they were before. You may in the beginning contract with the Lord of heaven and earth for the reward of your labor and enter His service for the sake of the promised gain, but if at the end you still speak of reward and quarrel with Him over your estimate of your services, then you have not even the smallest part in His kingdom. No human merit avails there and the more faithfully a servant seeks to fulfill the will of his Master, the more he will acknowledge himself an unprofitable, undeserving servant, who can only beg for grace. These laborers are excluded from the eternal mansions."

Schaeffer: "If ye Jews expect to earn or deserve divine blessings, be assured that all your expectations founded on outward righteousness, will be disappointed; you will fail to obtain grace; divine bounty will be extended to the meek and contrite alone. Your works of the Law, wrought in a mercenary spirit, attract no divine favor." Again: "If ye Jews convert the covenant of your fathers with God into a covenant of works, then abide by the terms which you have yourselves preferred (Rom. x. 5; Exod. xix, 5, 6; Lev. xviii. 5)." You wanted wages, take them and be gone. You have had your privileges and blessings as covenanted for. If men are saved by their works, then grace is no more grace. Rom. xi. 5. What you claim as a right has no connection with what is sought as a free gift. "Didst not thou agree"? God never fails to keep covenant.

"It is my will," the steward adds with powerful emphasis,

pointing to "the absolute freedom of God's grace and the sovereignty of His will." No one shall question His right of disposing of His own or trench upon the prerogatives of His majesty. His grace must have a free unhindered course. God's sentence once pronounced is never revoked. "This last," one who represents the eleventh hour group.

15. "Is it not lawful . . . what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

They based their complaints on grounds of justice. Is it unjust for a man to make a generous distribution of what is his own? Whom does he wrong by this? His bestowing on the last the same that he gave to the first concerns his own possessions, over which his will is absolute. It is not at another's cost that the steward is so liberal. He is giving his own, on which no one has any claim. "What insolence to restrict the householder in the use of his property, to subject even the administering of his grace to the sharp control of their mercenary eyes."

The steward not only reproves the first laborers, but he kindly exposes the seat of their trouble, and points the way of escape from their unhappy condition. The evil, jealous eye—the mind is reflected in the eye—must be plucked out if they would enter the kingdom, "for only he is fit for the kingdom of eternal love who has a sense for love and himself exercises love." What an incongruity for such a kingdom, the feeling of envy that "withers at another's good," a feeling that quickly betrays itself in the jaundiced eye. Mk. vii. 22; Deut. xv. 9; Prov. xxiii. 6, etc.

The steward's course is that of a kindly man who bestows more than justice requires, Rom. v. 7. No account is taken of human merit in Christ's kingdom. No question was asked, how much they earned by their brief hour's work. Grace alone measured out the reward. "Had the mercenaries really sought the kingdom of God, they would have discovered the handle offered them in this word of the Lord. He professes to act according to His goodness, why not take the hint, why not lay hold of His word and with it make their plea to Him saying, Lord, we will not let Thee go unless Thou bless us? Be thou also gracious to us, merciful, patient, and of great mercy in accordance with Thine excellent name; forgive us our seeking after gain, our envy, and be gracious to us. But the parable closes abruptly. This spirit of reward-seeking shuts itself out from the kingdom, for it insists upon its right, which indeed it receives, but of grace it knows nothing.

Upon the closed door the Lord, who sympathizes with our infirm-

ities, engraves two inscriptions; for if even a Peter, after almost three years of service with the Lord, could himself still ask, what shall we have, it may be taken for granted that this question will often arise among Christian people. This spirit must be rooted out of our hearts. Hence the two declarations :

16. "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many are called, but few chosen."

These are Jesus' own words, not the householder's. Cf. xix. 30, where the order is somewhat inverted. Their repetition shows that "the whole parable is intended to illustrate these words."

The last are promoted over the first in the sense that they receive relatively much larger pay for their work than the first. Rom. xi. 25. Luther warns against self-righteousness even if one think himself equal to an Abraham, Peter or Paul ; and against despair, even if one believe himself to have sinned like Pilate, Herod, Sodom or Gomorrah. Nebe: "The last receive the preëminence and the first lose their preëminence, yea, they sink to a depth that no place is left for them in the kingdom of God. Cf. xxii. 14. The second clause confirms the first. Bleek: "The called are the totality of those to whom has come the call to enter into the kingdom of God, who are invited to the marriage supper and who indeed show themselves ready to obey; the chosen are those who are chosen out of this number as those who show themselves qualified to have part therein." Luther: "The preaching of the gospel is general, whoever will hear and receive it, and God has it proclaimed so publicly in order that every man may hear, believe, accept it and be saved. But what happens? Few so take up with the gospel that God finds any pleasure in them; some hear it and do not regard it; some hear but do not cleave to it, and are unwilling to lose or to suffer anything for it. Some hear, but are more concerned for money, property and worldly pleasure. God takes no delight in this and will not have such persons. This is what Christ means by not being "chosen," so to bear oneself that God has no pleasure in him. But there are chosen souls, truly acceptable to God, those who gladly hear the Gospel, believe on Christ, prove their faith by their works and suffer for it what they are to suffer." Schaeffer: "All true believers whose faith or humble trust in Christ and His redeeming work renders them acceptable in the eyes of God." They have the desired qualities and therefore are approved; unbelievers have not.

The practical treatment of the parable has to do primarily with the central theme, the mercenary spirit, which must be overcome.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

GOD'S RECOMPENSE FOR LABOR IN HIS VINEYARD.

1. There is a recompense already here on earth.
2. There is, however, a better one in heaven.
3. Yet the recompense on earth is not an earnest of that in heaven.

BEWARE OF THE MERCENARY SPIRIT.

1. It makes the first last.
2. It never makes chosen ones out of the called.

HOW CAN YOU ASK, WHAT SHALL WE HAVE?

1. How did you enter into the kingdom?
2. What have you done for the kingdom?
3. God recompenses the pious beyond measure.
4. But will never receive those seeking reward.

THE EVIL EYE IS A BLIND EYE.

It does not see:

1. The unmeritorious character of all our works.
2. The righteousness of divine grace.
3. Its own incompatibility with the kingdom of God.

THE ENVIOUS EYE, A WICKED EYE:

1. Toward itself, making every day one of burden and heat.
2. Toward the neighbor, begrudging him the name of brother, and the blessing of God.
3. Toward God, for it reckons with Him and murmurs against His grace.

WHAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THE KINGDOM?

1. Not the merit of works.
2. Not the arbitrary will of God.
3. Only the state of the heart.

HOW GOOD IS THE LORD!

1. How good in calling us.
2. How good in judging us.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Luke viii. 4-15.

ALTHOUGH the view-point of the ancient Church has been shifted yet this Scripture selection is peculiarly appropriate for this ecclesiastical season. Nebe, combining this Pericope with the last one, says: "The passion-tide for which these two Sundays are preparatory is the chief seed-time in the whole Church Year. Never throughout the whole Church Year is the gospel so abundantly preached as in these holy weeks. . . . And again, the word of the cross which is preached during Lent, is preëminently the seed from which are born the children of God, as the dew from the womb of the morning. How fitting, then, it is, that this Gospel draw the attention of the congregation to the fact that this great ecclesiastical seed-time has again returned, and at the same time admonish men rightly to prepare their hearts for this sowing, that the seed may not fall upon the way, nor upon the rock, nor among the thorns, but into good and fertile soil." Parallels are found Matt. xiii. 2 ff; Mk. iv. 1 ff.

4. "And when a great multitude . . . and they of every city resorted to him, he spake by a parable."

Luke, as well as the other synoptists, gives the occasion for this parable: After a large circuit through the country, Jesus had returned to His own city, Capernaum. He goes out to the lake, and a great multitude quickly gathers around and is hourly growing, for not only is Capernaum, with all the thickly settled region around the Lake of Genessaret in a state of commotion, but from afar a vast concourse out of every city resorts to Jesus. Meyer: "Ἐπιπορεύεσθαι = not to journey after, but to journey thither or to draw towards."

This multitude, Nebe holds, desired to hear again the gospel from Him, to see again the great Miracle-worker. "For all do not come for the same purpose, with an equal desire for salvation. As the land lying before the eyes of Christ is characterized by the greatest diversity, as there is land like a beaten path, land where scarce a handful of soil covers the rock, and land where the roots

of thorns lie in the ground, and the good ground appears only in the midst of this poor ground, so the Lord recognizes among those who came to Him a like diversity. He knows what is in man, John ii. 25, and He knows that His word will fall into very different hearts, and will consequently have a very different history." It is to be noted, too, that the situation had changed since Jesus began His ministry. "In the beginning," says Thiersch, "the Lord spake unreservedly, in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere; the people were astonished at His teaching, and numbers of disciples gathered around Him. But now things have changed; the opposition of the Scribes has arisen, evil reports and echoes of calumny are heard, and many of the people who at first gladly heard Him had become perplexed about Him." Possibly, the Pharisees pointed to the difference of results in His preaching in order to discredit its value, its power, its divinity. Even to the present day, the claim that the word of Scripture is the living word of the living God is met by the objection that it by no means works with irresistible power in the hearts of men. Jesus explains Himself why He here speaks by a parable, v. 10.

5. "The sower . . . to sow his seed: and . . . some fell by the wayside; and . . . under foot, and the birds of the heaven devoured it."

As the Lord Himself later explains the parable, our task here is to study the illustration, *per se*. The going forth of the sower is simply pictorial, not figurative, of the Son going forth from the Father into our flesh, or of His going forth from Israel unto the Gentiles. Nebe: "Jesus would direct the attention of the people to the sower, hence He calls him 'the sower,' the one whose occupation is sowing, and accentuates the fact that sowing is the subject." The sower means to sow the seed, for the land does not of itself produce this crop; thorns and thistles are even yet indigentous to it, but not a harvest serviceable to man. And it is "his seed" that he goes forth to sow. It is emphatically declared that he does not bring strange or wild seed, or borrowed seed, into his land. He has obtained it by his own labor and prepared it. The seed is his property, his own peculiar seed.

As he sowed, some "fell" by the way; not by accident, as the same verb is used for what was dropped on the rock, among the thorns, and into the good ground. The seed did not fall without his knowledge or will into the several places, but was cast there in the act of sowing; while he was carrying out the purpose for which he went forth, he intentionally thus scattered his seed. And in doing this he is not chargeable with negligence or carelessness. He did not sow his seed on the way, but "by the way," *i. e.*, on

a footpath, which, according to some, stretched through the field, or passed along the edge of the field, where alongside of the road proper the people were wont to walk. Do what he will, plow it up from year to year, and sow it over, the farmer finds a path beaten along the border of his field, where the public assume the right to walk. This seed is accordingly trodden down. But that is not the only danger that befalls it. The birds of the air are sure to be around when the farmer sows his seed broadcast. His seed-time is their harvest-time. Hence, where the ground is used as a highway, and clods and hard lumps take the place of the mellow ground elsewhere, the seed is not properly covered and is easily accessible to the half-starved, greedy birds.

6. "And other fell on the rock, and as . . . grew, it withered away, because it had no moisture."

The soil is not uniform. In places it is rocky, the rock-strata coming close to the surface. When we read, "it fell on the rock," we are not to understand the bare rock, otherwise there would be no distinction between this surface and the footpath except that of greater hardness. Mark says: "Rocky ground, where it had not much earth;" the soil was very thin, shallow. Luke himself records that what fell on the rock "grew," which would have been impossible had the rock not been covered with a layer of earth. While in the first case the seed did not even sprout, being either trodden down by men or devoured by birds, this seed came up, "grew," and that "straightway" (Matt. and Mk.). "The soil which covers the rock is the soonest to be heated by the spring sun. The rocky ground becomes a hot-house, the seed shoots forth with surprising rapidity and luxuriance. But very soon there comes a change. The plant requires a deep subsoil into which it can send its roots, which serve as the ducts for the juices, the means by which plants gain their subsistence; they quickly penetrate the thin layer of soil on the rock and absorb all its moisture. From the naked rock below they can gain no sustenance. The plant can draw no longer any supplies, and its sap dries up, it withers away.

Another unfortunate circumstance is added. As the plant rises higher out of the ground, so also the sun rises higher in the sky with its fiery rays. Ordinarily the heat of the sun is necessary to the growth of the plant, but in this case the sun cannot promote its growth or cause it to mature. It can only hasten the withering away, the death of the plant. What was designed to be its life becomes its death.

A third case of seed not yielding fruit is given:

7. "And other fell amidst the thorns; and the thorns . . . choked it."

The seed has much to contend with. The sower is not so reckless as to cast deliberately his precious seed into the midst of rank-grown thorns, just as he did not in the second case intentionally waste his seed on naked rock. These thorns, when he was sowing, lay in the form of roots that were invisible, concealed in the ground. The Lord says expressly that the thorns grew up with the seed sown. As the seed was germinating the thorns also began to shoot. They may have been burnt off before the land was ploughed over. They had been destroyed in the ground, but there in the depths they remained alive, tough, inveterate. The seed sent forth its shoots, soon to be followed by the thorns, which rapidly caught up with the good seed, and shot beyond it, finally smothering it altogether.

Nebe: "It cannot well be otherwise: the good seed cannot cope with the thorns in growth; the thorns will in due time everywhere choke the good seed. The seed is originally an exotic in the soil, it falls upon the ground from without, it has first to secure a basis and ground and to take root. But the weeds are indigenous to the ground, the thorns were there long in advance of the good seed; they were spread abroad far and wide and deeply rooted, the juice and power of the soil are quietly but surely drawn toward them. Not pernicious influences from without disturb and destroy here the growth of the good seed; the cause of its ruin lies in the impurity of the ground."

8. "And other fell into the good ground . . . and brought forth fruit a hundred fold. As he said . . . he cried, He that hath ears . . . let him hear."

At last we come to seed which is not lost. Only the fourth variety of the field brings the desired fruit. This does not teach as by arithmetical accuracy that three-fourths of the field or of the seed is invariably unproductive. Experience refutes such a rendering. Often the whole of the seed perishes through some natural catastrophe; often, too, half of the seed and even more comes up and ripens into fruit. The field contains some good land, ground that is called "good," in distinction from that which is hardened by the trampling of feet, from that which conceals under a handful of earth an indisintegrable rock, and from that which in its hidden depths cherishes the roots of thorns. Good that land may be designated, which is mellow and receptive, moist and deep-soiled, pure and clean. Where the seed-corn falls into such soil it cannot fail to spring up, and to grow, shoot, ear and yield fruit. And the fruit yielded is not a small measure. The seed-corn is not satisfied to reproduce itself; it falls into the earth and dies that

it may multiply itself. This multiplication varies greatly. It bears fruit (Matt. and Mk.) thirty, sixty, an hundred fold. "Thus there is a rich manifoldness in the good ground, a surprising diversity." Nebe denies a spiritual import to this diversity. The chief object is to show that the seed does indeed produce fruit, yea a rich harvest. Few regions of the ancient world produced so bountifully.

"He that hath ears," etc. Nebe cites from Aeschylus a very similar formula challenging attention and consideration. This summons, the counterpart of "Verily, verily I say unto you," which refers to what follows, calls attention to what has been said, "take my words to heart and weigh them in your hearts."

9. "And his disciples . . . what this parable might be."

The summons of Jesus, "He that hath ears," etc., may have occasioned this question. As the Lord intimated a profound significance in the parable, they desire to understand it fully. "They do not trust themselves to find the key to this parable, and they apply to the Master Himself for its application." They were not up to this time familiar with parabolic discourses. Parabolic narratives had been framed by Jesus in open, figureless, doctrinal discourses, and carried thus with them their clear understanding. "But here we have a naked parable, one not explained by its environment; so that even if the disciples had previously heard parables, they were seriously concerned about the proper explanation of this one." Who would in fact have explained it in the way Jesus did?

"His disciples," not only the Twelve, who were called to continue the great seeding of the Lord, but, Mk. iv. 10, "those that were about him with the Twelve," "those who had taken to heart the Lord's summons and who desired to be initiated into a deeper understanding of the saving truth." From Luke one might infer that the disciples asked for an exposition of it immediately after our Lord had concluded the parable; but Mark records that the disciples did not prefer their request until Jesus was alone, when the people had withdrawn and the Lord had retired into comparative privacy, probably into His own house. From v. 10 it appears that He had told the people a whole series of parables, offering something to each diverse class in the great concourse.

The three synoptists complement each other here and show that the disciples presented a twofold question: Why speakest thou unto them in parables? Matt. xiii. 10, and, What means this parable? The answer to both questions is given by all the synoptists,

not indeed literally the same, yet substantially in entire harmony with each other.

10. "And . . . Unto you it is given to know the mysteries . . . but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing . . . not understand."

Not without purpose, not from fondness for figurative speech, did Jesus speak in parables. "It was in profound wisdom that He spoke thus and not otherwise." Nebe: "For the first time Jesus distinguishes here between such as stand within the circle and those without; the distinction which was gradually developed, is openly and honestly acknowledged by Him." Not all who gather to hear Him come for the purpose of really coming to Him and through Him into the divine kingdom. "Many come with such a disposition and with such a purpose that between them and Him no fellowship is possible. The physician is for the sick, the Saviour for sinners. But these do not know that they are sick, and do not want to hear that they are sinners."

They come because they seek some occasion against the Physician, against the Saviour. The judgment so often referred to in John's Gospel, which cleaves to the foot-soles of the only-begotten Son from the Father of all grace and truth, is already executing itself. So to those who came to Him asking, pleading, the Lord answers: "Unto you it is given to know, etc." In their petition for a solution of the parable, they acknowledge indeed that they do not yet understand the mysteries of the kingdom. They desire to learn them. Hence the significant, cheering, answer "Unto you it is given." "Blessed are the poor in spirit," Matt. v. 3, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The humble in spirit possess the kingdom, "for in Christ it stands personally before the door and takes possession, enters as its dwelling place the humble and contrite spirit." "Unto you," rejoins Jesus to the inquirers, it is given, because with holy desires they have come to Him who can impart to them true knowledge, and because by their coming they furnish actual proof that they desire to be led into all truth by Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. "Since the knowledge of the mysteries is assured to them and is to be imparted to them on the spot, He says, 'Unto you it is given.' Furthermore, our Lord would set forth that the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom is something to which man does not attain by the sweat of his brow, rather is it the gift of God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift." Meyer: "It is given by God through the unfolding of your inward powers of perception, not merely by means of the exposition."

In answer to Calvinistic interpretations Nebe says: "Without any reference to merit on our part, for the sake of which God imparts to us spiritual knowledge, there yet may be on our part a moral condition, which makes it possible for this knowledge to be imparted to us. The case presents itself so: to these is given the knowledge because they come seeking it. This desire to know does not itself produce in them the knowledge, but brings them into a condition to receive it from the hand of God. Whence this desire for saving knowledge, whether this be in turn the work of God's grace in our hearts? concerning this, no disclosure is made by the passage."

What are these "mysteries?" Meyer: "The secret things of the Messiah's kingdom;" called so "because their disclosure was now being brought about for the first time." Rom. xi. 25; xvi. 25. They are the purposes that are hid in God, which man can know only by the help of divine teaching, and which the gospel unveils. Bengel: "This term is applied not to all things which all ought to know from revelation, but to those things which they—to whom secret things are revealed, know beyond those who know only what is strictly necessary." Mysteries are things unknown till God reveals them, even then they can not be fully known. Nebe holds that the whole of revelation may be designated *mysterion*, as in Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. iv. 1; Eph. i. 9; iii. 3 etc., for mystery is everything that is hidden. Still special parts of revelation may be so designated in a specific sense, "for not all moments of revelation are placed in the same light; notwithstanding the revelation there still remain dark and unfathomable depths which are called 'mysteries,' 1 Cor. xiii. 2; Eph. iii. 9; v. 32." What makes the determination of the term more difficult here is the fact that it does not occur elsewhere in the synoptists.

Nebe accepts the more comprehensive sense, and claims that the Perfect, "is given," compels us to find the content of "the mysteries" not in remote regions, but in the immediate context. The knowledge of the mysteries is not held out to the disciples as a prospect, but is adjudged to them now. Nebe: "Their question opens to them the understanding of the mysteries. The mysteries must lie, therefore, within the compass of the parable; with the unfolding of the parable is involved the disclosure of the mysteries. But the parable does not treat of mysterious depths of revelation, not of unfathomable points of Christology, but obviously of revelation in general, of the reception of the revealed mysteries among men. Of this the disciples shall have knowledge, but their knowledge shall not be restricted to these. Not the knowledge of one par-

ticular truth of revelation does He promise the disciples, but the knowledge of the totality of the mysteries of revelation, the knowledge of the mystery of revelation in general. What Jesus here specifically assures to the disciples, the same He has acknowledged to His Father in terms of thanksgiving," Matt. xi. 25.

"But to the others" these mysteries are presented only in the form of parables, and that for a specific purpose, "that seeing they may not see," etc. The teleological import of *wa* must not be perverted. Such an attempt wholly mistakes the essence of the parable and perverts the powerful letter of the Holy Scriptures. The object of the parables was not an illustration and unveiling of the truth, but an obscuration and veiling of it, Jno. xvi. 29, 25. Von Gerlach: "Simple as they appear to us, they fulfilled then a double purpose, to conceal the truth from the carnal-minded mass, so that they could not misuse it, but to supply to the weak, though susceptible, disciples living impressive images which might, in the period of their later ripeness, easily lead them still further into the truth." He compares a parable to the pillar of cloud and of fire, which turned its dark side toward the Egyptians but the bright side to the people of the covenant, Ex. xiv. 20. "Still His preaching in parables to the people without understanding was not aimless; for these, too, from whom the insight into the truth was prevented in punishment for their carnal sense, might later, when these simple yet sententious images retained in their memory move again before their souls, discern the sooner their inward sense."

"In a quite unique way," says Nebe, "do the parables serve this double purpose. From the man who has no sense for the mysteries of the kingdom they completely seal this mystery. To the man whose mind is accessible to divine truth the aim of the parables is to sharpen his vision, that in everything earthly he may recognize the image and likeness of something super-earthly; above all they are to serve him as a ladder upon which he ascends into the kingdom of eternal truth."

It is Christ's own testimony that He addresses the people in parables "in order that seeing they may not see," in contrast with "unto you it is given to know." The allusion to Isa. vi. 10, is unmistakable; so is likewise the teleological import, the circumstance that the prophet speaks there of a divine judgment of obduration about to be executed upon Israel. Nebe: "Jesus puts upon the same plane with the contemporaries of the prophet, those of His contemporaries who obstinately close their eyes to Him, the Light of the world; yea, as much greater as is the incarnate Son of God than the royal prophet of the Old Covenant, so much more terrible must be

that judgment which will fall on the unbelieving generation through the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh." Again and again is it taught in the New Testament that the Advent of the only-begotten Son from the Father full of grace and truth is also the manifestation of judgment to mankind. Jno. iii. 17 ff. The impenetrable obduracy of the people was a divine judgment, not merely a result of human conduct. Bengel: "They already before saw not (Matt. xiii. 13). Now there is added (to their voluntary blindness) a divinely-sent judicial blindness." Olsh.: "Their failing to understand Him was the object designed by the Lord in using the parables." Their seeing and yet not seeing was an effect contemplated. It is the judicial penalty and blighting cause of sin that it blinds the understanding of men to the revelation of divine truth. Hence the Saviour, who gave His life for men, concealed from the unbelieving multitude the truth under parabolic veils, in order that while some would come thereby to be initiated into the secret divine counsels and ordinances of the new covenant, others should be left in darkness regarding them. To the former, parables disclosed the mysteries, to the latter they enclosed them. Only those would understand Him who were designed to. Nebe: "The Lord represents in the most incisive manner, that He speaks to these people alone and exclusively in parables, in order that the mysteries of the divine kingdom may be concealed from them. He will not have these people to see and understand."

Nebe: "This will is not to be regarded as an absolute decree, His first and last will. The *decretum absolutum*, the immediate purpose of the incarnate Son of God, is to seek and to save that which was lost, to reveal to every man the mysteries of the kingdom. But saving grace is not a physical nor a metaphysical energy which after the manner of force overpowers all things; but it is an ethical energy, which does not degrade persons to things, but allows its play to personal freedom. It can, therefore, reach its end only with those who willingly surrender to it; and as no one would, of his own accord, surrender himself to the grace of God, it must develop an aggressive activity. Saving grace must have known in advance that a universal surrender to it would not take place. It must have faced the problem, whether it should appear in the flesh at the peril of exciting, by the mighty unfolding of its power, these latter to resistance and of driving them to the development of all their evil powers. Saving grace has appeared, and that with its full energy. It is determined to maintain and assert itself, and it is equally determined to bring to naught the opposition to it. Because it means truly to save, it will also damn what refuses to

be saved. The eternal absolute will of saving grace, which wills the salvation of all, may be bent by the will of man, but in its energy it remains unbroken. However, as men separate themselves from it, it works in its separating energy up to the point of separation. Only in parables, in veiled forms, does the Lord still speak unto this people; He will not have them see into the truth; from this judgment we know that it is saving grace which judges. Should Christ show these people the truth unveiled—unthinkable task, since only an eye adapted to the sun can behold that orb—their judgment would be yet greater. They would despise and revile the recognized truth; in this way, however, they do not dishonor the pearl, for this pearl is not offered to them, only the shell in which the precious pearl rests concealed from them. The mystery of the kingdom which is revealed is the holy thing, the pearl, which we are not to cast before dogs and swine; but the parable is, *per se*, only the shell of eternal truth, which may be trodden under foot."

Having given the reasons for speaking in parables, Jesus proceeds with the exposition of the parable.

11. "Now the parable . . . The seed is the word of God."

Jesus does not say who the sower is. "The disciples need not be told: the Sower has even now cast from the ship His seed upon the land." The "sower" is certainly not an immaterial part of the parable; the spiritual counterpart is self-evident. Cf. Matt. xiii. 37. Christ is the Sower, and "his seed," v. 5, can be no other than the word of God, "which is the specific property of this Sower. The word of God is the product of the Word which was in the beginning with God; the word of God has the Son of God, in time and in eternity, not only for its substance, but also for its author and source."

"The seed is the word of God," a comparison not unusual in the New Testament, 1 Pet. i. 23, but occurring nowhere in the Old Testament. Isaiah, lv. 10, compares it to the rain and snow coming from heaven and causing the earth to bring forth seed to the sower and bread to the eater, in which Nebe recognizes a difference between the word of the New Testament and that of the Old Testament. Each is God's word. Nebe: "But as the rain and the snow only contribute to the development of the seed which lies in the soil, so the Old Testament word does not yet bring a new vital energy, the power of the world to come, into the human heart. By its mighty 'Thou shalt' it merely awakens the slumbering powers in the heart, moving man to work out for himself righteousness by

his own works. Not so with the New Testament word; it bears within itself spirit and life, a new world; there goes forth from it living power, in and by it a new life principle is implanted into the dead human heart."

The seed is dropped from without into the soil. The field is not sown by itself. This seed is not indigenous in the heart, though we be the offspring of God. Not out of themselves could holy men of God draw the word of God; flesh and blood could not reveal it unto them; it must be given them from without, from above. The seed of the word of God is derived from revelation. Nebe: "Is this the case, then we should consider that the seed is given us only for the purpose of being sown. It is not to be eaten of worms, but to be broadcast upon the land. It devolves upon all to whom God has committed His seed to spread abroad this word of God. And we should, besides, remember that the word of God is of the nature of seed. There inheres in the seed a vital force. The Almighty Creator has endowed it with a germinating power; with irresistible energy the germ bursts forth from its own house; marvellously the sprouting germ penetrates through the earth forth into the light, as on the other hand even as wonderfully and as energetically it sends its roots into the depths to get sustenance and support. Only leave to God's word time and room and do not be anxious, ye sowers. Trust to the indwelling and the energizing power of the word; it is an incorruptible, eternal seed."

The exposition of the parable now follows:

12. "And . . . the way side are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, . . . away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved."

"Those by the way side," *i. e.*, those sown by the way. Or, better, those which the parable means when it has the seed fall by the way. The exposition proceeds at once with the men, not with the seed sown. The question is not what becomes of the word in the event it falls here or there, but what becomes of men as they resemble one or the other of the different kinds of ground? Nebe: "The seed sown does not simply reproduce itself, but it generates a peculiar growth. So is it with the seed of the word. It does not keep by itself, but it grows in union with the man in whom it is sown and thus the history of the seed becomes the history of the person himself."

The "way" signifies here the utter hardening of the heart. Stier holds that the way is a place to which no longer any seed-corn comes, the devil and the realm of his angels; or, the sphere of life entirely externalized, where the spirit has become wholly sensuous,

sunk into the lower creature-life. But Nebe replies that the latter sphere is not beyond the reach of the sowing; for even in the lower creation there is still a sighing for the glorious liberty of the children of God. "Whatever is human belongs to the field; even the most reprobate man still resembles the ground by the way side." This does not conflict with the Lord's teaching that the mysteries of the kingdom could not be disclosed to some. Nebe: "These mysteries He did not, in fact, unfold to them; on the other hand, He did not withhold from them the seed of the word; richly, richly beyond measure, had the heavenly Sower sought, only in parables indeed, to cast His seed into their hearts."

"Those by the way" are those who hear the word—but only hear it. They offer no resistance or persecution to the word. Luther discovers in them "those who listen to the word and are disciples, wish to be called real Christians, and desire to live with us in the Christian congregation and share with us baptism and the sacrament." Calvin: "Those in whom there is a certain docility." Nebe would not say that with them the word went in one ear and out the other. "God's word bears with it its own seal, which seals it to the heart of every man as the word of God, who created the heart. A man cannot simply reject it; it will not be rejected; it penetrates and sinks its darts and hooks into our flesh. It enters more deeply than the ear; even with these people who are like the beaten pathway, it pierces to the heart. Heb. iv. 12. An absolute indifference toward the word of God is impossible. But even when it penetrates to the heart, this does not yet involve the victory of the word over the heart. There are hard hearts, obtuse, trifling, secularized minds which admit of no deep impression." Thiersch: "They shut out from their minds alike the terror and the love of God; the less they hear of it, the more agreeable. If they live in a Christian environment they still go to church from habit, but they have attained a certain capacity to let the word of God sweep by them; it does not impress them, conscience is not disturbed, they remain as they were,"

Not in them alone, however, lies the whole cause of the failure of the seed to germinate. "It is trodden under foot and the birds of heaven devour it." Only to the last feature is an explanation given by the Lord. The former we can, according to Nebe, explain ourselves. "Those who tread down the seed by the way are men whose delight it is to devastate the fields of the Lord, who are provoked that the Lord seeks also to render this part of the field fruitful, and who come accordingly with a firm, heavy tread to stamp down the scattered seed. The servants of sin keep a sharp

eye on their associates, they come quickly in order that in the event of one of their number having left them and drawn near to the Lord and His word, they may efface the impression received."

Not only do men engage in this, but Satan himself joins in the work, and takes away the word from their hearts. He comes promptly, 'then.' He is never too late. Note *ἀπό*, not *ἐκ*. The seed lies on the surface, not in the heart. It can be easily removed. "The birds" are the agents of Satan, probably wicked angels whose realm is the air. Nebe: "The evil spirits come after the manner of spirits, they excite the spirit and other spirits. The devil either sends wicked men or he exerts his evil influence directly upon men's hearts. He comes as a scoffer and says: Doctrine which disturbs the conscience is an exaggeration; it distracts and turns one's head; this doctrine is not so certain as it seems to be; the preachers themselves do not believe what they preach, as may be seen by their works. These evil spirits excite the heart in its darkest recesses, and kindle there the lurid fires of the passions and lusts of the old man. The word of God must not fall into the heart, and, if it has lodged there, the heart must indignantly thrust from it this word of life. What enemies oppose the word of God! What hostile hosts threaten it! Enemies around us and above us, and no receptive soil within us! How great our danger! And what is at stake? The salvation of the soul. The devil knows this, hence he comes so quickly. If we would only know it ourselves and quickly bury the seed-corn of eternal life within our hearts, where no bird of prey could take it from us!"

13. "And . . . the rock are they which . . . receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away."

Nebe: "Even the joyful acceptance of the Gospel is no infallible proof that the heart is good ground. There are enough tender, susceptible hearts, which quite resemble rocky ground. Depth is wanting to those sown upon the rock, well-grounded thoroughness. The mind is very shallow. The seed springs up suddenly, but in many cases it just as suddenly withers away. This is a true picture of souls possessed of lively emotions; they would take the kingdom of God by violence. They are readily impressed with the nothingness of the world and all its goods, with the emptiness and the desolation within them; the law of God pierces their hearts and the grace of God awakens in them psalter and harp. Jesus is to them the loveliest of all the children of men; His word is their sweetest food; His holy passion draws streaming tears from their eyes, and all their hours in the house of God are

Tabor-hours. They are not only like Mary, but like Martha they move their busy hands. They give bounteous alms, and take a joyful interest in all work of Home and Foreign Missions. All appears to be going splendidly, their heart is leaping. . . . But the eye that seeth in secret discovers in these souls a dreadful hurt. All appears to be susceptibility with them and yet the true susceptibility for the kingdom is absent altogether. The kingdom of God cannot be seized with violence in the rapture of joy, it can be attained only step by step through conflict: it must come to us and dwell within us by another way than by the feelings. Faith is not a matter of emotion; the kingdom of God does not consist in feeling. The seed, if it is to be fruitful, must take root in the depths; all depends upon this action which no human eye sees, which no human hand can supply. But feeling floats on the surface of the natural man; it is essentially nothing more than the power to receive impressions from without and to give out again the impressions received; it is always in process of rising or falling, in process of changing. Emotional Christianity has no hold or firmness in itself; it is a matter of fashion. When a Christian current cuts its bed through an age, these people swim with the tide; but when the current flows back, these same people also go backward."

"For awhile they believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Temptations are sure to come. As the tree, if it is to grow, must not stand in the hot-house, but out in the open, where wind and storm will shake it, so that it become firmly rooted and does not shoot forth into rank wood, so the inward man who has received the seed of the word, must be subjected to the storms of temptation that he may be thoroughly grounded and strengthened.

Matthew and Mark specify the temptations of "affliction and persecution." Nebe: "The dangerous temptations with this class do not proceed out of their own hearts (as with the third class), but out of the sphere toward which their whole life is directed, the outer world. Conflicts from without, hatred, evil report, persecution, disturb their emotional comfort, frighten them out of their carnal enjoyment. They have not looked forward to times when the watchword is fighting, wrestling, suffering pain and resisting unto blood. Like the plants on the rocky shallows, their heads soon droop, their arms hang down, the knees grow feeble, with the feeling of delight all joy in the gospel leaves the heart, all joy in witnessing for the truth." Such people were wrought on, were awakened, but never thoroughly converted. Not the beginning, but the completion, is what is needed. "They merely began, they

failed of true progress, of a blessed growth. The rock remained in the heart, the hard impenitent heart was not crushed under the hammer that breaks the flinty rock. The outward conflict is so fateful for them, because they did not in their inward conflict steel and increase their strength against it. God's words smote the feelings but did not smite that which lies hidden under the feelings in the heart's depths. There is in the heart of man something abiding, which is not affected by changes of time, which, when he has found the rock against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, imparts to him a fixed impress, a distinct character, and secures him against all instability. This conscience, which forms the stable kernel in man, the word of God did not reach. It did not get beyond the feelings, it did not bring about true repentance."

14. "And that . . . among the thorns . . . they that have heard and as they go on their way they are choked with . . . this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

Luther, Meyer and others render: "go on their way among cares, and riches," etc., the latter being a modal limitation to "going," "so that *ἐν* marks the accompanying relations," the impulse under which they move forward; their further life-guidance is dominated by the three particulars mentioned, with each of which "of this life" stands connected. Without this qualifying phrase *πορευόμενοι* would be an unmeaning addition. Meyer: "Temporal cares, temporal riches, and temporal pleasures are the conditioning circumstances to which their interest is enchained and among which their *πορεύεσθαι* proceeds."

Nebe: "The thorns pierce and tear him who has to do with them, they pin him fast, they choke what cannot free itself from them." With the "cares" are conjoined "riches" and "pleasures," most dangerous enemies to the word of God. "Usually these three different thorn-bushes divide among themselves the human heart. Cares keep asking, What shall I eat, what shall I drink, etc. Through cares and pains man attains wealth and prosperity, but he does not find in this possession what his soul promised him, the cares remain along with the wealth, for mammon must be guarded against thieves, and the treasure must be so increased that its owner may rival the richest." The possession is, however, to the smallest number worth pursuing. They want the possession for the sake of enjoyment, and this enjoyment is again a thorn, for the enjoyment gained does not satisfy, it only tickles the palate and excites an appetite for other, finer or coarser enjoyments. These thorns, as indicated above, did not cover the ground when the seed was sown, their roots lay concealed beneath the surface. The soil was deep and loose enough, but not

thoroughly cleaned. It could hold and nourish both the weeds and the wheat—an image of hearts which want no “Away from all, to cleave to Christ,” which are not able for Christ’s sake to forsake all and follow after Him. “They attempt to make the impossible possible, to serve God and Mammon at the same time, to have a divided heart. They mean well. They think that both can grow together; the thorns can be kept down so that the seed may yet thrive. . . . They hear the word, they do not mean to reject it; they willingly hear it, and mean also in their own way to keep it. . . . Not at once do these thorns choke the seed; the seed springs up, even endures fires of affliction, even shoots ears, a most promising bloom appears, there are fair prospects for fruit; but it does not come to maturity, the grain does not ripen, it is at last choked by the thorns.”

Thiersch: “When one has received the word, made an earnest beginning in self-knowledge and sanctification, perchance also has suffered with Christ, it may yet happen that the word will be choked in his heart, and finally be without fruit. Those inconstant ones (on the rocky ground) fall away immediately, but the sad course of these is slow. The thorns are at first small and therefore scarcely noticed, but they grow step by step, they take firmer root, they gain headway, they absorb the strength of the soil, so that the good seed is gradually smothered. The danger with such souls consists in their hardly noticing their decline in spiritual good and deceiving themselves respecting their condition. They have spiritual consumption, and the bad feature of that disease consists in the sick one not knowing how sick he is and how near to death.

“Not with great sins does this evil begin, but with things deemed allowable and innocent, like the anxious care for daily needs, the love of money, clinging to earthly possessions, the aspiration after honor from men, etc.; all these are briar-bushes which drain out the strength from the divine life within us, induce slow disease and finally death and destruction.” Bengel: “He who hath received the word of God ought to see lest the cares of the world wax strong upon him, and take more violent hold than even before of his new-born expansion of soul and his mental affections, which have been enlarged (and stimulated) by the word of God.”

15. “But that on the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast.”

They hold the word fast in an honest and good heart, 1 Cor. xi. 2. “Having heard,” etc., is a qualifying parenthetical clause. Finally the seed finds also good ground, but not in the Pelagian sense of the innate goodness and excellence of the human heart. It is

not stated that the seed makes the ground good, still the husbandman does not sow his seed upon ground lying in its wild natural condition. Before he commits the seed to the ground, he has diligently cultivated the field. Hence the good ground is not an image of the natural heart, but an image of a heart at which prevenient grace has already been at work. Meyer: "The heart is morally beautiful and good just by means of the purifying efficacy of the word that is heard," John xv. 3. Wherein the beauty and goodness of these hearts consist, is obvious from comparison with the conditions of heart heretofore considered. The first class has hard, unreceptive hearts, and the word was easily taken away from them; these hold fast the word heard. They do not allow others to turn them against it, or to destroy it; they watch and pray that the birds sent by Satan may not tear it from their hearts. The second class with their shallow minds were not in a condition to bear the heat of conflict, the Simoom of affliction; these have appropriated the word in the innermost depths of their hearts and are prepared to forsake for the Lord goods and blood, "with patience" (*i. e.* perseveringly, Rom. ii. 7, *versus* "fall away," v. 13). The third class finally had kept the word even in affliction, but with half a heart they could bear no fruit; these have no thorns growing in the heart, they have embraced in the heart the sum of the commandments: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. "They bear fruit, the fruit of the Spirit, as indeed the Lord has distributed his gifts in divers measures, but they all bear fruit which remaineth unto life eternal."

In the practical treatment of the Pericope, Nebe warns us not to forget that Christ views the birds as images of the devil, and not to overlook the boundary between the second and the third image. What the Lord has separated, must not be joined together by the Lord's servant.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE CAUSE WHY THE WORD OF GOD BEARS SO LITTLE FRUIT.

- 1 Not the sower, who casts his seed everywhere.
2. Not the seed, which bears within it a vital power.
3. Not outward circumstances, which are not invincible.
4. Only the evil heart of man.

THE HEARTS WHICH GOD'S WORD FINDS:

1. Indifferent and hard.
2. Superficial and inconstant.
3. Impure and earthly-minded.
4. Honest and good.

HOW MUST THE HEART BE TO BE GOOD GROUND?

1. Susceptible. 2. Steadfast. 3. Pure.

THE FATE OF THE WORD AMONG MEN.

1. Some hear, but do not receive it.
2. Some receive it, but are not penetrated by it.
3. Some are penetrated, but not permeated by it.
4. Some are penetrated and permeated by it, and bring forth fruit continually.

THE WORD OF GOD WILL BEAR FRUIT,

1. If we do not allow Satan to take it from us.
2. If we do not allow temptation to turn us against it.
3. If we do not allow evil lusts to choke it.

CHRIST THE TRUE SOWER.

1. He has the true seed, the word of God, for He is the Son of God.
2. He has for the seed the true ground, the human heart, for He is the Searcher of hearts.
3. He has for His ground the true love, which is self-denial, for He sows also where there is no hope.

THE DIVINE POWER OF THE WORD:

1. It softens the hard heart.
2. It deepens the superficial heart.
3. It makes the half heart whole.

THE VARYING EFFICACY OF GOD'S WORD:

1. A common experience.
2. According to God's purpose.
3. Through man's fault.

. Luke xviii. 31-43.

WHITHER the Ecclesiastical Year now wends its face, is shown by this Pericope. "Behold we go up to Jerusalem," Jesus exclaims, and enters upon his path of suffering. We stand before the gate of Jericho, but the gate of Jericho is the gate of the Holy Passion. The hand of the Lord engraves over this portal the history of His sufferings. There sits at the same time by the gate a blind man—a blind man at the entrance into the Holy Passion.

What does this teach us except to say: Blind, blind you are! The word from the cross is a mystery to the natural man, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness, a seven-fold sealed book. But the Lord gives sight to the blind who wish to see.

31. "Then he took the twelve, and said unto them" . . .

From Bethany, where he had raised Lazarus from the dead, our Lord had withdrawn with His disciples to the wilderness of Ephraim. John xi. 54. Easter is approaching and therefore He departs to go to Jerusalem by way of Jericho. Mark x. 32: "Jesus was going before them"—like an intrepid captain seeking to inspire his despondent troops, He kept the lead. Like the Lion of Judah He goes forward. Mark also notes the twofold feeling which possessed His disciples, amazement and fear, astonishment and anxiety. They had forebodings of a grave calamity. He was marching right into it, and leading them along with Him. They knew to what pitch the hatred of the chief-priests and rulers had risen. They divined what was coming. They were marching into the jaws of death, as Thomas observed, John xi. 16. Jesus was incomprehensible to them. He had just withdrawn from the vicinity of Jerusalem in order to be secure—and now He is resolutely going there. They were amazed at this intrepidity and composure in the face of death. "Yet already they beheld on His brow the crown of victory which He had achieved over His own flesh and blood, and which in the immediate future He would most certainly achieve over sin, the world, and the devil."

Παραλαβὼν: He collected them closely around Him. Matt. xx. 17 adds *καὶ ἰδίαν*. He took them apart, drawing them near His person for confidential discourse.

The outer circle of his followers must not hear what He is about to communicate. He discourses to them privately, not after the manner of the philosophers, who divided their teachings into esoteric and exoteric, for what they heard in the ear they were to proclaim from the housetops, Matt. x. 27; but because the twelve only—and they hardly, could understand the primary elements of the word from the cross. When the Lord had spoken to the multitude concerning His sufferings it was always in an enigmatical manner, as in the reference to Jonah, Matt. xii. 40.

The different disclosures concerning His sufferings are not all identical. Like the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, so His own prophecies of His sufferings follow an ascending scale, proceeding from general outlines to the minutest portraiture.

Matt. xvi. 21 contains the first prediction. The next is Matt. xvii. 22 ff, where Jesus declares that He will be betrayed, slain, and on the third day be raised again. "The third and last detailed announcement is that of our Lesson, Matt. xx. 17 ff. and Mark x. 32 offering the parallel records, and it certainly surpasses in definiteness all the preceding ones." The different stations of the Passion appear here before our eyes.

Jesus begins with *Ἰδοὺ*, *Ecce*, Behold! It not only excites their attention, but "attests the energy of the Redeemer's will." "It includes not only His foreknowledge but also the freedom of His will." Deliberately He hastens to the event.

"We go up to Jerusalem." Jerusalem had not only a high geographical elevation, but it was the theocratic centre and summit of the Holy Land. Luke ii. 4, 51. Though there may have been a topographical descent, yet every journey to Jerusalem was an ascending journey—as it doubtless was to every true Israelite, who in the earthly Jerusalem sought the heavenly, in the material sanctuary Him who dwelleth in the high and the holy place.

"We go." Stier: "This pertains to them as well as to Him. They are to follow. They will have fellowship with His sufferings." Nebe: "It means no more than an announcement that what will befall Him will transpire before their eyes, they will be witnesses of it all, and must bear witness of it all. Take therefore in faith the rod and staff which I proffer to you in My word, that you may not stumble as you walk through the dark valley."

"To Jerusalem." There and nowhere else He must suffer and rise again. His birth-place had been foretold, but not the locality

of His death. Jesus Himself, Luke xiii. 33, had said "it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem," but this gives no reason for His own death there. The FF. made much of the tradition that Adam was buried on Golgotha. Again, the typical offering up of Isaac on Mount Moriah was assumed to have taken place on the site of the temple. The Jews regarded Jerusalem as the centre of the whole earth.

Nebe: "Jerusalem is the capital of the country, the seat of the highest spiritual and temporal authority, the centre of Israel's national life. If salvation is to come from the Jews then the Lamb of God which beareth the sin of the world must be led to the slaughter in Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Jewish nation, and especially since the typical paschal lamb could be killed only there."

The Messiah was not to be stoned to death, not because that scene in æsthetic effect would have fallen below that of a Christ crucified, but, as Nebe maintains, that it might appear at once that not in a tumult or in the heat and blindness of passion, but after deliberate counsel and cool consideration was the Lord rejected and surrendered to death.

It behooved Him to die there, also, that His death might appear to be the bloody work of the whole nation, that Jews and Gentiles might alike lay their hands upon this holy victim.

In Jerusalem, too, it behooved him to rise again. He rose there as in the sight of all people, and the high-priests and rulers had to bear witness that the grave was empty.

There in Jerusalem everything was to be consummated that is written, through the prophets, concerning the Son of man. Some connect the last words immediately with the verb: "accomplished unto the Son of man" (Rev.), *i. e.*, shall happen to Him. Others: *Dat. instr.*, shall be accomplished by the Son. Meyer, Bleek, DeWette, Godet, Luther and Vulgate connect the clause immediately with "what is written by the prophets." The clause thus points out definitely which of the prophecies are now to be fulfilled. Jesus frequently and most decidedly declares that the Old Testament speaks of the suffering and death of the Redeemer. Luke xxiv. 25 ff.

What Jesus thus foresaw of the fate impending over Him was not the result of His own reflection. He quotes prophecy. Events might yet have taken quite a different course from what is here foretold. Herod might have claimed Him and beheaded Him, or He might have perished like Stephen. Jesus Himself expressly declares that the prophets predicted directly what should befall

Him in Jerusalem. "The Old Testament presents so fresh and clear a life-picture of Him that we could write a biography of the incarnate Son of God, before He appeared in the flesh."

Luther, referring to Is. 53, says "the prophet became an evangelist, and treats more thoroughly than either of these the sufferings and death of Christ."

"The Son of man." Not without purpose does our Lord apply to Himself here this designation. See on the Lesson for the second Sunday in Advent. He bears this name because **He is the Son of God personally become man.**

32. "For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles" . . .

Luke does not stop to relate what preceded the surrender of Jesus to the Gentiles—that having been sufficiently treated in the earlier announcements concerning the passion. We are reminded only in passing of Israel's guilt in the transaction, while Jesus portrays here His sufferings at the hand of the Gentiles.

This "delivering over" is not the act of Judas, but the act of God's covenant people. The same term is used, not without design, for the guilt of Judas and for that of the Jews. Matt. xxvii. 2, 18; Mark xv. 1, 10; Luke xxiv. 20; John xviii. 30, 35; Acts iii. 13. The two acts are parallel, though not on the same scale, and they have a like significance for the person of Judas and for the nation. Judas is the Greek form of the national name. His act was the renunciation of the Lord and a wanton surrender of himself to damnation. So the nation by its course repudiated its own Messiah, and forfeited the inheritance of the promise, bringing wantonly upon themselves and their children, their Redeemer's blood.

By this most astounding act of "handing over" the Christ to the heathen, the Jewish nation (the people were in full sympathy with their leaders) hurled from itself the promises and the salvation, for which their fathers had hoped, their prophets labored, and which God had designed for them. The corner-stone is rejected by the builders—the heir of the vineyard is cast out from it—to be slain without.

To the heathen the chosen people deliver the Son of man, and in another sense they surrender to them what by the highest prerogative was their own. But the heathen, too, heap dishonor upon the Lord's anointed. "Shall be mocked." This is to be His first experience from the heathen. The betrayal to the heathen is indicated Ps. cxviii. 22; Is. xxviii. 16; Ps. xxii. 17. The mocking is found Is. xxviii. 16. Nebe recalls the scene in the palace of the

Roman governor, Matt. xxvii. 28 ff, where the whole band collected around Him, stripped Him, decked Him in a scarlet robe, platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, put a reed in His right hand, bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him (cf. also v. 31) saying "Hail, King of the Jews." Cf. the scene before Herod in Luke xxiii. 11; and the scene at the cross, Luke xxiii. 36, where again the same term is used.

Ἰβριστήσαται, shamefully entreated. He is to be subjected to something more than wanton rudeness and levity. Some: the maltreatment in words proceeds to maltreatment in acts—but acts were included in the first term, according to the accounts of the evangelists. Ἰβρις is insolence, a wrong springing from insolence, affront, insult (the mental injury and the wantonness of its infliction being prominent). The verb means to treat with scorn. Is. liii. is the clearest prophecy of the outrage and insolence, the violation of all human and divine rights, which are to befall the Servant of the Lord. Cf. Ps. xxii. 12-17. For the historic occurrence Nebe refers to John xix. 10 f, where the governor haughtily asks, Knowest thou not that I have power, etc.? The whole judicial procedure was a judicial outrage. To His last expiring breath Gentiles vied with Jews in heaping upon Him insult upon insult. Luke xxiii. 35; Matt. xxvii. 42.

"Spit upon," one deeper dye of scorn. The Old Testament represents spitting on one as the highest token of repugnance and abhorrence. The compound ἐμπρίω shows that the heathen spat on His holy person, in His divine face. As Is. liii. portrays the mocking in general to which Messiah was subjected, this specific feature is drawn from Is. l. 6. For the fulfillment cf. Matt. xxvii. 30. He was spit upon by the heathen immediately after the hearing before the High Priest.

33. "And they shall scourge and kill him : and the third day" . . .

After the wanton and lawless violence which Jesus was to suffer, the prophecy proceeds to the torments He must undergo according to the forms of law and the sentence of His judges. Is. l. 6 (LXX.) and liii. 10 contain the prophecy. For the fulfillment cf. Matt. xxvii. 26; John xix. 1; Luke xxiii. 16. The holy body of our Lord was macerated, for the scourging of the Romans had that character. Nebe again remarks that the scourging is not resorted to simply as an additional torture, but to show that He must meet a bloody death, not in a violent lawless manner, but according to all the forms of a full legal process. The scourging could be inflicted only by the magistracy. It is the infliction of a penalty.

All this does not exhaust the sins of the world against our Lord. His enemies do not recoil from the final deed. They do not stop till they have imbrued their hands in His blood.

“Kill him.” Nebe: “The Old Testament announced from the beginning the death of the Redeemer. The first sound of the word from the cross is heard in the protevangelium, Gen. iii. 15.” But it becomes in the course of the Scriptures more and more distinct. The clearest passages are Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 7 and Is. liii. “The Son of man will die, the Gentiles will slay Him, and as they will slay Him after they have mocked, insulted, spit upon and scourged Him, they will also subject Him to a death that will combine the greatest pain with the greatest infamy, i. e., they will crucify Him, as Jesus expressly foretold in Matt. xx. 19.”

“And the third day He shall rise again.” Nebe: “Knowing the weakness of the twelve, conscious that the stars of prophecy are incapable of throwing a sufficient light into the darkness which will overwhelm them in the hour of His sufferings and death, He causes the bright Easter sun to break forth and illumine the darkness of death.” Positively, distinctly, He announces that on the third day after His death He will arise. This announcement is doubtless included in the things which had been written concerning the Son of man. Peter, Acts ii. 25, interprets Ps. xvi. 8 ff. of the resurrection of Christ.

Nebe cites Is. liii., “where we read of the unending life of the servant of God who was led to the slaughter and cut off out of the land of the living.” The cross became for the Lord the stairway to the throne of His glory. He who brings His own out of the depths into the heights of glory, goes Himself in advance on the same road, that in all things He might be their example. And the mighty exchange will not long be deferred. He who was in every possible way subjected to the lowest humiliation by men, will be raised to the loftiest height by God. He who was slain shall prove to be the conqueror of death and the Prince of Life.

34. “And they understood none of these things : and this saying” . . .

“Intentionally and circumstantially” the evangelist, as in ix. 45, relates the disciples’ want of understanding. Some render the *kai* = *é* or “and yet,” drawing a contrast. Although Jesus reveals to His disciples His impending doom, they do not understand Him. Bengel recognizes a contrast and sees a gradation in the three “ands” of this verse. Nebe paraphrases: “The evangelist tells first that the disciples themselves did not understand one word of it, the whole statement remained concealed to their minds,

and even after the whole matter was fully stated to them, they were still incapable of understanding it, until what had been thus spoken was made clear to them practically by the events of the frightful catastrophe which so soon overtook them."

Whence this want of understanding? Did they not understand that Jesus spoke of His sufferings, death and resurrection? Meyer: "The failure to understand has reference not to the meaning of the words, but to the fact as the Messianic destiny." Nebe: "The sense of the words was doubtless clear, but as they could not harmonize this announcement with the portrait of the Messiah with which they were familiar,—since the Jews had no conception of a suffering Messiah—the cross was to them a stumbling block, these clear utterances became hieroglyphs, and they supposed these open unfigurative declarations of the Master to be parables."

Some note with surprise, that the disciples misunderstood Jesus, when He spoke so definitely of His death, while the multitude understood Him when He but indirectly alluded to it. Nebe replies that since the Jews took Jesus for a mere man, they could not stagger at His death. If the Apostles were unable to understand the history of the Holy Passion, how can we understand this history in its salutary import? Luther aptly says: "As they could not believe that God would suffer Him to die, they imagined this language must have a figurative sense. Reason, flesh and blood cannot understand that the Scriptures should speak of the Son of man being crucified. Much less does reason comprehend that He dies thus of His own will, for it does not believe that it is necessary. It would come to God with works. Hence what is outwardly proclaimed to the ear, God must by His Spirit disclose to the heart. Even then men believe with difficulty. It is a mystery and remains a mystery, as is the case with all God's works before they happen."

This brings us to the second section of our Pericope—the healing of the blind man. But how are these two sections combined into one Lesson? There must be an inner connection, for each Pericope is marked by unity. Luther unites the two in this way: "The eyes of the blind man are still closed, but immediately upon the word which he believes, follows the work as he believed. So the disciples should have acted, for after the word nothing is proper but faith."

The inward connection is clear. The inward blindness of the twelve has a true mirror in the outward blindness of this beggar by the wayside—and the cure of the latter becomes a precious prophecy for all who are smitten with spiritual blindness. Let them

but imitate his cries and importunities for the opening of their eyes, and the Light of the world will give them sight.

How shall we harmonize Matt. xx. 29 ff. and Mk. x. 46 ff. with our passage? There is a difference in point of numbers, and also in point of time. Matthew has two blind men, Mark and Luke but one. Matthew and Mark agree in placing the healing at the departure from Jericho. Luke places the occurrence at the entrance. Attempts to reconcile the conflicting narratives are found as early as Augustine, who has been followed by most moderns in the view that there were two healings. Mark narrates the second at Jericho, Luke the first, and Matthew has confounded the two. But Bleek objects that notwithstanding the individual divergence and peculiarities, the three representations have undoubtedly as their basis the identical conception. This is the impression made upon every unbiased reader. Calvin, Bengel and others offer the following solution: Already as Jesus was entering Jericho, the blind man entreated Him for his sight, but the healing was deferred till the next morning when Jesus was departing from Jericho to Jerusalem. In the meanwhile another blind man had joined Bartimæus, and so while at the entrance only one was crying for mercy, on the departure there were two. Some object that it was unlike Jesus to delay over night giving relief to a suppliant, and Luke very specifically places the occurrence "as he drew nigh unto Jericho." Then it must be borne in mind that the multitude murmured when they saw Him enter the house of Zaccheus, xix. 7, and it is thought incredible that after they had taken their leave of Jesus at nightfall in a murmuring mood, a crowd collected around Him and accompanied Him again the next morning. Nebe argues from xix. 1—note the original with the Imperfect—that Jesus did not propose to tarry at Jericho, but the picturesque and surprising encounter with Zaccheus detained Him. The "running on before" is interpreted as showing that He was not stopping in the city. Zaccheus ran ahead on the road leading to Jerusalem. The sycamore tree stood along the highway. "The Lord observes Zaccheus on the tree—such a sight He had not before encountered, a chief of the publicans seated on a tree and with yearning eyes looking for the Savior of sinners. The Lord immediately changes His plan to proceed the same day toward Jerusalem or Bethany; He must first satisfy the hunger and thirst of this sinner for the kingdom of God. He had before been the guest of publicans, but now for the first time He alters His course in order to dine with one. Jesus who had already departed from Jericho returns and once more approaches the city." This Nebe regards as the solu-

tion offered through xix. 1 ff., of the divergence of Luke from Matthew and Mark. Luke, he thinks, wished to give an unbroken portraiture of Zaccheus, and hence he records the healing of the blind man altogether independently of that. The case of the healing of the woman with the flow of blood when our Lord was on His way to raise the daughter of Jairus is somewhat parallel.

That Matthew speaks of the two blind men, and the others of but one, is explained in this way: the one which Mark calls Bartimæus and Luke simply "a certain blind man," was the best known, or he may have taken the initiative, or have been throughout more demonstrative and more conspicuous. "At the light of his faith the faith of his unhappy associate was kindled."

Olsh. says: "Every attempt to reconcile the conflicting narratives carries with it something unhistorical. But their very differences on such immaterial points, show the genuine historical character of the Gospels, and so far from detracting from their character in a higher point of view, they exalt it."

35. "And it came to pass as he drew nigh unto Jericho, . . ."

Jericho, called also by Josephus "the city of palm trees," was distant from Jerusalem 150 furlongs, within the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 21. In our Lord's day it was one of the most important cities of Palestine, "the capital of one of the 11 Toparchies into which the country was divided." Robinson found there a population of scarcely 200. The environment, formerly one of the most charming spots of the Holy Land, is now a desert.

Mystical commentators take these blind men as the representatives of the human race, others as representatives of the two sects, Pharisees and Sadducees.

They are of course mirrors of all our fallen race, but we have to do here with them as historic persons. Nebe makes a striking commentary relative to many, especially the teachers of Germany, who have often gone with our Lord to Jerusalem, and who are still blind in regard to the mystery of His vicarious death. How blind we all are as we stand before the Man of sorrows!

"A certain blind man." Mark alone names him Bartimæus. A patronymic had become his proper name. "Begging." His loss of sight was aggravated by poverty.

36. "And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked . . ."

The beggar could not see—but he could hear. The loss of one sense generally sharpens the others. Probably Bartimæus heard more acutely and distinctly than those around him who had their eyesight. He was conscious of great masses of people passing by,

and this extraordinary concourse so excited his attention that he inquired the cause of it. May we also note the multitudes of Christian people following their Lord through the progress of His passion!

37. "And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by."

Παρέρχεται in xvii. 7 is rendered by the Rev. simply "come." And this clause can be rendered simply "Jesus the Nazarene is coming."

Nebe notices that the inquirer derives very little concerning Jesus from the multitude. They ascribe to Him no title of honor, they do not applaud Him as the prophet who teaches with authority and who by signs and wonders attests His divine power and glory. They designate Him only according to His lowliness, Jesus the Nazarene. Did they recognize in Him nothing more? Were they without faith?

Where there is tinder, says Nebe, it requires but a spark, and a flame bursts forth. Faith is not the work of man. And it is not dependent on a man experiencing much or little in regard to the Lord. "As a weak hand of faith is nevertheless a hand of faith, so faith stretches forth its hand, longing for help, even where but a little is offered to it." Faith is the work of God in the heart of man.

38. "And he called, saying Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy" . . .

The faith which saved him, v. 42, shows itself at once both in the title with which he addresses Him, and in his petition. He whom the masses spoke of as Jesus the Nazarene, he at once addresses as Son of David. Blind though he be, he recognizes in Him the promised Messiah who is to reestablish the kingdom of God in Israel. "He recognizes not only a man whom God has endowed with the spirit of power, he has a deep insight into the innermost heart of the Saviour, he turns to the Son of David with a cry for mercy."

According to Matt. xx. 31 the cry was *κύριε, ἐλέησον*, and let it be noted that this was not a prayer for pardon, but for grace, for the removal of his blindness. Nebe: "he perceives that mercy dwells in the depths of the heart of the Son of David, that mercy is the innermost essence of His nature. To this mercy, which in Jesus has become flesh and blood, the blind man applies; he appeals to the heart not to the hand of the Lord, to His mercy and not to His omnipotence."

His faith implies that he did not now for the first time hear of Jesus. The reports concerning His great miracles had reached him,

the various opinions of the people concerning this worker of miracles were known to him. Outwardly he could not behold these wonders, but all the more clearly did he penetrate their inward kernel and recognize the heart which those wonders attested.

Nebe: "Like a flash it goes through his soul. His heart divines it, a mighty hope springs up irresistibly: He is the one who can help me. Hope grows quickly into assurance. Every doubt vanishes. He is the one who will help me, who does help me; mercy brought Him into the world, mercy is His life in this world. Hence he cries, calls. His voice like a trumpet pierces through the uproar of the crowd into the ears of the Lord."

"Jesus, son of David, have mercy." "This is the true passion prayer, a cry out of deep distress, a cry which casts aside all self-righteousness, a cry which knows but one refuge, the grace and mercy of Him who is going up to Jerusalem in order to suffer and die and rise again for us."

39. "And those going before rebuked him, that he should" . . .

It is not likely that he was more disorderly or irreverent than they were. There was certainly more reverence in his cry than in their noise and tumult, which aroused his attention. But the confession of faith and the prayer of the heart always meet with hindrances. As often as faith proceeds to bear testimony, an attempt is made to quench its testimony. The old man is quick to react against the first sign of the life of the new man. The hindrance comes from without in the present instance; the multitude going before, Matt. xx. 31, try to silence him.

Ἐπιτιμῶν, to rebuke, to threaten, used by our Lord when admonishing or commanding such as had been healed not to publish it. Why did these people threaten the poor man? Some think they took offence because of the title he gave to the Nazarene. They would not suffer such a recognition of His Messiahship. Some: that Jesus was engaged in teaching and they would not allow Him to be disturbed or interrupted, or to be stopped on His journey so soon after entering upon it. Some: These people were friendly to Jesus and felt great concern for His safety. Jerusalem was quite near and another miracle was calculated to embitter the rulers still more. Weiss: "As they themselves intended to proclaim Jesus as King of Israel on reaching Jerusalem, such premature declarations might prove embarrassing." Inasmuch as a number joined in the attempt to silence him, some may have acted from one motive and some from another. The crowd consisted, as is usual with crowds, of men of various opinions, and of some without any opinion.

There were those who would take offense because they themselves did not believe. Others may have shared the blind man's faith, but their faith was so weak and timid, that they were afraid of men, and regarded it hazardous and presumptuous to express their faith so openly.

But true faith refuses to be silenced. You can no more quench the outflow of a living faith than you can dam up a stream of living water. The more men attempt ignorantly or maliciously to stop it, the more mightily does the stream break forth and sweep away every barrier. The life that is born of God cannot be bound or extinguished. Every resistance only stimulates and increases its force. First he "called" out—now "he cried out the more a great deal." "The firmness of the blind man overcomes all opposition. His zeal increases through the resistance, his voice is now louder and stronger than before." And the Lord hears him. He need not to have called so mightily. Jesus hears the gentlest sigh. Nebe: "God moved him to cry out so loudly for the sake of the people who surrounded him. For this reason, too, the opposition may have been allowed, so that his confession and prayer might be heard all the more."

40. "And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him" . . .

This sounds as if Jesus had been in motion, on His journey. Nebe: "His foot is rooted in the ground, *σταθεῖς* implying the taking of a firm, immovable stand. Whatever He may have been engaged in, He immediately breaks off and commands the suppliant for mercy to be brought to Him. Wherefore this? He could have healed him at a distance by a word. But He proposed to heal in His immediate presence the poor man whom the crowd was determined to keep away from Him. The case is similar to that of the children, whom He commanded to be brought to Him in order to rebuke the foolish disciples, and then not only laid His hands of blessing on their heads but took them into His arms and pressed them to His heart. What the Apostles there learned, the whole multitude may now learn, that to every man, even to the beggar by the roadside, He accords personal communion and the extension of His hand.

Why "command?" He might readily have found his way to Jesus. Julius Müller says: "He eagerly embraces every opportunity to unite men with men in closer relations. The blind man has been torn away and isolated from the world, he shall realize once more the great value of human fellowship. Helping hands are offered him and lead him to Christ, his Saviour. How dear to

him ever after must have been those who in this critical moment of his life had served him as friends, who had been helpful to him in obtaining the divine salvation." Nebe adds: "This command was a lesson for those who attempted to silence him, not to constitute themselves uncalled as masters of ceremonies to keep the sick away from the Physician, but to lend a helping hand, so that every sufferer may come to the Saviour."

Jesus asked the approaching beggar not about his faith,—for His finely susceptible ear had clearly perceived that in the heart-tones: "Lord have mercy on me," but

41. "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" . . .

What form is my mercy to take? Benignly and tenderly, as in so many other cases, He invites him to present his peculiar distress, intimating that whatever may be needed He will grant.

"That I may receive"—there seems to be an ellipse. *Ἰνα* is referred by Meyer to *ἐλέησον*, giving the object of the cry for help. Others: inasmuch as this is the answer to the Lord's question, we ought to supply *θέλω* or the Imperative *ποίησον*. He prays for eyesight: this is the view of all expositors except Steinmeyer, who finds a deeper, soteriological sense: Jesus saying "thy faith hath saved thee" must mean more than the restoration of sight, and as the cured man followed Him glorifying God, the whole transaction involved a salvation which extended to the inner blindness and the soul's deliverance. He holds that as often as the phrase "thy faith hath saved thee" recurs, xvii. 19; viii. 48, etc., the reference is not to a physical cure but to the salvation of the soul. No doubt that phrase does imply much more than a bodily deliverance. When Jesus uses it He no doubt has in mind also the healing effected in the inward man, and by these words He constantly sets forth that the true healing has been vouchsafed to the person of whom He speaks. But this does not warrant us in supposing that the prayer of the man itself is to be interpreted in this spiritual sense. He received incomparably more than he had sought.

42. "And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith" . . .

This, says Nebe, means no more than that he shall have the light of his eyes again. But the next clause, "thy faith hath saved thee," shows that it was his faith which enabled him to obtain the benefit. Faith is the hand which must take the gifts of grace. Where that hand fails no gift of grace can reach us. Divine blessings are exchanged for faith. Grace is poured out like water, faith gathers it up. Grace is proportioned to the susceptibility of our will. Some drink at the fountain from small vessels

small portions, others more abundantly with large vessels. Some give the light admission to their homes by many windows, some by few. This blind one receives much because he dips in deep, he opens all the windows of his heart. With the bodily gift he receives the heavenly treasure. With the eye of the body opens also the eye of the soul. "His faith brought him to the Lord, his faith showed him prepared for the bodily benefit, and the bodily benefit seals to him that Jesus is the Christ, the Light of the world." Thus his faith has been his salvation for the outward and the inward man.

43. "And immediately he received his sight, and followed him" . . .

The word of Christ is the power of God. "Immediately," in a moment, his vision is restored, and the first object on which it falls is the sweet countenance of his benefactor, Jesus, whom having not seen, he believed in. Blessed are they which see not and yet believe. But the sight of the Saviour was not enough. He cannot break away from Him any more. He joins His followers going up to Jerusalem and his eyes are turned upward in thanksgiving and praise.

Nebe: "The blind man, who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, has seen the light of life in the Lord, who is going up to Jerusalem to suffer. This is the turning point; the way of Christ to death is become for him who believed, the way of life."

The people who saw this, gave praise unto God. Meyer: "The poetic *αἶνος* is found only here and (excepting the LXX.) Matt. xxi. 16. Its use here must be intentional. It indicates that their hearts sang a new and noble hymn to the Lord." Wondrous change! Before, they charged the blind man to keep silent, now in loud acclamations they join in the praises of God which he began. Amid the praises of his people Jesus is going forward to His bitter sufferings and death.

The difficulty in the practical treatment of the Pericope arises from the combination of the two sections in one point of view, the prophecy of the sufferings and the healing of the blind man.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE PORTAL OF THE HOLY PASSION OFFERS A VIEW:

1. Of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.
2. Of the blindness which does not apprehend the word of the cross.
3. Of the prayer which breaks the seal of the mystery.
4. Of the thanksgiving due to God, the Father of our Lord.

THE LORD'S PATH TO SUFFERING IS,

1. A voluntary one.
2. Ordained of God.
3. A mysterious, and
4. A gracious path.

CHRIST WAS MOVED TO GO TO JERUSALEM,

1. By His love to the Father—whose word must be fulfilled.
2. By His love for us, that we might receive our sight.

JESUS GOES TO JERUSALEM,

1. As God's obedient Son.
2. As the sympathizing High-Priest.
3. As the Helper out of every need.

ON ENTERING INTO THE HOLY PASSION SEASON IT BECOMES US,

1. To fix our eyes upon the Passion-history.
2. To pray the Lord for enlightened eyes.
3. To praise God by following Jesus.

THE SUFFERINGS OF OUR LORD REVEAL TO US,

1. The eternal counsel of God.
2. Our great misery.
3. The saving grace of the Lord.

NOTICE THE SAVIOR ON HIS WAY TO THE CROSS:

1. Submissive as to His own sufferings.
2. Compassionate towards the sufferings of others.

THE PREVAILING BLINDNESS CONCERNING CHRIST'S PASSION.

1. Its nature. 2. Its cure. 3. The result of the cure.

THE PRAYER FOR MERCY.

1. Its significance. 2. Its necessity. 3. Its power.

Matt. vi. 16-21.

THE season of Fasting begins properly with our Lord's teaching on this subject. To follow Him through humiliation and to the cross, we need first of all His own instruction. Fasting may be perverted. The true fast is not one merely of outward abstinence, Is. lviii. 3-8, and certainly does not consist of an outward show intended to attract the admiration of others. Fasting has its true import as an expression of penitence, self-abasement and sorrow. It signifies that some indulgence, otherwise allowable, is denied to the natural will, in testimony of the earnestness of one's penitence or grief. It is essentially voluntary. The practice is found to be an element of all religions. It held a less prominent place in the Old Testament than in many false religions, although very much was made of it in the time of our Lord, some regarding it of greater importance than almsgiving. It passed over into the New Testament with an emphasis placed on its inwardness and genuineness.

16. "Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites," . . .

Jesus neither forbids nor commands fasting—but assuming that it is practiced, He condemns the manner and the motive under which it was observed by the hypocrites. The reference is undoubtedly to the voluntary and frequent private fasts, Luke xviii. 12, and not to the practice observed in connection with the day of Atonement, and other annual fasts. Lev. xvi. 29; xxiii. 27. During the captivity, Zech. vii. 3, 5; viii. 19, four days of mournful commemoration, kept by fasting, were added to the celebration of the Sabbath. See, Oehler, p. 423. A fast was, however, never observed on the Sabbath nor on Festivals except at the Feast of Purim. The Pharisees fasted regularly on Thursdays and Mondays, Luke xviii. 12, supposed to be the days of Moses' ascent and descent from the mount.

"Do not become *σκυθρωποί*," sad, gloomy, Luke xxiv. 17; Gen. xl. 7. In the classics the term denotes not only having a sad countenance, but feigning one. Such outward signs were intended

to catch the eye of the public, to command the applause of men, for one's religious fidelity.

Mourning attire was worn during the fasting, Is. lviii. 5; lxi. 3; Joel. ii. 12; Zech. vii. 3; Dan. x. 3, 2; Sam. xii. 20; xiii. 9; and the genius of Christianity does not condemn this *per se*, but when men do such things ostensibly from religious motives, but really from motives of personal ambition, they are condemned.

Ἀφανίζειν. The same term is used, in v. 19, to express the effect of moth and rust upon earthly treasures. By some expositors it is rendered, deform, disfigure, by means of ashes and dirt. Is. lxi. 3. Tholuck refers it to the squalor of the unwashed face and unkempt hair and beard, in contrast with v. 17. Others render it, "destroy," which corresponds with its use v. 19. The ashes sprinkled on them, and the accumulation of dirt, practically destroyed their faces. Meyer presses the literal sense: "to make invisible." Vulg: "exterminate." Greek writers associated the word with κρυπτειν. By covering, veiling, concealing their faces in the garb of mourning, they prevented one from seeing what their countenance really was like. 2 Sam. xv. 30; Esth. vi. 12. Some recognize a play on the word φανῶσιν: they conceal their countenances with a view of being seen by men.

17, 18. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint" . . .

A true fast, in the spirit of the gospel, has a very different character. It is no advertisement of a man's humility. It does not display itself in outward habiliments. It is a matter between the penitent soul and a merciful Father.

"Anoint thy head and wash thy face," what men do in connection with feasting, just the opposite of fasting. It is the same as saying, Make your toilet as if preparing for a feast. Ps. xxiii. 5; Luke vii. 46. The gospel is a true feast, which satisfies the hungry soul, not a fast by which it is tortured and famished. Do not falsify its true character. Let there be sincere fasting, as occasion calls for it, but do not pervert it into a formalistic observance, with a view of striking the eyes of the multitude and gaining popularity for your piety.

Of course the anointing and washing are, again, not to be taken literally, but the admonition is that men are not to make it a point to parade their fasting before men—they shall not appear, as v. 18 has it, to men as fasting, but to God. The one point is that God recognizes a true fast, God, who is in secret, who knows the secrets of our hearts. The object is to have God pleased with our fasting,—and He is, we know, pleased with a broken and a con-

trite heart. Whatever in connection with it is intended to please men is to be omitted.

Κρυφαίω, adopted by Meyer and others, is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, but is used several times by the LXX. He who sees where no human eye can penetrate, can behold the reality and sincerity of the fast where men are deceived by appearances. "Will recompense thee" (Rev.), namely for the fasting. The Pharisees aimed at the reward which men bestow. He who fasts inwardly and rightly, whose humble and contrite spirit expresses itself in a true fast, will have his reward from God. Not that there is merit in any fasting, but the recognition of our fasting by the omniscient eye of God, will be found very profitable. God's grace is most freely given where the fast takes place from no regard to man.

19. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," . . .

While DeWette and others deny a close connection of thought, Meyer, Tholuck and others contend for the immediate continuity. The treasures upon earth correspond to the praises of men. In their alms, prayers and fasts, the Pharisees aimed at being seen, at having a reward from their fellowmen. It was but at best a man-service done to gain compensation from man, vi. 1, 2, 5, 16. What are such earthly perishable treasures worth in comparison with the recompense which comes from God, namely, the heavenly treasures, which are beyond the reach of moth and rust and thieves, v. 12!

Three times in the course of the chapter the hearers have heard the momentous words, "thy Father which seeth in secret," and now they are directed in all their labor and endeavor to have supreme regard for the eye of the Invisible, to seek the treasures which are heavenly and which endure forever.

Θησαυρός: treasures, stores of every character, corn, gold, silver, raiment. Ezra. ii. 69; Neh. vii. 10; James v. 2. *Σης*: a moth. This destroys the raiment. *Βρώσις*: an eating, a canker, corrosion of every kind, "rust." Some think of a worm destroying corn. "Thieves" take especially the gold and silver. *Αφανίζει*: cause to disappear.

20. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," . . .

"In heaven" is to be taken immediately with "lay up:" lay not up upon earth, but lay up in heaven, treasures. As God is there, God who takes account of things in secret and to whom external appearances are nothing, lay them up there: things that are treasures and jewels in His sight. As Luke puts it xii. 21, "Be

rich toward God." Cf. Luke xii. 33; 1 Tim. vi. 19. The favor of God is the only imperishable treasure. That is burglar-proof, moth-proof, rust-proof, "incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away." "Break through:" lit. "Dig through the wall by which treasures are protected." Earthly treasures perish from two causes: the ordinary course of nature and forcible abstraction. Heavenly ones are subject to neither contingency.

Does this forbid the amassing of earthly wealth? The Sermon on the Mount has its true interpretation in the key of the spirit. It is throughout impossible to make a literal interpretation of it for practical life. But the spirit of it must be accepted and applied with the highest sanction. The heart, as v. 21 shows, must not be set on earthly treasure. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament commend individuals who were possessed of wealth. It is possible so to gather earthly treasure as to promote our spiritual riches. It is possible to multiply the good things of life and at the same time to multiply the sovereign treasure which comes freely by God's grace. "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts." 1 Tim. vi. 6-21. What we most value and pursue becomes a magnet for the heart. Meyer says: "Everything which the Lord has hitherto enjoined (in His sermon), constitutes the sum and substance of the righteousness that comes from God through faith in Him. Thus do men gather treasures for themselves, which are reserved for them with God in Heaven."

21. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart" . . .

Where your treasure is, *i. e.*, the object for which your hands are laboring, there is your love, there are the desires, the longings, the tendencies, which have their seat in the heart. Besides the perishable character of these objects, they absorb the heart. Is it possible now for a man to separate his heart's affections from his treasures? What a man loves is his God, says Luther. Meyer observes: "The treasure is the result of effort, and the object of love, hence the heart is inseparable from it." The heart will move in the same sphere, high or low, as the object we pursue. As the treasure is, so will the heart become. The miser becomes a stone, the sensualist a beast, the proud spirit a devil. While you lay up—that is the emphatic term—treasure on earth, that becomes the congenial sphere in which your inner life moves; you come into the liveliest sympathy with the object for which you live. You are affianced, wedded to it, and you become assimilated to it. How important that the believer's heart be in heaven, that his mind be

set upon things above, that he be absorbed in the pursuit of eternal life! Heaven holds the only treasure for a pure heart. Phil. iii. 20; Col. iii. 2 ff; 2 Cor. iv. 17; 1 John ii. 15 ff.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

OUTWARD MANIFESTATIONS OF PIETY:

1. Genuine, if springing from within, and designed to please God.
2. Spurious, if belied in the heart, and designed to please men.

RELIGIOUS COMEDY.

1. Its bearing on the actor.
2. Its bearing on one's fellowmen.
3. Its bearing on God.

TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS CONSISTS,

1. Not in appearance, but in reality.
2. Its objects are not earthly, but heavenly.
3. It has respect to the judgment of God, not to that of men.

THE TWO KINDS OF TREASURE.

1. The qualities of the earthly treasure.
2. The qualities of the heavenly treasure.
3. Their relation to each other.

TEMPORAL POSSESSIONS:

1. In themselves.
2. To the carnal mind.
3. To the believer.

TREASURES UPON EARTH ARE,

1. Outward.
2. Transient.
3. Liable to loss.

TREASURES IN HEAVEN ARE,

1. Hidden, yet manifest.
2. Infinitely far, yet infinitely near.
3. One treasure, yet innumerable treasures.

THE LAYING UP OF HEAVENLY TREASURE, THE BEST SAFEGUARD AGAINST THE DANGERS CONNECTED WITH EARTHLY TREASURE.

1. It keeps the heart right.
2. It keeps our conduct right.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT (INVOCAVIT).

Matt. iv. 1-11.

NEBE explains the selection of this theme for the opening of the Passion season on the ground that our High-Priest must be sinless. The paschal lamb was required to be "without blemish." So Christ must suffer as the innocent Lamb of God, the sinless One. Only thus could He once for all expiate the sins of the world. While it may be questioned whether we are to conceive of an external appearance of Satan standing corporeally before Christ, a circumstance which would in advance have insured the defeat of the tempter, we possess undoubtedly here the account of an actual occurrence. It is not a parable, or a compendium of Messianic and apostolic wisdom. The text does not say in what form the devil appeared, but, as we well know, if evil is to be enticing it must not appear in its hideousness. Luther: "Satan makes himself beautiful when he wants to deceive." 2 Cor. xi. 14. We must hold fast to the truth, that in some way or other these suggestions came directly or indirectly from without, from the evil one personally.

The scene of the conflict may have been internal, as with us. Jesus had inherited the Jewish conception of the Messiah. Satan now holds this image before his mind, and for the time He was exposed to the full influence of the kingdom of darkness. That kingdom in the person of its chief representative displayed to Him its alluring side, and endeavored to seduce Him from the narrow path of suffering and humiliation which had been marked out for Him.

The temptation stands as one of those decisive events in life which determine all its subsequent manifestations. The liability to temptation attached to the human soul of our Lord. He was—and He had to be—in all points tempted as we are, James i. 12. Temptation is a condition of human development. As man, it was abstractly possible for Him to sin, and the peculiar character of these temptations was addressed to peculiar susceptibilities of His nature, those which arose from great hunger, from inherited aspirations, from the instinctive dread of suffering. By re-

sistance He attained to a holy self-determination. On the other hand, the certainty and the necessity of victory attached to His divinity, the fullness of the divine Spirit within Him, which made Him forever separate from sinners. As God, it was impossible for Him to sin. Thus was it at once possible and impossible for Him to sin, as He was both man and God. The paradox of the former statement follows from the inexplicable mystery of the latter.

The temptation of the evil one would naturally confront the Messiah, who had now entered his domain and whose mission it was to destroy his kingdom. 1 John iii. 8. The prince of darkness is thrown on the defensive. Throughout His entire earthly life Jesus maintained the contest with the arch-enemy of mankind, and both at the commencement and at the close of His official earthly career, He encountered the full and united power of the evil one—and in each instance overcame him. In the desert Satan offered Him the cup of worldliness sweetened with words of flattery and promise. In Gethsemane he tried by the cup of suffering to wrest Him from His course. In each case Christ came off victor.

The Messiah truly laid His axe to the root of the tree. It was only by conquering the principle, the personal principle of evil in the universe, that He could begin, carry forward and complete the redemption of man. The temptation accordingly possesses a world-historical, a universal significance, and at the commencement of the gospel history its position is that of a positive necessity. It is suggestive, too, that the temptation followed immediately upon His reception of baptism and the Holy Ghost. Lange, in fact, holds that the crisis of Christ's victory occurred already in the baptism. His humiliation under the baptism of John was a victory over Himself, and assured Him the victory over the now impotent assaults of Satan. It in fact qualified and prepared Him for it.

1. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit" . . .

"Then" *i. e.*, when the Holy Spirit had descended on Him. An immediate inner connection is recognized between the baptism and the temptation, though the same adverb is used in iii. 13 with perhaps little reference to time. Luke iv. 1 says, "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit" etc.

"Led up," Luke ii. 22; xxii. 66. Some: upwards from the river bank to the higher table land, more into the heart of the desert. Mark uses *ἐκβάλλει*: "the spirit driveth him forth." He was impelled by an action or influence, possibly somewhat in the

nature of force or urgency, ix. 38; Acts viii. 39; 2 Kings ii. 16. At all events, by a divine impulse, by the Spirit of God which He had received, v. 16, Luke iv. 1. This impulse is not to be confounded with the ecstatic state, Rev. i. 10; iv. 2; Ezek. iii. 12; viii. 3, etc. It was not by His own conscious spirit that He was led. After His baptism He gave Himself up to the Holy Ghost, and by Him He is now taken into the wilderness to be tempted. Satan, recognizing the significance of the endowment of the Spirit for the accomplishment of His Messianic calling, deemed this the opportune moment for the temptation. He always pursues this course:

“*Ἐρημος.*” Tradition makes this to have been Quarantania, near Jericho. Josh. xvi. 1. It begins at Tekoa and extends to the Dead Sea. Luke iii. 2 ff. includes in it “all the country about Jordan.” Some are led by John i. 28 and iii. 26 to understand the Sinaitic Desert, at all events a desert beyond the Jordan, whither Elijah had been led by the Spirit of God.

DeWette observes: “the evil spirits dwell in the desert.” Mark adds “He was with the wild beasts.” Starcke, with others, conjectures that Satan attacked Jesus also through the beasts, His being surrounded by them must have its significance, as well as the presence of the angels mentioned by Mark. DeWette construes this as pictorial embellishment, a graphic contrast with the angels who hovered around Him. Such beasts belong ordinarily to a desert and enhance its terrors. “To be tempted:” This was the purpose of the Spirit. The will of Christ and the will of Satan coincided in this, that Jesus in order to prove Himself before God was ready to be tempted, and Satan desired to tempt Him.

On *πειράζω* see Thayer's Lexicon. It means to make trial of, to test, in a good sense or a bad sense, especially to try or test one's faith, virtue, character, by enticement to what is unlawful. The precise meaning is always to be determined by the context. Satan tempts one for the purpose of destroying him. 1 Cor. vii. 5; 1 Thess. iii. 5. God may tempt one, subject him to trials, in order to prove him, *i. e.*, to purify and perfect his character.

The purpose of the Satanic temptation of our Lord was to seduce Him to a selfish use of His power, to the employment of unworthy measures for the advancement of His mission, measures in conflict with the nature of His mediatorial office and with His knowledge of the divine will. It was a test of strict fidelity to His transcendent calling. Could He be induced to step aside from the pathway of thorns?

“*Διάβολος,*” literally the accuser, he who accuses and calumniates men before God. Zech. iii. 1; Job. i. 6; ii. 4; Rev. xii. 10:

1 Tim. iii. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 3; Tit. ii. 3. (Satan is the Hebrew equivalent). Such is the hardihood of infernal wickedness that it does not hesitate to assail with its allurements the divine Redeemer from sin.

2. "And when he had fasted forty days" . . .

νηστεύσας means: having in the strictest sense dispensed with all nourishment. So Olshausen, Bleek, Meyer, Nebe. Luke iv. 2 says, "He ate nothing."

"Forty days and forty nights." Both Moses and Elias, but especially the 40 years' journey in the wilderness, furnish a figure of this. "Forty" is to be taken literally, not merely as a round number. Note, too, that the typical fasting of Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 28, and that of Elias, 1 Kings xix. 8, consisted in entire abstinence from all food. His soul was absorbed in communion with God, contemplating His mission. Nebe draws a parallel between the 40 days which preceded the public appearance of Jesus, and the 40 days which followed His final public appearance. "He afterward hungered," a proof of His real humanity. This could hardly have been the case had He not beforehand been wholly without food. The text adds a superfluous word, *ϊστερον*, to show emphatically that the fasting preceded the hungering. According to DeWette the fasting was to furnish the occasion for the temptation. It was a preparation for it. The Master gives us an example of the value of fasting, of temperance and self-restraint.

The temptation only began in reality, or culminated, after the 40 days. The hunger brought the tempter on the scene. According to Mark and Luke there were temptations during the 40 days, but the solution is found in distinguishing those temptations from the three terrible ones which followed. It is noteworthy that the temptation to which the first Adam as well as the second was subjected, came through bodily appetite.

3. "And when the tempter came to him," . . .

προσελθὼν, coming to Him in visible form. So Bengel. "The tempter." He did not wish it to be known that he was Satan.

After he had betrayed his Satanity, Christ in v. 10 calls him Satan. "If thou be Son of God." The absence of the article does not affect the sense. It is often wanting before the Genitive, xii. 24; xxvii. 40, 43. First of all doubt, unbelief, is to be injected into His mind. How very like the unbelief successfully suggested to our first parents! The old trick is to be tried again. The same arts are employed, but with what different results. Some hold that the divinity is assumed—and the incompatibility

of hunger with it accented. Satan had no doubt of our Lord's divinity. It was his knowledge of Jesus' supernatural relation to God which led him to put to the test the manifestation and activity of the divine. The demons which Jesus at various times cast out were wont to address Him as the Son of God. His continued hunger was calculated to excite doubts in His own mind concerning his divinity so solemnly attested at His baptism. How unbecoming the Son of the Creator to suffer hunger!

Some hold that "Son of God" is here no more than an official Messianic title, but were this granted the force of the suggestion would be the same: "Art Thou sent on a divine mission, endowed with divine power, and left destitute even of bodily nourishment?" Who will recognize in one fallen into such a plight, the Son of God, the promised Messiah?

It is held by some that the subject is presented in a problematical form, so as to provoke Jesus to give a proof of His divinity. Cf. xxvii. 40, where the same phrase occurs in the mouth of mockers. If He sustains the relation of Son to the Creator, He must not suffer want. That is unbecoming His dignity.

"Speak that these stones" is the literal rendering. *ἵνα* in the New Testament, according to DeWette, Winer and Bleek, is used in place of the Infinitive after words of commanding, asking, etc., while Meyer holds that it is always an expression of purpose. "Speak in order that," etc. Luke: "command that, etc."

Omnipotence by its mere fiat, as in the creation of the universe, is to convert stones into bread: "put forth as in the original creation of heaven and earth Thy creative word."

"These stones"—it was a stony spot, and the stones may have had the appearance and form of loaves. By bread is doubtless meant the literal article and not food in general, vii. 9.

Satan watches for the opportunity. He knows how to improve the situation of the moment. The essence of the temptation was, the exercise of Jesus' power given to redeem sinners for His own relief from personal suffering. Certainly, He could easily have wrought this miracle. He did greater things than this. But He would not. Why not?

4. "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not" . . .

"It is written." Our Lord's weapon against temptation is the sword of the Spirit, Eph. vi. 17, the written word. He does not appeal to the voice from heaven. Nor does He enter into argument with the tempter, but simply cites the assertion of Scripture as became the Son of God. He declines to state whether He is the Son of God.

What high authority is thus ascribed to the Scriptures, an authority irrefragable to Satan! And this was the weapon against him—and still is in like manner for us. The Saviour's weapon against Satan was provided already by Moses.

These words, "man shall not, etc.," are contained in Deut. viii. 3, and have reference primarily to the divine leadings Israel had experienced and especially to the divinely-supplied manna. The original sense is: When ordinary natural means of sustenance fail, a man may be preserved alive in an extraordinary way by the creative word of God, as in the case of the Israelites in the desert. And this sense has a most appropriate application here. The tempted One answers: I leave it to God to preserve my life. He can do it by a word—and I will not selfishly or arbitrarily save myself by a resort to supernatural power.

Some attach a spiritual sense to the answer: The Messiah is not dependent on sensuous food alone. He lives by doing and suffering the will of God. John iv. 32, 34. But doubtless we are to understand primarily material and ordinary means of subsistence. The manna descended from the skies, but it was corporeal nourishment. And it was in connection with the manna that the Israelites had committed the very sin to which the Messiah was here urged. They, indeed, wrought no miracle, but they demanded one of God. Exod. xvi. 15; Ps. lxxviii. 19 f.

The passage is cited from the LXX, but omits the last clause "man shall live," which the LXX added. Ἐπὶ: on the basis of, supported by. Bread is the staff of life, Is. iii. 1, but something more than bread is needed to preserve life.

Ζήσεται Meyer holds to have a simple future sense. Still Jesus had experienced this during these 40 days.

"Man" with the article, generally viewed, *man*. So the Heb. and LXX.—not of Christ, the man. Jesus places Himself here in the midst of His brethren. Of all men this is true. Jesus meets the tempter as a man. Even when he has bread, this does not *per se* nourish man without the blessing of God.

"But by every word proceeding," etc. Ps. lxxxix. 34 (LXX). Whatever utterance proceeds from the mouth of God, every command, promise, revelation etc., "by which the preservation of life is effected." Cf. Deut. viii. 23 (Heb.): "From everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah." Meyer renders literally "word," what is spoken. Matt. xviii. 16; Luke ii. 15. Others: whatever God has ordained.

It is the first duty of every man to abide by what is written. Obedience, not power, is Christ's weapon against Satan. Luther

says: "He who has and believes God's word is sure of two things: first when he suffers hunger and want the word will preserve him that he does not perish from hunger, Ps. xxxvii. 25; Is. xxxiii. 16; Heb. xiii. 5. 6; the word he has in the heart will nourish and preserve him without eating or drinking. Second, he will assuredly find bread at last, come whence it may, even though it should rain from heaven like the manna." As the spirit is more than the body, and bears rule over the body, food for the soul is more important than food for the body. Whoever does not feed on God's word does not live. This sustained Jesus in the desert. He surrenders Himself completely to God's word, and makes this the spring of His actions and the expression of His own mind, whether among men or against Satan. The point of the temptation was to disturb His faith in God. But His faith in the word of God cannot be shaken.

5. "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city" . . .

Luke has the second temptation last. Matthew's order is natural. The third as given by him finally reveals the purpose of the tempter. Put this temptation second, and the other one seems superfluous. Matthew gives the three in the order of time; Luke observes a gradation in the places. Though balked in the first attempt, Satan makes another. How often have his victims after victoriously withstanding one onslaught, fallen under the second, especially when approached from a directly opposite quarter!

Luther says: "In the first temptation the devil is black; in the second, using Scripture, he becomes a white one, In the third, he is quite a divinely majestic devil, as if he were God himself."

Παραλαμβάνει, cf. v. 8, "takes him with him." Bengel: "For he takes and leads." Luke: "he led." Some suppose an ecstatic condition. DeWette, supernatural force. Meyer, too, makes it a miraculous occurrence, "not subjective." Jerome thought of Christ as being transported through the air. "A marvelous power was granted to the tempter, until Jesus in v. 10 says, depart." Jesus permitted Himself now to be "led by the devil" as afterwards crucified. Cf. xvii. 1.

"The holy city," Jerusalem, xxvii. 53; Luke iv. 9; Is. xlix. 2; lii. 1; Neh. xi. 1. Doubtless so called on account of it being the nation's seat of worship. The Arabs now call it El Kuds, place of the sanctuary, or the holy city. This designation is in striking contrast with the devil, the unholy one. It is notable, too, that the devil took Him into the holy city, just as He also expounded to Him the Holy Scriptures. He attacks the Holy

One, he makes it his business to intrude into what is holy. 2 Thess. ii. 4. On the change of place, cf. Num. xxiii. 37.

"He setteth him." Here again is implied the involuntary nature of the act on the part of Jesus, and Satan's power in connection with it. Πτερόγιον. The term occurs only in Hegesippus, where the Jews found James preaching on the *pterugion*, pinnacle, bulwark or balustrade, and hurled him over. Bengel: "to which the ascent was far more easy than the descent from it." Among the Greeks πτέρον was a wing in the architectural sense, the extremity, turret, battlement, peak, gable, pediment. Some take it simply of the temple roof in general, which was slightly peaked. Just what it was, remains uncertain.

"The temple." The original is *ιερόν* not *ναός*, not the main building proper, but the whole area of the temple with its buildings. The sacredness of the temple proper would forbid any one ascending the roof. What particular portion is referred to is uncertain. Josephus says, the roofing of the temple was furnished on the top with pointed stakes, as a protection against birds. It may have been on the parapet of Solomon's porch on the east, or of the royal porch on the south, both of which overhung an abrupt precipice, perhaps on the heights of the temple proper.

Satan returns to the attack. Again the issue of His divinity is raised, but in a totally opposite direction: God will indeed protect Thee. I will see whether thou dost really trust every word of God.

6. "And saith, . . . If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself" . . .

"Cast thyself down." Below in the temple area is the multitude, and should the masses behold Him leaping from that awful height and lighting on the ground uninjured, they would at once flock to His standard and hail Him as Messiah. How much more inviting such a means of securing followers, than the *via dolorosa* of Calvary! The Jews were eager to see signs and wonders. What an electric effect such a daring miracle would have on them! How irresistible to their minds such a spectacular display of omnipotent power!

Satan now grasps the weapon which had been used against him. If the Messiah means to go by every word proceeding from the mouth of God, here is a passage from God's mouth: "It is written." I also am governed by God's word. Satan is a believer, James ii. 19. A tribute to the divine authority of the Scriptures is thus wrung from the prince of fallen angels. Jesus supports His position with the word, so will he. The second temptation goes right back to the principle by which the first was resisted.

God's word is used for offense as well as defense. Satan, as it were, snatches Christ's weapon out of His hand. Jesus had answered, I trust for my maintenance to the promises and providence of God. Satan now responds, I will set thee on this pinnacle and test thy confidence in the divine promise of protection.

No cause ever was so damnable that it did not seek to draw support from the word of God. Satan quoting Scripture has become proverbial. He and his followers are quite expert in making Scripture contradict Scripture, importing contradictions into the inspired volume, pressing the letter at the expense of the spirit, and perverting God's word. All serves only as a mask for Satan's purpose.

"He shall give His angels charge etc.," quoted from Ps. xci. 11 f. The Psalm refers to God's providential care over the pious in general, which Satan must often have observed in seeking their injury, and is not necessarily Messianic, "though the typical expression of the Psalm is applied strictly to the Messiah." What is promised to all the godly, the tempter urges, will be particularly, fulfilled in Thy case, if Thou art really the Son of God. Trusting as Thou dost in divine support, here Thou hast the guarantee of it—angels will carefully guard Thee; wherefore avail Thyself of this utterance proceeding from the mouth of God, and by this miracle spare Thyself a career of bitter trial and suffering. This chimes in with the first temptation, and shows that the assault was made where it was thought possible the tempted One was vulnerable. The subtlety of the foe strikes for the point of susceptibility. Some have thought that the evil suggestion lay in the misquotation of Scripture, but Bengel says, the fraud consists rather in false application than in omission. It would have been absurd for Satan to hope to gain ought by misquoting or garbling Holy Writ to Jesus.

7. "Jesus said unto him, It is written again" . . .

"Again." There is another Scripture. "Again" both points to a contrast and serves to introduce another passage, cf. chap. v. 33. The Holy Scriptures are His shield by which He quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one. Because Satan has wretchedly abused the Scriptures, Jesus does not cease to use them. Scripture must be interpreted and reconciled by Scripture. Jesus does not oppose Scripture to Scripture, but sets Scripture by the side of Scripture. There is no contradiction between these two passages of Holy Writ. There can be no contradiction when each passage is properly understood. But a powerful lesson is offered showing how wretchedly the Scriptures may be perverted.

"Thou shalt not tempt etc.," Deut. vi. 16 (LXX.). It refers originally to the occurrence at Massah (and Meribah), Exod xvii. 2. Ἐκπειράζειν according to Bengel was with the LXX. the same as πειράζειν. Others take it as having a stronger meaning. Cf. Luke x. 25; 1 Cor. x. 9.

Temptation of which God is the object assumes a different sense—since God cannot be tempted with evil. You shall not demand from Him extraordinary and striking proofs of His power and care for His people, is what tempting God implies. "Men tempt God by exhibitions of distrust, as though they wished to try whether He is not justly distrusted; by impious or wicked conduct to test God's justice and patience and to challenge Him, as it were, to give proof of His perfections."

Through their murmuring the Israelites challenged God to show whether He could help. Ps. lxxviii. 19 f.: "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?"

Meyer: "Do not make it a question whether God will save thee from dangers on which thou hast entered uncalled." "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." If God commands one to do aught, then there is no temptation of God for one to venture, whatever be the peril. Luther holds that while the first temptation was meant to shake the faith of Jesus, this was calculated to develop presumption and spiritual pride and self-sufficiency. The real point of the temptation according to Meyer was: "The Son of God in reliance on the divine protection, must undertake a daring miracle of display in order to win over to Himself the masses, who crowded the area below." This would have an electric effect.

8. "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain" . . .

The action which transferred Jesus from the wilderness to the gable of the temple is now repeated in taking Him to a new theater of temptations, to "an exceeding high mountain." In view of the miraculous nature of the occurrence it is futile to speculate on the actual mountain in question. The text offers no data whatever, except the surpassing height. "Shows" does not imply an actual pointing. "All the kingdoms." Luke iv. 5 adds "in a moment of time." If this is not to be taken as hyperbolic, then we cannot argue that the marvellous height of the mountain would enable human eyes to look even to remote heathen lands and kingdoms. We have evidently to do here with what was at least in part supernatural, and hence we are debarred from asking "How can this be?" May not Jesus have been out of the body

as well as Satan? 2 Cor. xii. 2. Bengel: "he shows Him what the horizon enclosed." Some: Palestine. But the text says: "all the kingdoms of this world," perhaps in tableau or panorama.

Meyer reminds us that the holy land with its temple and people belonged as a matter of course to the Son of God, while Satan would regard all heathen lands as his disposable possessions, "for that is delivered unto me and to whomsoever I will give it." Luke iv. 6.

Their "glory" also Satan pointed out to Jesus. This is commonly interpreted as their external splendor. Cognizant of His mission, the Messiah must have known that all these kingdoms were to be won to His sceptre—and He knew too by what weapon the sublime victory must be achieved, namely by the cross.

9. "And saith, . . . All these things will I give thee, if" . . .

Satan proposes an easier conquest, a more direct capture of all the kingdoms of this world. I, to whom they belong, will give them to Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me—literally: "having prostrated thyself thou wilt do reverence and manifest thy homage to me," cf. ii. 2. He poses as god of this world. The mask is removed. This would have made Jesus at the threshold of His career unfaithful to Himself and to His mission, and brought Him under the dominion of Satan. The prince of this world offered a partnership to the Prince of life, promising universal victory as the fruit of such a coalition. Failing to overcome Him, Satan offers a compromise. He will render Him assistance, etc. This temptation has not yet lost its force with the Church.

The sense of προσκυνεῖν as worship is unmistakable, cf. v. 10. The temerity of this proposal exceeds comprehension: Christ's kingdom is not to be a true kingdom of God, nor, indeed, is it to be a Satanic kingdom, but a kingdom for entrance into which regeneration is not indispensable. The gist of the entire temptation, in its three forms, stripped of all historic drapery of presentation, is the prosecution of Messiah's mission by another way than that of the cross, a redemption of the world without redemption from sin.

10. "Then saith Jesus . . . Get thee hence, Satan : for it is written" . . .

"Hence Satan." DeWette thinks that Jesus now for the first time recognizes Satan in the august form before Him. Hence up to this point he had imagined Himself wrestling with the thoughts of His own mind. That He now calls him by his wretched name is rather in keeping with the growing intensity of emotion in Jesus, as well as a repelling of Satan's self-assertion in v. 9.

Bengel: "Thou hast tried to discover who I am, and I tell thee, who thou art." When he wished to appear especially gracious, Jesus calls him Satan. Just as the subtle deceiver seemed to offer Him boundless favors, Jesus opens the eyes for him by addressing to him his proper name, which itself shows what was in store for those who accepted favors from him.

While again quoting Scripture against the tempter, Jesus prefaces it with His own imperative dismissal of the seducer. He asserts pointblank His power over him: "The Lord thy God shalt thou worship and Him alone" etc., cited from Deut. vi. 13, freely from the LXX. *Φοβηθήσῃ* in LXX. is exchanged for *προσκυνήσεις*, because of that word having been employed by Satan. It is well to observe that *μόνῳ* is not in the original, no term corresponding to it. This rendering of the LXX. is parallel to Luther's introduction of "allein" in Rom. iii. 28.

It is by rendering unto God what belongs to Him alone, absolute devotion and supreme worship, obedience and homage, in accordance with the Scriptures, that Jesus proposes to secure the government of the world. John xviii. 36; Phil. ii. 6 ff; Matt. xxviii. 18; Acts x. 36 ff.

The estimate which the Son of God put upon the Old Testament is unmistakable. It was for Him unquestioned authority, and He uses it in His defense when assailed by the arch-spirit of the pit, who not only quotes the Old Testament but quails before its teachings, and under its glare slinks away from Him who made this word His armor.

The point of the third temptation is generally viewed as ambition for worldly honor and power. The Saviour's example shows that no end justifies unholy means. Satan would have surrendered all the kingdoms of this world for a certain consideration. But Jesus remained true and pure.

11. "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came" . . .

"Angels." Mark adds the article. The devil leaveth—defeated and discomfited, he withdraws for a season—but the conflict being ended, other spirits rush in, and for the cruel assaults of the evil one substitute the tender ministries of love. Satan offered Him no service—but in the third temptation promised Him certain results. He said, Help thyself to food, etc., but the angels, from whose ranks Satan fell, themselves ministered food to Him. That is the sense of *διακονῆν*, viii. 15; xxv. 44; xxvii. 55; cf. 1 Kings xix. 5. They brought Him no food before the end of the 40 days. The Lord must not do less than Moses. They are viewed by some

as celebrating the victory of their Lord. How grateful their sympathy and support must have been! Jesus will not serve another, but has twelve legions of angels to serve Him. It is their province to minister to those whom He saves, yet more to the Saviour Himself.

Nebe: "Not till now could the angels approach, for the Lord must wage the conflict alone. They come to Him not only to be witnesses of His triumph, and to bring Him the thanks of heaven for His faithfulness, but especially to serve the hungry victor of Satan with food. As in Gethsemane, the Redeemer was suffering from physical exhaustion. And here, too, there is light for believers in their manifold temptations.

For critical treatises of the temptation compare Meyer (on Matthew) and Ellicott.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

CHRIST'S TEMPTATION THE GATEWAY TO HIS PASSION.

The former like the latter is,

1. The will of God.
2. The work of Satan.
3. For the glory of the Lord.
4. For the joy of angels.

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST AT THE OPENING OF HIS PASSION.

1. The temptation was the beginning of His conflict with Satan.
2. The passion is the triumphant close of the conflict.

THE GLORIOUS VICTORY.

1. The foe and his assaults.
2. The tempted Lord and His weapon.
3. The victory and its celebration.

CHRIST'S TEMPTATION THE PROOF OF HIS SINLESSNESS.

1. The temptation is from without and finds no entrance into the heart.
2. It is enticing, but cannot entice Him.
3. It passes away and the angels come.

THE SAVIOUR AND HIS OWN.

1. His foe is our foe.
2. His temptation is our temptation.
3. His victory is our victory.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD THAT BEARETH OUR SIN.

1. He seeks not the gratification of the flesh.
2. He seeks not the honor of His name.
3. He seeks not the glory of His kingdom.

THE THREE-FOLD VICTORY.

1. Faith in God triumphs over the sense of want.
2. Humility before God triumphs over presumption.
3. Love to God triumphs over all the glory of this world.

THE PASSION SEASON A SEASON OF CONFLICT:

1. For the Lord.
2. For His followers.

THE TRUE CONTEST:

1. To know the real enemy.
2. To seize the true weapon.
3. To stand firm.
4. To keep in prospect the crown of **victory**.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT (REMINISCERE).

Matt. xv. 21-28.

LUTHER gives as the reason for the use of this Lesson at this season, that it contains an account of casting out devils and serves therefore as an admonition to be pious and to go to confession. Such outward considerations may have contributed to the selection, but it is not likely that it was determined entirely by them. It may be distinguished from the foregoing Lesson by the circumstance, that while that represents Christ as victor over Satan in his own personal conflict, this reveals Him as the one who having in Himself overcome Satan, overcomes him also in others. The woman was a heathen. She too receives saving grace. The death of our Lord breaks down the wall of partition between Jews and heathen, Eph. ii. 11 ff., and brings them into the unity of faith. "The death of Christ, the Innocent, inures to the benefit alike of Jews and heathen. The High-Priest now about to accomplish His work, makes atonement for all men. And we may go a step further. The woman's faith, her great faith, is praised; because she had this great faith she obtained salvation." So Nebe, who suggests as the central theme: The salvation of the Lord comes to every one whoever he may be, if only faith is found in him. There is a parallel in Mark vii. 24 ff.

21, "Then Jesus went . . . into the coasts of Tyre" . . .

Nebe lays stress on *καί* as indicating a close connection with the preceding clause. The evangelist narrates in the beginning of the chapter, how Jesus answered the Scribes and Pharisees concerning washing of hands, human traditions, and impurity. His going away was therefore not in order to escape from the stifling crowd, but to get away from those who were maliciously waylaying Him. He was weary of their fruitless discussions, and would fain have done with them. When He left they returned to Jerusalem, and He might then return to Galilee, and undisturbed break the bread of life to hungry souls. Jesus loved peace, and took no pleasure in triumphing over His enemies in word-contests.

The term *ἀναχωρῶ* means to withdraw, and we are doubtless to

understand that, in the first instance, His withdrawal was that of a private individual seeking retirement, Matt. x. 5; cf. v. 24, without intending to preach or to exercise His ministry. "He would have no man know it, but He could not be hid." As He more than once sailed across the lake to an uninhabited region for a season of rest, so here He goes away off beyond the western frontier of the Holy Land. His soul at times craved solitude, concealment. Having never been in these parts, He could rest there awhile *in-cognito*.

Tà μέρη. Mark has *δρια*. Some take *eis* in the sense of *versus*, "toward," "in the direction of Tyre and Sidon." There the woman came to Him, v. 22, "out of the same coasts," and while they hold that Jesus did not cross the heathen frontier, they render: He went to the Galilean regions bordering on Tyre. But to Meyer, Bleek and others this is a forced rendering. Nebe makes the two Genitives in connection with μέρη Genitives of possession: parts of Tyre and Sidon. He claims that Genitives with μέρη have always in the New Testament this first and natural sense. Hence the Lord really passed, in this one instance, beyond the boundaries of the Holy Land. This might surprise us, if Jesus had meant to furnish a prelude to the conversion of the Gentiles. He would then have transcended the limits of His commission; but He entered into those Gentile regions only as a stranger, who seeks concealment.

Vitringa recognized in this journey to Tyre and Sidon a fulfillment of Is. xxiii. 15 ff. Nebe, a fulfillment of His word on His first public appearance in Nazareth. Luke iv. 24 ff. "If He meant to be a prophet of God, He must also in this follow God's prophets, that He seek a refuge among the heathen. The prophets had often repaired towards Phœnicia. As indicated in the synagogue at Nazareth, the prophet who is not accepted in His own country is welcomed among strangers."

. 22. "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same" . . .

Ἰδοὺ. The evangelist is surprised. He sharply marks the contrast between the Jews and this heathen. A woman of Canaan, not a resident of Cana in the tribe of Asher, but a descendent of the Canaanites who originally inhabited Palestine, a branch of them having moved northward before the Jewish conquest. The Phœnicians were of Canaanite origin (Hamites, though using a Semitic tongue), and were always called Canaanites by the Jews. According to Mark, while speaking Greek she hailed from that part of Phœnicia belonging to the province of Syria.

From Judges iv. 23, cf. Neh. ix. 24; Deut. ix. 3, Hengstenberg argues that Canaan means "the bowed one," the humble one, the submissive. "The woman brings honor to the dishonored name; she bows herself before Him, before whom to bow is the highest honor."

"Came out from those borders." This is generally understood literally by modern expositors. Some: out of her house or from the interior of the country. Others: from Phœnicia to Palestine. But the pronoun refers to "the parts of Tyre, etc." The woman no doubt lived on the border, but our Lord, (cf. Mark,) had passed into the borders of Tyre and Sidon.

According to Matthew Jesus was proceeding with His disciples on the way when the woman called to Him. According to Mark the whole scene appears to have transpired in the house of a Canaanite, unless v. 24 be so explained as to say that, as He could not remain hidden in the house He set out to go farther into the interior.

How the woman's attention had been drawn to Jesus, how she came to repose such confidence in Him, neither evangelist informs us. The first beginnings of faith for the most part escape observation and are wrapped in mystery. A word from the Lord has penetrated the ear of the woman—possibly for a long time it lay there unfruitful, but the affliction which befell her has brought back to her mind the name of Him who has delivered so many out of their distresses.

In the first year of His ministry the fame of Jesus had spread through all Syria, Matt. iv. 24. What the woman had heard concerning Him may be inferred from her cry: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David." She cried, *i. e.* from behind, and some think from a distance, cf. 23, 25. The latter has "then came she," showing that previously she had been at a distance. It cannot be claimed that she knew the full significance of her language, which an ancient gloss interprets as expressing her belief that He was God, since she calls him Lord, and also that He was man, since she calls Him Son of David. She asks, however, nothing on the score of merit but only for mercy's sake. It is certain also, that in addressing Him with *Kyrie* she conceived of Him as something more than man. He was one who had control over demons, to say the least, a man endowed with divine power. Her addressing Him as Son of David may be a proof that she was a proselyte of the gate. She may to a certain extent have been a worshiper of Jehovah. Bengel infers from her familiarity with this title, that she heard of the promise either long ago or lately. How widespread was the knowledge of that promise!

The Israelites were much given to speaking of the great future which awaited them. Again, living on the border, the woman may easily have heard from accounts of the miracles of Jesus this designation, for it seems to have been the favorite one with all the sufferers who sought His help.

Along with the title of the Helper, she recognised in all His miracles most clearly the quality of mercy, and for this she applied. Nebe: "Love gave her these sharp eyes, for like is only recognized by like; she has a capacity for understanding the love of the Lord in the love which she, poor heathen mother, cherished in her heart."

"On me," not "on my daughter." She had made her daughter's misery her own, vv. 23, 28, and in her mind suffered, doubtless, greater anguish than the daughter. "Grievously demonized," *i. e.*, possessed of a demon. This phenomenon in the time of our Lord was the occasion for unspeakable misery to those afflicted by it, and it has given rise to endless perplexity on the part of commentators. Olsh.: "The suffering person appears with his own human consciousness suppressed and with a controlling foreign influence on his nervous life; but as there are alternations of seasons in which the hostile power is ascendant, and in which it retreats, so after a paroxysm the human self again shows itself in lucid intervals with the full sense of the wretchedness of such a bondage." A dual consciousness exists in the human organism, which serves now for the manifestation of the human spirit, now for that of the demon. There are found also in connection with this abnormal condition certain forms of sickness, generally epileptic convulsions.

Naturalism holds that the disorder was simply that of a diseased physical condition, inducing delirium, which the Jews, who were in the habit of ascribing all physical suffering to supernatural agency, referred to a demoniacal incarnation. Meyer makes those so afflicted, really sick persons with diseases of a peculiar character (mania, delirium, hypochondria, paralysis, etc.), whose sufferings being apparently inexplicable from physical causes, were believed to have their foundation in diabolical possession—in an actual indwelling of demoniacal personalities, very many of which might be counted in one person, Mk. v. 9; xvi. 9. Lange refers it to "a nervous disease, having an elective affinity with demoniacal influences."

Two theories respecting these cures are offered: (1) That Jesus in this matter accommodated Himself to the ignorance and superstition of the people. Meyer further holds that this belief ren-

dered healing possible only through the acceptance of the existing views, leaving the idea itself untouched, but made it all the more certain for the Messiah, who has power over the kingdom of the devils. See on Matt. iv. 24. As He was the light of the world, the authoritative organ of truth, the divine teacher and prophet, such an accommodation to error and superstition is irreconcilable with His mission. (2) That He Himself shared these erroneous views—having been reared in an atmosphere that was charged with such superstitions.

Meyer: offers five reasons against the orthodox interpretation: (1) The non-occurrence of demoniacs in the Old Testament. (2) The undisputed healing of the same by exorcists, Matt. xii. 27; Mk. ix. 38. (3) The non-occurrence of reliable instances in modern times, although the same sicknesses, which were deemed to be demoniacal, are common. (4) The complete silence of John. (5) The demoniacs were not at all filled with godless dispositions and anti-Christian wickedness, such as was to have been expected had devils dwelt within them. Yet he admits: "If we assume that Jesus Himself shared the opinion of His age and nation regarding the reality of demoniacal possession, we find ourselves in the dilemma of being compelled to accept the old doctrine as correct upon the authority of Jesus, or to attribute to Him an erroneous belief on a subject of an essentially religious character, (so Paulus, Strauss, Hase), which would be irreconcilable with the pure height of the Lord's divine knowledge."

As Jesus not only spoke to the possessed, in which case it is claimed the healing was conditioned upon the healer sharing (ostensibly) the delusion of the subject, but also of the possessed, repeatedly empowered His disciples to cast them out, Matt. x. 1, 8; Mk. xvi. 17, and spoke of demoniacal possession as a reality, Luke x. 17-20, and of the conditions to be complied with for its expulsion, Matt. xvii. 21, this view of naturalism inevitably makes the Messiah either a self-deceived one or a deceiver.

Light is thrown on the subject when we consider that the Lord became in the fullness of time incarnate in order to destroy the works of the devil, and it may be assumed that in order to meet His foe and offset His power Satan, too, would seek to become incarnate and thus bring mankind in a peculiar way under his power.

In "possessing" them Satan overpowered them and bound them. There may have been isolated instances before, as there were subsequently, while in the time of our Lord and His Apostles the cases were numerous. The powers of darkness attained in that period their climax.

Jesus Himself, Matt. xii. 27, testified to the reality of such healings by others, and His disciples reported to Him how they had healed cases, Mk. ix. 38. Although the healing of the possessed was effected by the exorcists in a different way from the method of our Lord, who healed them by a word of command, their methods and cures cannot be viewed as proof that there was no such thing as demoniacal possession. The same evil may be removed by divers causes.

The Reformers speak of such instances happening in their day, cases which they themselves investigated, or of which they learned from most trustworthy witnesses. And missionaries have believed that they discovered similar cases. Even though no real appearances of this character should have occurred since the days of the Apostles, we must admit that even natural diseases have their periods, certain plagues prevailing for a generation or two, and never afterward being heard of.

Although John narrates no demoniacal cures, as he also gives no healing of lepers, yet it is evident from Mk. ix. 38, that he did not doubt the presence of demons. This kind of miracles did not fall within the plan of John's gospel. Steinmeyer says: "The IVth gospel, too, exhibits Jesus in conflict with Satan. No other gospel testifies of this conflict so often and so purposely. But it fixes the eye on a particular phase of the conflict, the hidden phase, which cannot be presented by external facts. John does not relate the overpowering of Satan, but his moral overthrow. He does not describe the battle at the periphery, but at the center.

As to the fifth difficulty, that the demoniacs themselves were not specially wicked, we are not warranted by the Scriptures in assuming such a character in the poor victims. Unless Judas be put down as a demoniac, John xiii. 27, there is not one example of peculiar wickedness on the part of the subjects. The possessed were overpowered by Satan against their will; they were bound by him, and thrown into a condition of suffering, helplessness and dementia.

The Evangelists and the Apostles unmistakably shared the belief of the people respecting this phenomenon, and they expressly distinguished the possessed, again and again, from lunatics. Matthew evidently lays great stress on the fact that our Lord drove out the demons; he repeatedly gives the words uttered by the demons and particularly their testimony to His Messiahship and divinity. In no other way could these first disciples be so deeply impressed with the mission of Christ to destroy the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8, as in these cures where He rescued humanity from the fetters in which Satan held them.

Von Hofmann says: "Jesus not only shared the view of the people on this matter, but He gave to it its proper value, bringing it into connection with the knowledge of the general activity of the enemy of God, and showed in His healing of the possessed and also of all sickness in general, a symbolization of His all-comprehensive Messianic mission." Matt. xii. 25-29.

We must accept this phenomenon, then, as produced by other than natural causes, as an overpowering of mankind by Satan. The SS. ascribe the wretched condition of these subjects to the devil, to demons, to impure and wicked spirits, who stand in the service of Satan. As sin was introduced into man's heart by Satan, a relation exists between him and man, like a living bond between father and child. John viii. 44. A point of contact is offered, therefore, to the evil one, by which he can enter and possess himself of every human faculty. And the mysterious union of soul and body forms the basis by which infernal spirits may produce the bodily and spiritual wretchedness of the demoniac condition.

Nebe, holding the view that the soul unites the body and the spirit into one organism, says, Satan storms this centre of the living man, and possesses it, be it with one or with many spirits in his service. Proceeding from this living centre, the Satanic powers work in every direction upon the life of the body and the life of the soul, hindering, binding, distracting.

The Ancient Church, which on account of the number of the possessed, established the office of exorcist, never confounded these unfortunate creatures with the penitents. While the latter were required to do penance as having of their own will fallen under Satan's power, the former were simply the objects of the Church's intercession that they might be delivered from the chains with which Satan had bound them against their will. In this, Nebe holds, the Ancient Church clearly followed the mind of the Lord, who never said to a demoniac what He often said to others whom He healed, "Go and sin no more." The one in Mk. ix. 21 had been thus afflicted from childhood—had therefore hardly any responsibility for his affliction. For a fuller treatment of the subject see Winer's *Biblical Lexicon*; Delitzsch's *Biblical Psychology*; Keil's *Handbook of Archæology* and Twisten's *Dogmatik*.

23. "But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came" . . .

How unlike His usual response to a suppliant. The cry of the blind man at Jericho attracted His attention instantly. The touch of the woman with the issue of blood stopped Him immedi-

ately when He was on His way to save the daughter of Jairus. He hears our faintest sigh—His ear is bent toward a sorrowing world, and His arm is ever stretched out to bring relief to every one who may seek it. Yet the heathen mother that brings her distress to Him is answered with the (apparent) indifference of silence. The ever-flowing fountain of mercy is closed up—the divine Physician withholds the medicine and denies the cure. “The disciples besought Him.” The Master is silent—the disciples speak, but even their speech is not properly an intercession for the poor woman, and, such as it is, it avails nothing. Bengel interprets, “Help as you are wont,” cf. 24. Some have thought the appeal of the disciples was of an unfriendly nature. The woman was annoying them. Their Master desired to be in retirement, but this calling after them revealed His whereabouts. Hence they ask Him impatiently not to relieve her, but to dismiss her.

Nebe thinks that they would have found some other word to express their prayer, had they really sympathized with her distress and urged the Master's interposition. Some: they did not know how the Master might regard a heathen, hence they used an equivocal word, and thereby left it entirely to His decision whether He would grant her prayer or not. “They begged for a decision,” says Nebe, “and the following verse seems to imply that they hoped for a favorable decision.” The woman keeps following them and crying after them, and she is not likely to stop her frantic cries until He shows her compassion. When Jesus spoke afterwards, Luke xviii. 2 ff., of the widow who cried day and night to the unjust judge, the disciples must have recalled this Canaanite. Their concern the disciples manifest, not for the distressed mother, nor for her suffering child, not even for what pertains to the Lord, but for what is agreeable or disagreeable to themselves. Let us hope that it was not exclusively for their own sakes.

Jesus had obvious reasons for His remarkable demeanor toward the woman. His own mind may have been subjected to a profound suspense, desiring on the one hand with all His heart to extend relief, yet recognizing a situation which seemed to forbid the intervention sought, which exposed Him to the peril of transcending His personal mission, and of placing an insuperable barrier to the establishment of His kingdom. Hence in v. 24, “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” He condescends to explain to the disciples the difficulty which confronts Him.

How gladly would His heart pour out abundantly the merciful kindness for which this woman prayed! But she is a Gentile, yea a

descendent of the accursed race, whose extirpation was demanded of Israel when God gave them Canaan. And now, when God has commissioned Him to recover the lost sheep of Israel, when in accordance with prophecy He has come as the Good Shepherd in pursuit of the dispersed flock, how dare He go out after the very enemies of Israel, and make one fold out of Jew and Gentile! The problem is all the greater, when we remember that such a going after the Gentiles at this time, must have driven the lost sheep of Israel entirely and absolutely away from Him.

The whole life of Jesus was one of self-denial. So here He could not follow the promptings of His heart, and the vast boundless flow of His sympathy He lays an offering upon the altar of His God and Father. He must limit His mercy since the Father has so ordained, since His mission so requires. He is not here to do His own will. He is an ambassador with a very specific task. Charged by God with an embassy to the house of Israel, behold with what fidelity Jesus remains immovably true to His own people, though they have hounded Him beyond the borders of their own country. The nation have broken the covenant, yet their despised Mediator continues faithful and firm in His mission in their behalf. He honors them with the distinction of "sheep." Though they be lost, yet are they the sheep of the Great Shepherd, Ps. 95, His heritage, His peculiar people. The promises still avail for the house of Israel. "The mission of Christ was restricted absolutely to the house of Israel; only among the chosen people, 'His own,' John i. 11, could He according to the divine will carry forward His Messianic activity. Had not this been the divine purpose, it would be incomprehensible and inexcusable, that after 'His own' had entirely rejected Him, He did not at least for once make an effort on a broad scale in heathen lands." The calling and the command to which He was subject, circumscribed His Messianic action.

Jesus knows that the kingdom founded by Him is a grain of mustard seed, which will produce a tree under whose branches all the birds of heaven shall lodge, that yet other sheep which are not of this Israelite fold He must also shepherd, but He knows also that the time for this does not fall within the period of His flesh. The divine economy was that the Jews first should have the bread of life, and that He was personally to bring it exclusively to them. Doubtless for the same reason He enjoined the twelve, Matt. x. 5, not to go into the way of the Gentiles—nor into any city of the Samaritans, whereas the final command was "Go ye into all the world, etc."

It is generally agreed that v. 24 was spoken to the disciples and that the woman did not hear it, since in v. 25 she came to Him. Some think it was addressed to the woman. But Nebe argues that the woman would have taken up that reply as she did the later one had it been spoken to her.

25. "Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord" . . .

Bengel: "In front of the Saviour, from behind Him." The apparent repulse only increased the energy of her faith. She might have been moved by her treatment to give vent to dolorous and sarcastic reflections: Such harshness and heartlessness as I must endure when I lay my distress before Him. Not a friend, but a foe, she seems to have encountered. He reminds her of her misfortune, He upholds class distinction, He shuts her out from the circle of God's favorites. Pity is denied her. Reproach and insult are accorded to her. Ah! quite the contrary effect is wrought and was meant to be wrought by the Master.

The holding back of grace acted as a check usually acts on a living force. She lays hold of Him more resolutely. She throws herself at His feet, she repeats her cry for help. Though the heavens be brass and the Father's countenance be turned away, and our prayers be despised, faith will not let go, will take no denial. So this woman is a true faith hero. She suffers nothing to hold her from the fountain of grace. The disciples do not keep her back as they did those mothers who came with their children, although His reply in v. 24 might have encouraged them to it—which may be a proof that they were desirous of seeing her prayer granted.

The prayer, as is natural when the heart is broken, is exceedingly brief, and its form is interpreted as a proof that she regarded Him as more than a creature.

Nebe: "It would seem as if our Lord's refusal had not only given wings to the woman's feet to bring her before Him, but also that it had fanned into a bright flame the spark of faith within her. Only in conflict does power steel and increase itself; and so the power of faith also grows only in this wise."

26. "But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread" . . .

Not yet has the suppliant's faith overcome the obstacles, not yet is it clear that Jesus can help her without trampling upon His instructions. Faith must be tried by another and severer ordeal. Luther: "This is the sharpest temptation of all, and true it is that Jesus is nowhere else in all the gospel portrayed in such severe outlines. For it is incomparably hard that the Lord casts her at His

feet, and does not stop with showing her that she is not a child nor a Jewess, but calls her a dog. This is worse than calling her outright a heathen. To be reckoned as a dog among the children is to be put even below the servants and to be excluded from the eternal inheritance. It is as much as to say: you belong to the devil, away with you, you have nothing to get here. This was a terrible trial."

Jesus' answer was a hard saying, and it seems to place Him upon the narrow self-righteous and exclusive national position of the Scribes and Pharisees. The Jews are called children. Jesus bestows full honor on the house of Israel, which is the more surprising and magnanimous as the Jews have already cast out from the vineyard the Son and Heir. Their stiff-necked unbelief has driven Him from the country, yet they are the children, chosen and reared by the true Father, and to them the kingdom of heaven is offered first. "Children's bread." This bread, salvation, belongs in a peculiar sense to the children. They are entitled to it. It is so eminently theirs, that He who was sent to give it to them would be chargeable with injustice if He gave it to the dogs.

Κυνάρια: this woman and her people. This proverbial expression was not coined for the relation of Jews and heathen, but a peculiar coloring is given to it here, where it distinguishes the children of the house of Israel from the heathen dogs. The woman knew very well with what animal the Jew was wont to compare her race.

It is notable that neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament recognizes the noble nature of the dog, and that to this day in the orient he does not have the position which for thousands of years he has enjoyed in the west. The dog is regarded as unclean and despicable. Job xxx. 1; 1 Sam. xxiv. 15; 2 Sam. ix. 8; 2 Kings viii. 13; Phil. iii. 2; Prov. xxvi. 11; 2 Pet. ii. 22. In Ps. xxii. 17 David compares his enemies to dogs. Nebe thinks that we should especially take into consideration the peculiarities of the eastern dogs, which without masters and in wild droves roam about, attacking everybody, and in order to satisfy their craving hunger devouring everything that can be devoured. So the heathen are without a shepherd or master to lead them in and out. No house offers to them shelter and peace. Restless they wander around. Israel had to endure from time to time the attacks of the heathen. They fell with rage upon God's people in order to destroy them.

Hard and harsh seems the Lord's reply. We may say with Luther: every part sounds more strongly for "no" than for "yes,"

and yet there is more "yes" in them than "no." Ah! it is all "yes," but so profound and hidden that it seems to be only "no."

"Wenn lauter Nein erscheint,
Ist lauter Ja gemeinet."

Jesus does not say *οὐκ ἐξεστίν*, but *οὐκ ἔστι καλόν*, according to the Sinaitic Codex and Mark, which is very significant. He does not say: it is not right, but it is not fitting, appropriate, becoming. Luther: "es ist nicht fein." Help is not absolutely disallowed, but it is not becoming, it does not suit, it is incongruous, "thereby giving a handle to the woman to take hold of Him." Mark offers the right interpretation: "Let the children first be filled, for it is not meet to take the children's bread, etc."

The term *κυνάριον*, a diminutive, "little dogs," is not as ugly as *κυνές*. It is a weaker term, and may mean household dogs, pet dogs. Not wild roving dogs are the heathen in the eyes of Christ, but little dogs, "table dogs," lap-dogs. He will call also these dogs to His gracious table, to His bosom. The idea is that of a family meal, in connection with which it was not unnatural to think of the little house-dogs under the table. Not every eye may discern this gentleness and tenderness in the words of the Lord, the soft, sweet kernel in the rough, hard shell. But the woman appears to have discerned and tasted it. She hears the gurgling of the hidden spring of life under the cold hard rock. She takes the magic wand in her strong hand of faith, and she firmly touches the rock Christ Jesus.

27. "And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat" . . .

The woman is quick-witted, ingenious and humble. She at once turns the answer into a ground for an undeniable plea. The particle *ναί* "partly asserts, partly as it were places on our Lord's tongue the assent to her prayers." It confirms, attests, the whole statement of Jesus, as in xi. 9, 26, and is just what she wants. *Καὶ γὰρ*, says Bengel, must be rendered "for even." It gives a reason for the *ναί*. He regards *τὰ κυνάρια* as the expression to which *καὶ* is meant to give prominence. He paraphrases thus: Yes, Lord, Thou art right in what thou sayest, for even the dogs do eat of the crumbs, etc.,—or to express it negatively, for even the dogs are not sent away empty. He holds that, so far as can be seen from the context, this *καὶ* cannot be intended to serve any other purpose than to suggest a comparison between the dogs and the children, hence he paraphrases as follows: Thou art right Lord; for not merely are the children ill-fed with bread at the family meal, but

—so richly is the table spread—even the dogs receive their share in that which falls from the table, etc. It would, therefore, be but the more unseemly to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs, so as possibly to leave the former unfed. But in thus justifying her "Yea, Lord," the woman seems to suggest the inference to Him that He might yet venture to give her that which is hinted at in those ψυχία, crumbs, with which the κυνάρια have to be content. Of course, by this she means a share of His abundant mercy after the wants of Israel have been fully supplied. The children often waste their bread, though the woman is careful not to say bread nor even morsel. She begs only for what falls from the table—not that Jesus "take the bread and cast it to her. She asks for what will be a great favor to her, an essential blessing, but the giving of which will injure no one."

Ἀπό. She does not ask to be admitted to the table, but implies that she was not distant from it. Her nation was contiguous to Israel. τῶν κυρίων. The plural is used as "the woman is understood to be stating what is a matter of general experience." "This," says Bengel, "indicates the prerogative of the children, and yet a certain tie of connection with them on the part of the little dogs."

Some have interpreted the woman's answer as a contradiction of what Jesus said, namely: "it is allowable to give the bread to the dogs," etc., but Meyer justly protests, "if there is one thing more than another that must not be associated with the tender language of this woman, it is the appearance of anything like contradiction."

Nebe: "Faith is humiliation, submission, obedience to the word of the Lord; the woman as she lies outwardly prostrate under the feet of Jesus, surrenders herself to Him with this "Yea" without reservation or gainsaying. She takes her last refuge in His own words, holds up before Him the words of His own lips, in order to hold Him to His own words and not to let go without His blessing."

He holds however that an adversative sense has to be conceded. Luther: "aber doch." Steinmeyer suggests an ellipsis, and reads: "Lord thou art right, notwithstanding I press my claim; for Thou canst grant it without a violation of Thy orders; for even dogs do eat, etc.,—I ask no part in the rights of Israel." She does not ask to sit at the table with the invited guests, but as Jesus has Himself come to the borders of Israel, so from the edge of the table may fall a few crumbs for the benefit of such as have no claims.

In fact, the place of the dogs while the family eats, illustrates the very truth contained in the language of Jesus. They do not

snatch the children's bread away from them. Their very place under the table shows them to be content with what drops from it when their masters eat—crumbs. “From which it follows that a heathen is not justified in depriving the children of Israel of the salvation destined for them, but yet that he may hope to obtain some share of the riches of this salvation, in so far as Israel's reception of it be no more hindered or lessened thereby, than the meal of the children by the crumbs which fall down to the dogs.”

Her excited condition accounts for the omission of the intermediate sentence; “with a bold leap of faith she springs into the opening which the Lord Himself has made for her.” Luther notices here a striking example in which may be seen the power of faith. “It seizes Christ with His own words, where He is most wrathful, converts His harsh language into a comforting argument, quickly turns round His word and interprets it for one's advantage. She says: Just regard me as only a dog; give the children their bread, let them sit at the table. I ask no such favor. Allow me only to pick up under the table the crumbs which the children at all events do not eat, and which would otherwise be wholly wasted. I will gladly be satisfied with these. She conquers Him on His own ground. Ah! more yet. Accepting the right of a dog, she wins the right of a child. For what will the dear Jesus do? He has caught Himself and must now give in. But if we only knew it, He likes to be caught in this way. This is a true master-stroke, an extraordinary and rare example, and which has been laid down for us that we might learn it and not be turned away from Him; God grant, that He call us dogs or heathen. For the dogs must have masters and something to eat; and so the heathen too must have a God.”

Nebe says, the woman remains true to her character as *κυνάριον* instead of *κύων*. She could have answered that the children despise the bread and wickedly throw it under the table, to trample it beneath their feet. But she refrains from the biting criticism. She recognizes perfectly the position which the heathen hold respecting Israel. The children of Israel are their *κύριοι*, their masters. The Jews have the primary call into the kingdom. The great Apostle to the Gentiles recognized this relation continually in word and conduct, cf. Rom. ix.—xi.

28. “Then Jesus answered and said unto her, “O woman, great is thy faith” . . .

The woman triumphs. Nebe: “She endured all the tests to which she was subjected, not only to be convinced herself, but to convince every one, that this heathen soul was brought to the In-

heritor of the Gentiles and given to Him by His God and Father." So splendidly did she stand the ordeal as to make it justly incumbent upon Jesus to grant unto her His saving grace.

Some lay stress upon the exercise and development of the woman's faith, as having been the object of our Lord's attitude toward her, cf. Luke xviii. 3 f.; Gen. xxxii. 24 f.; Exod. iv. 24. Christian experience knows the gracious import of such a trial. The holding back of grace only developed the full energy of her faith, until it broke forth in an irresistible torrent, removing every barrier. This mode of procedure is but another form of love. Where faith is weak, Jesus anticipates it and advances toward it; where it is strong, He holds Himself aloof that it may perfect its energy.

Others assert that His aim was to furnish her with an opportunity of displaying her faith, and that for the benefit of the disciples, (or for the condemnation of Israel's unbelief). Meyer, however, thinks "the moral sense protests against this apparent cruelty." He prefers to recognize in our Lord's demeanor "a sincere disposition to repel, which however is subsequently conquered by the woman's unshaken trust." Steinmeyer thinks that simulation of this sort conflicts with the character of Christ. But similar cases are not wanting. Ewald sees here the greatness of Jesus in a two-fold way: first in prudently and resolutely confining Himself to His immediate sphere; and then in no less thoughtfully overstepping this limit whenever a higher reason rendered it proper to do so, "and as if to foreshadow what was going to take place a little farther on in the future."

The well known sensitiveness and powerful prejudice of the Jews concerning the equal privileges of the heathen in the Messianic kingdom, offers an unmistakable reason why the Messiah Himself should limit His ministry to the chosen nation.

Again, the outcome of the covenant made with Abraham and of the Mosaic institutions, was to prepare a people to receive the great salvation, to develop in them a faith that would promptly recognize and appropriate Redemption. For the most part this faith failed to be found in Israel. In isolated cases it was found—to the surprise of the Lord Himself—among the heathen. The present is such a case—and now that this heathen woman exhibits faith, pure, strong and overmastering, how can the gifts of grace be withheld? If the heathen dog shows the spirit of a true child, how can the Master do otherwise than act as a Father? Grace corresponds to grace. Grace has already wrought so effectively in this woman, that she is prepared to receive the fullest measure of grace. She endures a strug-

gle possible only to mature faith—and she bears away the reward of faith which endureth to the end. And if it is not permitted the Chief Shepherd to go out after heathen sheep, He dares not turn them away when they come to Him. There was, indeed, another heathen, the centurion's servant at Capernaum, whom He had snatched from the grave, viii. 5, for there too a mighty faith was exercised. He never made any distinction when the afflicted came to Him for help. Matt. iv. 24 has been cited to show that He had healed a number of Canaanites. Meyer holds that the difficulty is lessened by the fact that the centurion, Luke vii. 2 ff., "was living in the heart of the people, and might be said to be already pretty much identified with Judaism; whereas we have a complete stranger in the case of the woman, before whom Jesus feels Himself called upon, in consequence of their request, v. 23, strictly to point out to His disciples, that His mission, so far as its fundamental object was concerned, was to be confined exclusively to Israel."

While clearly conscious of His mission on the one hand, and while God's grace on the other hand can never be denied to a believer, it was proper that His help in this instance be delayed, until it could be shown that the woman was truly prepared for His mercy by a living faith produced through the Spirit of God in the heart. He held back until there was an overwhelming demonstration that she possessed the very conditions, which, in order to bestow His grace, He was seeking among the lost sheep of Israel.

"Great is thy faith." This was shown in her humility as in the case of her fellow heathen at Capernaum, and in her persistence in the face of all obstacles. Jesus is the well of salvation and is full of grace. "The hand of faith takes from this fullness grace for grace." John i. 14, 16. Reaching out the hand of faith she hears Him say "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

In Matt. viii. 13 He said "Be it unto thee as thou hast believed." Why is the will made so prominent in this case? It was the energy of her will which had been most decidedly manifested and which made her victorious against all opposition.

The words of Christ are spirit and they are life. The cure of the possessed daughter follows instantly, and, according to Mark, Jesus Himself assured the mother that the cure had taken place.

The practical treatment of the Pericope is mainly occupied with the essence and value of living faith.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE ELEMENTS OF A TRUE FAITH ARE:

1. True desire.
2. True confidence.
3. True perseverance.
4. True humility.

GREAT WAS THE FAITH OF THIS WOMAN:

1. In respect to its origin. 2. Its struggle. 3. Its crown.

EFFECTUAL PRAYER IS MARKED BY

1. Faith. 2. Importunity. 3. Self-surrender.

GOD TRIES OUR FAITH,

1. By His silence. 2. By His words.

THE HISTORY OF FAITH:

1. Born in distress.
2. Growing amid struggles.
3. Crowned with grace.

TRUE FAITH

1. Springs from a sense of our misery.
2. Seeks help alone with the Saviour.
3. Remains steadfast amid hindrances.
4. Receives at last its reward.

WHY HELP IS DELAYED.

1. To test our faith.
2. To drive us to prayer.
3. To exercise humility.
4. To display God's grace.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT (OCULI).

Luke xi. 14-28.

THE subject of this day bears evident connection with that of the previous Sunday. This Gospel is again occupied with casting out devils, with the relation of Christ's kingdom to Satan's. Luther says: "Read it to-day or to-morrow, in Summer or in Lent, it is very rich, presenting to our view the work of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, which happened not only then, but which shall continue until the end of the world." We see here the different views held concerning this subject by the people. Herein lies the essential difference between this Pericope and the last one. The diverse thoughts of the human heart concerning Christ's work are laid bare, cf. vv. 14, 15, 16, 27. "And as men are divided in their views concerning the work of Christ, so they are concerning His sufferings and death." His coming into the world is the touchstone of humanity. The cross is the throne of judgment. Cf. Matt. x. 34 ff. The gospel is for the rising or the falling of many. Luke ii. 34. Two kingdoms stand in mortal array against each other. Neutrality is impossible. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." According to Nebe, the order of thought is: The innocent, suffering Christ, who without respect of person brings salvation to every one and redeems him from the power of darkness, demands a decision for or against Him.

Both the other synoptics offer parallels. Matt. xii. 22 ff., offers the closest, though there are also variations. Both of them connect with the healing of the demoniac the detailed observations called forth by the miracle. Mark, iii. 22 ff., is so much occupied with these observations that he does not mention the healing. He gives simply the answer of Jesus to the charge that He wrought miracles through Beelzebub, and besides, the declarations (found here also in Matt.) concerning the sin against the Son of man and against the Holy Ghost.

14. "And He was casting out a devil, and it was dumb" . . .

These demoniacs were numerous in that age. As Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, to overcome the strong one and take

from him all his armor and his prey, Satan would naturally confront Him with all the energy and power, as yet unbroken and unbound at His command.

The demon, *αἰρό*, was "dumb," *κωφόν*. The dumbness is ascribed to the spirit, a sure indication that the poor victim had previously enjoyed the power of speech. This affliction resulted from the demon entering into him. The disorder of the bodily organism followed the disturbance of the psychical life. The bodily injury ceased the moment the "possession" ceased. When Satan's bond was loosed by the word of the Lord, the bond which bound his tongue was also loosed.

"The people wondered." Nebe observes that the people did not give expression to their astonishment at every miracle of Jesus. The great number which they had witnessed had accustomed them somewhat to His extraordinary doings and blunted in a measure their feelings. Besides, their leaders had exercised such an influence over them, that they were no longer disposed to accord to Jesus the full meed of their recognition. But in spite of their growing insensibility and against their will, they are in this instance carried away with astonishment. They cannot resist the impression made by this miracle. It was quite extraordinary. An uncommon demoniac was healed. According to Luke he was indeed only "dumb," but Matthew says he was also blind, and in no other instance do we find these two bodily afflictions united. Always only one bodily organ is bound. While deafness and dumbness are naturally combined, since the tongue is dependent on the ear, the want of one sense is ordinarily attended by the greater acuteness of the others.

Whereas Jesus had effected for this doubly afflicted man so blessed a deliverance, that the people wondered and said "Is not this the Son of David?" Matt. xii. 23,

15. "Some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief" . . .

"Some." Matt: "The Pharisees having heard." Mark: "The Scribes who had come down from Jerusalem," and who of course belonged to the Pharisees. Nebe: "Their envy would not let them rest at Jerusalem. With jealous eyes they followed the course of His miracles in Galilee, and they went to the scene to break into the circle of His activity, to discredit Him with the people, etc." They do not attack Him openly, believing that it is easier to sow in secret the tares among the wheat. Not to Him do they say that He is casting out demons by Beelzebub's power, but mingling among the people they whisper it in their ears. "The envy of those who would be great follows all truly great men, as

the shadow follows the light." This envy is the more certain to follow our Lord because His greatness is ethical. His moral grandeur, His innocence, righteousness, and love to God and to man, not only casts into the shade all that the world deems great and glorious, but it exposes the moral insufficiency and dry rot of everything great and mighty in the world.

Nebe: "Their envy rises to hate, to malice. They cannot endure the insignificance into which they are thrown by Him who alone is great and lofty." They are determined to obliterate at once the profound impression which the healing of the demoniac had made upon the people. They cannot deny the miracle itself, so they attempt to destroy its ethical bearing, to destroy in fact the moral character of Him who wrought it. They do not merely make the suggestion, neither have they inquired into the character of the means employed. They assert pointblank, they charge as an undeniable fact, that He casts out demons through Beelzebub the chief of the demons, cf. Matt. ix. 34. This accusation had probably become stereotyped. They imply in their charge that not an ordinary devil, but only the arch-spirit himself, "the prince of the devils," is able to bring about such results. Thus again the mouth of His enemies must attest the uniqueness of the Lord's miracles. Only the mightiest among the infernal powers could be equal to such a task.

"Beelzebub." Matt. x. 25; xii. 24; Mk. iii. 22. The common view of the origin and import of this name is the following: In Ekron of the Philistines Baal was worshiped as Baal Zebub, "lord of flies," 2 Kings i. 2, 3, 16. Ahaziah inquired of this idol in a sickness. As "zebug" is the word for fly, Baal-Zebub is the god who keeps away the flies, that pest of hot eastern lands. Nebe does not accept the idea of a god keeping off the flies, but he takes the flies as the symbol of this deity. "The fly is the offspring and symbol of summer. Baal is the sun-god and the worship of flies was a widespread idolatry in the ancient world." By the Babylonians flies were believed to reveal the future.

Some have claimed that the name of the demon Beelzebub was purposely made out of Beel-zebul in express contempt and horror; i. e., "lord of dung," instead of "lord of flies," "zebul" meaning dung, filth, expressive of their loathing of the prince of all impurity. Schaff-Herzog: "Beelzebul may be looked upon as precisely the same name as Beelzebub, except that the last syllable was softened, and therefore as having the same meaning." "The connection of Baal with the flies showed that he was in a sense the most unclean god, and therefore worthy of the greatest contempt."

Others: "Zebul" in Hebrew means "dwelling," hence, "lord of the dwelling," but they are not agreed as to what dwelling. Meyer: "He was called thus as lord of his domain in which the evil spirits dwell." He holds that Jesus' own designation of Himself as *οικοδεσπότης*, Matt. x. 25, is evidently chosen with reference to the meaning of Beelzebul, *δεσπότης* being the same as Baal, "and that accordingly the name Beelzebul must contain something corresponding to *οίκος* as well." The context in all the New Testament passages, it is claimed, supports this interpretation.

While some charge that Jesus is a confederate of the devil, Himself either possessed by Satan, or deriving His power to cast out demons from him, others come forward and in order to put Him to the test demand of Him a sign from heaven. The one party acknowledged that the fact of the miracles was incontestable, though their cause was infernal, the latter asked for an unmistakable sign from heaven.

16 "And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven."

"Others:—" Matt. xii. 38 says, "some of the Scribes." According to him they did not make their request until Jesus had settled with His maligners and exposed the absurdity of their imputation. It may be that they had not yet been so completely hardened as the rest; they only asked for stronger testimonials; they want full conviction in order to cast in their lot with Him. But they are perchance only more cunning and clever. While the former offer open resistance, these under the pretext of being favorably disposed, resort to finesse and strategy, like those who wanted His answer concerning the tribute. Nebe: "The sign which they have just witnessed they by this new request pronounce inadequate; consequently they weaken the impression it has made on the people, and as they know beforehand that the Lord will work no miracle at their behest, they will be able to draw away from Him the people, whose expectations excited by their demand were doomed to disappointment."

A more unreasonable or a more wicked course is not conceivable. Just as if nothing had occurred, they ask for a sign, etc. They do not specify the kind of miracle—except "from heaven," which if emphasized, means that what He had wrought heretofore were either of terrestrial or infernal, and not of heavenly origin. Everything with them was measured with the scale of the senses. Not the ethical value of the miracle struck their eye; it must descend visibly from the sky, must be spectacular, epideiktic, like the fire of Elijah.

Thus He could be put to the test, and in the event of His failure to produce such a sign, He would stand discredited in the eyes of the people.

17. "But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation;" . . .

This is addressed to those who made the malicious charge, v. 15. And the evangelist adds with emphasis, that in view of His knowledge of their thoughts, "He said unto them," etc., which seems to conflict with the observation v. 15, "some of them said." Chrys. and others: "Only in their hearts did they say," etc. But they said it really, not to Him but to the people. They had in fact, as Jesus Himself told His disciples, Matt. x. 25, called Jesus outright Beelzebul himself. Jesus had not with His bodily ears heard the imputation, v. 15, but in His heart He knew it, supernaturally. Again the Pharisees had really uttered very little; their further thoughts and plots they kept to themselves till an opportune time. The reply of Jesus is directed not only to what they gave utterance to, but to the whole mass of their thoughts connected with the occasion. "The discourse following is a genuine seal of the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus." Susceptible minds would have been recognized in it a "sign from heaven." His very mildness and moderation prove the charge of the Pharisees to be without foundation. One possessed by Satan is not so gentle. Along with the gentleness of Jesus, He shows a cheerful composure and a lofty serenity over against the most malicious imputations. "He is assured not only of the innocence of His soul and the righteousness of His cause, but also of the victory that must follow."

Notice, too, His sublime, irrefutable argumentation. Nebe: "He follows their thoughts to their hidden roots, He illumines them with the light of eternal truth, He impugnably exposes their untenable character, and their self-contradiction." No other than the Son of God in the flesh could speak thus, no one among men could consciously or unconsciously produce its equal. John vii. 46.

Jesus does not here oppose the Scribes with the Scriptures, for they did not stand on the Scriptures. He appeals to reason. He emphasizes common sense to expose the absurdity of their charge. Clearly and firmly He lays down the proposition: "Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate and house falleth upon house." Their charge is self-contradictory. "No kingdom, town, nor family, no united community can maintain its existence without a certain order and union of the members, neither of course can Satan's kingdom."

ὄλος. Some: in the sense of family. One family after another perisheth. But better, literally, of buildings; not "house after house," but the buildings tumble over one another to destruction, a graphic description of the desolation. When a kingdom is overthrown, its metropolis falls also, and house topples against house, each by its fall pulling down another into ruin. There is complete, utter destruction—the picture of a kingdom devastated by civil war.

The devil, then, has a kingdom. There are many demons, but only one, Satan, is their head. "Devil with devil damned firm concord holds." They form a united power in opposition to God. All parties are a unit controlled by their chief. It has been objected that the principle of evil cannot form a community, cannot league together its individual elements. Only love can unite. That is the bond of perfectness. But the selfishness of evil may so far limit itself, as to form a bond, a league, a kingdom. The Pharisees and the Herodians united against Jesus. Pilate and Herod became friends when they had Jesus in their power. The wicked may join hands in a common cause. "All evil has one foe. All the wicked have one aim. They mean to contend against God, they mean to bury in darkness the light which shines into the world." Circumstances render their union a necessity. When the necessity is gone, so is the union. Christ who draws all to Himself in a living union, unites also all His enemies in opposition to Him. They all adopt the same cry "We will not have this one rule over us."

The work of Jesus is evidently an assault on that kingdom. The casting out of demons is directed against Satan's power and sway. Has Satan then inspired him to destroy his own realm? Is his own instrument engaged in the destruction of his kingdom? Is the devil making war upon himself? "Is Satan at once the subject and the object of the casting out?"

18. "And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom" . . .

If his realm is split up into parties making war upon each other, how will it continue to stand? They might at least rejoice in the prospect of having one of his own tools overthrow his kingdom, if they do not believe that Jesus has come from God. In the hasty syllogism the minor premise is not expressed. Fully given it goes: Every kingdom falls through internal contentions. Satan has a kingdom. Therefore, his kingdom falls through internal contention. I can certainly not be upholding Satan's rule while I am engaged in destroying it. They had admitted the existence of

such a kingdom, when they called Beelzebub the chief of the devils. An archon ("chief") presupposes subjects, order, a kingdom. Assuming the correctness of their position, He shows that His casting out of demons is equivalent to one devil casting out another. Satan's kingdom is therefore torn to pieces. Satan's power is turned against himself. In his kingdom there is none greater than himself, therefore he casts himself out. These demons are his servants, his representatives, his comrades, and their expulsion is his expulsion. He is driven by his own power from his throne. Jesus recognizes in Satan the collective embodiment of all the demons. Though they all be persons, yet are they but servants and instruments of the prince of darkness. In casting out demons the Lord is casting out the evil one himself and taking possession of his goods.

Jesus is not content to destroy the right wing of His enemies. He now attacks them also on the left, in order to make their discomfiture complete. He is determined to rescue the poor people whom these wicked men sought to draw away from Him. His purpose to seek the lost sheep of Israel is clearly manifest.

19. "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast" . . .

Others are casting out devils. If you accuse me of doing it through the agency of Satan, through whom are they casting them out? "Your children," literally, "sons." This term implies physical or moral relationship. Formerly it was held that the disciples were meant, to whom Jesus had given power over unclean spirits, Luke x. 17. Nearly all moderns: persons of their own party or school who were engaged in this practice. If you accuse me, what have you to say concerning your own "sons," those of your own kind?

Some hold that the Jewish exorcists who were here called "sons," were disciples of the exorcist schools of the Pharisees—as the disciples of the prophets are called sons of the prophets. 1 Kings xx. 35. Others simply: "your own adherents or associates." Luke has not mentioned the Pharisees and Scribes. Hence the term seems to be quite general: persons belonging to these very people engaged in casting out devils.

Jewish exorcists were accustomed at the time not only to travel over the Holy Land, cf. Mk. ix. 38; Luke ix. 49; Matt. vii. 22, but carried on their business far and wide in other lands, Acts xix. 13. To show the preposterousness of the charge against Jesus, He puts Himself on the same footing with these. This has raised the question, whether their work was but an imposture and delusion,

and those possessed remained in their wretched condition? Some deny that the reality of their miraculous cures must be admitted, holding that Jesus simply argues *ex concessis*. But how can the Lord compare His own miracles with theirs, if He regarded the latter as mere jugglery? Luther accepts their miracles as genuine, and holds that very immoral exorcists could cast out demons. Miraculous power is independent of the moral power of the agent who exercises it. Augustine unhesitatingly acknowledges the miracles of Apollonius of Tyana and of Apuleius, as Lactantius had done. The Scriptures accord similar power to the magicians of Egypt, Exod. vii. 11, 22; to Jannes and Jambres, 2 Tim. iii. 8; and they speak of the real miracles of Anti-Christ in the last days, 2 Thess. ii. 9; Rev. xiii. 13. These clear passages contain nothing that conflicts with Christian faith. If it be objected, that such a confession calls into question the omnipotence of God, or trenches on the divine government of the world, we reply, then every sin, even the smallest sin of man, is an infringement upon the divine government.

God is not merely a being of power, but a moral being, and "He conducts the government of the world not for the unfolding of His Omnipotence, but that His wisdom and love may apply and direct the free action of free personalities to the highest good of all. The Omnipotence of God suffers no prejudice, for it does not consist in this that only what is agreeable to God takes place in heaven and on earth, but in this, that whatever may take place in heaven or earth, takes place only because God permits it to take place, that it may serve His purpose." Besides, the New Testament clearly acknowledges in respect to casting out demons, the miraculous activity of the Jewish exorcists, Mk. ix. 38. Josephus refers to them, Antiq. viii. 2, 5; Bell. Jud. 7, 6, 3. So do Justyn Martyr and Irenaeus. The former says that this art continued for a long time among the Jews, crowned with many results.

Some hold that at that time a large number of Jewish exorcists in casting out devils availed themselves of the name of Jesus Christ, the mighty power of which they had recognized in the instances in which He or His disciples had cast them out, Mark ix. 38, cf. Luke ix. 49; Acts xix. 13 ff.

Such an argument of Jesus must have been crushing. But Nebe makes out of His words no more than "If in your judgment I can cast out devils only through Beelzebul, by whose power do your own sons cast them out, by Beelzebul's also?" "Therefore shall they be your judges." They will show the untenableness of your charge. As the queen of the South and the

people of Nineveh in the day of judgment shall condemn the contemporaries of our Lord, so will these portray and condemn His malicious calumniators. Having exposed the diabolical character of their charges, Jesus might Himself have turned the tables and hurled at their own heads the charges they had made against Him. But when He was reviled He reviled not again. 1 Peter ii. 23. He is the innocent Lamb of God that beareth away the sin of the world. And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so He openeth not His mouth. Is. liii. 7. Note the glorious fulfillment of prophecy. Matt. xii. 19 f; Is. xlii. 2 f. The Son of man came not to judge the world but to save the world. John xii. 47. Nebe: "After He has struck His enemies on the right wing and on the left, He now attacks the centre. He would not only overcome their intellect but overpower also their heart." Hence He says,

20. "But if I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God" . . .

If it is impossible that Christ cast out devils by Beelzebul, then they must confess that He casts them out of men through the power and grace of God. His work is the mark and token of the kingdom of God, a work reserved for the Messiah.

Standing on this immovable position He makes His appeal to them to behold the finger of God. Matthew has in place of "finger," "the Spirit of God." Baur held that there is an essential difference between the two. Others see no real difference. Meyer regards Luke's figure for expressing the divine agency as appealing more to the senses, especially that of sight. It is a more concrete form than that given by Matthew. Exod. viii. 19; Ps. viii. 3. Bleek, while he admits that both expressions mean here the same, claims that the different forms of expression, in view of the verbal correspondence between the two verses, cannot be accidental, as for instance being due to a fault of memory or a different translation of the Aramaic, as little as the variation in Matt. vii. 11 and Luke xi. 13. He deems it likely that Luke gives the term originally used and the one which prevailed in the original Greek conception of the discourse, and that Matthew for the sake of being more explicit used the more definite form: "Spirit of God." The Ancients interpreted the finger of God as a finger of the Holy Ghost.

Why does Jesus speak of the finger of God, and not of His outstretched arm, which generally in the Old Testament represents the mighty interposition of God? Bengel: "by divine power, and without any exertion." Should He have said arm or hand of God, it might have implied that with great effort, by summoning all His resources, He drove out demons. He does it merely by the finger of God.

Some: as God points with His finger. Others: I need but lift the finger, I need but threaten with my finger, and the devils flee. "What is said later about the strong man being overcome by the stronger one, is clear to the thoughtful hearer already from the finger of God."

The apodosis following this protasis is "the kingdom of God is come upon you." Not for His own honor is this said. "The blind people, who in part still desire a sign, shall discern the signs of the times. The casting out of the demons confirms the dawn of a new epoch, as the numerous presence of the demons puts beyond all doubt the high-tide of the kingdom of darkness. The great day of grace has come. Let every soul consider what makes for its peace. Jesus proclaims the nearness of the kingdom, not of the King Himself in His person. He refrained from causing further offense to His adversaries. They still believed on and hoped for the kingdom of God. And on this susceptible spot He places His hand in order to bring them under His easy yoke." Such deeds wrought by the finger of God go to prove that He who performs them is "no other than He who brings in the kingdom—the Messiah. Where the Messiah is present and working, there, too, is the kingdom, not yet, of course, as completely established, but preparing to become so through its preliminary development in the world." *φθάνα*. Some: "reach," "arrive at," "come to," cf. Phil. iii. 16. But Nebe: as used by classical writers, "to anticipate," 1 Thess. iv. 15. "The kingdom of God has come upon you sooner than you expected."

As Pallas Athene sprung full-armed from the head of Jove, so the kingdom of God enters into the world, its arms in hand, in order to effect its conquest in the world. There is no vacuum in the sphere of grace. "Sin is eradicated from the heart only so far as faith becomes rooted in the heart. The kingdom of evil departs from you only so far as the kingdom of light takes possession of you." The kingdom is accordingly not something in the dark womb of the future. It is present, in their midst. The casting out of the demons attests its presence with power.

21. "When the strong ~~man~~ fully armed guardeth his own" . . .

"The strong one." "The article indicates the particular strong man with whom in Matthew *τις* has to do. "Nebe thinks this inconsistent with Meyer's own remark that the figurative language may have been suggested by Is. xlix. 24 f. Bleek also thinks that Luke had that passage before his eyes.

ὁ ἰσχυρός, according to the entire connection, is no other than

Satan, the enemy. Matt. xiii. 39, "fully armed," defines the subject more fully. Very significant revelations concerning Satanology flow from this discourse. Satan has a kingdom; the forces of evil are not scattered, but form a compact union. Sin opposes a solid phalanx to the kingdom of light.

Here we see that the leader of the hostile powers is powerful, that he is called par excellence *ὁ ἰσχυρός*. He is not a contemptible foe. Thousands suffer defeat in the contest with him because they underestimate his power and overestimate their own. He is a most powerful and formidable enemy—a roaring lion, 1 Pet. v. 8; a dragon, Rev. xii. 3. Nebe: "the power of Satan consists not only in the fact that he is a being of higher organism, but also in this, that he is decided, hardened and firm." Besides his inherent power, he is panoplied, "fully armed," which Bengel interprets of his external power. Within or without he is possessed of stupendous energy, might and resources. Of what specifically his armor consists, we are not informed. Only the panoply as a whole is referred to, not the several constituents.

Some think of the allies of the lord of the demons. Others find the resources of his power not so much in personal abettors, as in the deep guile and great might which "are his dread arms in fight," according to Luther.

"Keepeth his *αἰλή*," court. The strong one, so powerfully equipped, does not confide in his strength so as to repose in peace. He does not even sleep under arms, but he is at his post, a sentinel sleeplessly on the watch guarding his domain. Nebe: "He must have a bad conscience, which does not let him rest but ever impels him to seize his armor and watch." He is conscious that he is not the only mighty one, and that with all his power a struggle for existence awaits him. He has no peace, can have none. Having revolted and lifted up arms against God, having begun the conflict, he is in it to the finish.

Αἰλή: Luth., "palace." Mey., "the court" at whose entrance the strong one stands guard, *αὐλή* never signifying a palace in the New Testament. But Nebe gives Matt. xxvi. 3, 58, 69; Mk. xiv. 54, 66; xv. 16; Luke xxii. 55; John x. 1, 16; xviii. 15; Rev. xi. 2, as passages, none of which requires *αἰλή* to be translated "court," in distinction from the house itself. Both in Homer and in later Greek and the Apocrypha, *αἰλή* = *βασιλειον*. The parallels in Matthew and Mark have *οἰκία*. The most natural rendering, the one, too, giving a more distinct image, is palace.

This palace according to Augustine is: the hearts of those in whom he himself dwells. Jerome and others: the world. Satan

is called the archon of this world. Paul says the whole world lies *ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ*. Others: the household of demons, the realm in which they reside, the sphere in which the householder has the authority. Thus the demoniacs, the possessed, are themselves in the palace. They are the captives to whom deliverance is proclaimed, Luke iv. 18. They are the *σκεύη, ὑπάρχοντα, σκῦλα*, that are to be taken from their powerful lord, who has control of the "palace."

Nebe thinks the reference is merely in general to the two great kingdoms, which are engaged in mortal strife with each other.

They are contending for the possession of the *aulé*. "The conflict is not so much with reference to this or that demoniac, or with reference to the totality of the demons. The conflict which engages all the powers of heaven, earth and hell, is for the possession of this world." Rev. xi. 15.

Τὰ ὑπάρχοντα: "goods." In v. 22, *σκῦλα*: what is stripped off, arms stripped off, spoils. The most suitable interpretation: the beings who are in Satan's possession. The contest between the strong one and the stronger one is in behalf of the eternal salvation or damnation of men. While the strong one is on guard, he keeps his own in his possession. Is he then outwitted? lulled into security? caught napping? Does he fail at times to be on guard? But a parable must not go on all fours. Nor is the reference here to the lethargy and apathy of man, his conscience being asleep and the carnal heart saying, peace! peace!

The subject is Christ's contest with Satan for human souls. It is evident that no man can seize or bind this strong one; no power upon earth can snatch from him his own. No human power can break the bonds which he has formed around the necks of his subjects. A redeemer, a mightier one, must come from beyond the bounds of humanity.

22. "But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome" . . .

How absurd it would be for one not sure of being mightier than the strong one who has everything secured, to precipitate an attack upon him! He would merely throw himself into the hands of the strong one. But there is a more powerful One than the mighty one. Speaking in a parable Jesus does not name Himself as this most mighty One. But it is not difficult to discern who it is that is superior in strength to the strong one. In Matt. iii. 11, John, calls him "mightier than I." He "the stronger One" conquers "the strong one," comes upon him and overcomes him (Rev.). The struggle is fierce, it costs blood, even the stronger One bleeds from the wounds which the strong one inflicts, Gen. iii. 15; but He

triumphs in His blood, yea by His blood, **Rev. xii. 11**, and His victory is so complete that the strong one loses his subjects, they are wrested from his control, snatched from his grasp. He is disarmed, his panoply is stripped from him, *i. e.* not only the weapons of offense are taken from him, but also his defensive armor, by which he shielded himself when attacked. Through the stronger one the strong one is rendered impotent, harmless. What a light this casts on the work of the Redeemer, on His overthrow of Satan's power! What an object lesson to Israel the casting out of the demons! How could they have been rescued from the control of their mighty chief, how could the servants, implements and vessels have been taken away from their powerful guard and owner, had He not first overcome and bound the giant, and destroyed his power. Surely, Jesus must be the adversary of Satan, his omnipotent foe, and therefore the divine friend of man, his almighty Redeemer. He overcame him that had the power of death, the devil. He that is for us is mightier than he that is against us. Satan can no longer harm, if we shield ourselves under the wings of his conqueror. The Gospel secures us against all his snares and subtleties. With Jesus Christ for our watchword and the sword of the Spirit, God's word, for our weapon, Satan is bound to quit the field.

“Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none,
He's judged: the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.”

Besides overcoming him and crushing the strong one's head, the stronger One “divideth his spoil.” This touch does not simply portray the total discomfiture of the strong one, but it represents the nature of the kingdom of the stronger One, the mind of the divine King. To whom does Christ divide the spoils? Some: to the angels. Others: to the Apostles. Nebe: while the strong one kept for himself, for his own enjoyment, what he possessed, no such selfishness characterizes “the stronger One.” His is the grace, the love that imparts itself.

The application of these words is, that the charge of his employing the assistance of Satan to cast out evil spirits, is rendered still more nugatory by the truth, that in other spheres the weaker one seeks the assistance of the stronger, but here he proves himself to be the stronger one. Hence such an alliance as they charge is unthinkable. Others: if the casting out of demons confirms the presence of the kingdom of God, it confirms also the truth that Jesus,

instead of being an enemy of man, is God's chosen One. Satan defends his prey with weapons. He that would snatch his prey from him must first overcome him by a higher power.

"A war has thus broken out, a war which must decide the destiny of men, of the whole world." In this war, which must determine whether my soul is to continue in the fetters of Satan, indifference on my part is inexcusable—impossible.

28. "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not" . . .

The Lord allows no neutrality with respect to Himself. In the case of every soul it must be "either, or." Nebe holds these words as a part of the parable; Jesus has the harvest in view. He who does not gather with Him what has ripened in the fields of God, he who does not take part with Him in gathering His own into the heavenly garner, is His enemy and causes some of His own to be scattered and lost. Some make the reference to Satan. He scatters and destroys what Jesus would gather and save. Contrast the two: they cannot be harmonized, Christ and Belial cannot work together. Each is against the other—absolutely. His kingdom and mine, says the Lord, are irreconcilably opposed to each other. Some have applied *μετ' ἐμοῦ* to Satan, while Jesus is understood to be representing himself as Satan's enemy. That is, Satan would say, he that is not working with me is against me. Meyer: "After Jesus had repelled the accusation made in v. 15, He pronounces upon the relation to Him of those making it." In his note on Matt. xii. 30 he observes: "The truth is, He, previously as well as subsequently, speaks of Himself in the first person (vv. 28, 31), and He could not be supposed, He who is the Messiah, to represent Himself as taking up a neutral attitude toward Satan. Not coöperation, not even neutrality, but on the contrary a mortal conflict with Satan is the order of the day."

He is speaking, according to Meyer, of the Pharisees and their bearing toward Him, which must necessarily be of a hostile character, as they do not make common cause with Him. He that is not with me, is my enemy. This, however, need not be charged against them. They pretended to be nothing else. Bengel refers to the exorcists. Your sons are not against me. They gather with me. Neander took the opposite view, that the exorcists were really arrayed against His kingdom and advancing the kingdom of Satan. Godet: "Those Jewish exorcists do not lead the people to Him, they only cast out the evil spirits to the extent that they are still capable of free movement, and can return to their former abode as illustrated in the following verses. In this way they oppose

Him who sends the spirits into their prison." It is claimed that the verse is too far removed from the passage, v. 19, which treats of them. On the other hand it serves to introduce the passage which treats of the evil spirit coming back, etc., v. 24.

Bleek, Nebe and others apply the declaration to the undecided, fickle, vacillating mass. It is a warning to the people, who were in danger of being influenced against Him by the course of their leaders. The Lord is done with His revilers, but He is concerned to save the poor masses who are so easily misled by the suggestions of the Scribes.

These words do not favor the delusive maxim about the golden mean. It is a question of life and death. Neutrality toward Christ is the same as to renounce Him. Those who are neither cold nor hot, He spews from His mouth, Rev. iii. 16. The normal place of every man is in the bosom of the Son of man. Our inmost heart should draw us to Him even though He were at a distance. But He comes near us with the light of His truth and the fire of His grace. He therefore who does not joyfully fall into His arms, wickedly closes his heart so that the light of God's grace cannot enlighten him and the fire of His love cannot kindle him. "Jesus, the personal Saviour, stands in the centre of humanity, and here as before His judgment-seat there is only a right and a left."

The decision must be made by every man. When made within, it will show itself in his life: "he that gathereth not with me scattereth." Jesus is intent on gathering. The indifferent are His enemies. The mightier One has also a kingdom. He is a King. "He seeks to gather the children of men into the kingdom of His grace, Matt. xxiii. 37; John xi. 52, and in this work He will have co-laborers. His saved ones are to be co-workers in gathering the sheep, in collecting the sheaves from the harvest field." He who stands by idle not only offers a bad example, but he positively injures the Lord of the harvest—or of the flock. Either figure may be intended.

He "scatters." So impossible is it to be neutral. The Saviour breaks in upon the indifferent one, and makes him either accept or reject Him. He does not stop seeking the lost, until obduracy renders all efforts fruitless.

The apparent contradiction to this passage in Mk. ix. 40 and Luke ix. 50, is easily solved, when we note that there it is "against you" and "for you," and that the whole situation is different.

24. "The unclean spirit, when he is gone out, passes through waterless" . . .

Nebe: "After Jesus had spoken to the conscience of the undecided and wavering, who, seeing the great contest between the power of darkness and the greater power of light, would not decide either for or against Christ, He now addresses these earnest words to those who had been profoundly impressed and who had been freed from Satan's bonds. He warns them against backsliding and apostasy."

Meyer holds that the allegory is meant to show the incorrigibility of His opponents, bearing therefore especially on v. 23. Some: the state of those healed by the Jewish exorcists. Others: it gives a mirror of the history of Israel. Nebe: the condition of the natural man. The whole human race is under the captivity of sin and thereby under the empire of Satan. Man's only alternative is to be a home for Satan, or a temple of God's Spirit. The unclean spirit must be cast out. There is One who by the finger of God casts him out. Being cast out, however, the spirit is not content. He wanders around seeking rest.

"Through waterless places." Deserts were reputed to be the dwelling place of the demons. Men do not dwell where there is no water, Ps. cvii. 35 f. Some figuratively: men not yet sprinkled with the water of baptism, Job viii. 3; Baruch iv. 35; Rev. xviii. 2; cf. Is. xiii. 21; Chrys.: heretics and Jews.

This ancient view is given up, though it is not without instruction. Jesus declares here a general truth. The FF. gave special illustrations of it. Most expositors view v. 24 allegorically, Luther literally: "Dry places are not godless hearts, for in them he rests and dwells as a mighty tyrant, but they are dry and desolate places, where no one lives, where there is nothing but forest and wilderness. Thither, when cast out, he flees full of malice and wrath; just as Jesus found Satan in the wilderness." Stier also holds that according to the SS. the desert is really the abode of the demons.

Nebe, claiming that from v. 24 on Jesus speaks figuratively and does not intend to describe literally a case of a demon's return, declines to take out of the picture one feature for a literal truth. The truth taught is, in the first instance, that Satan in rage at his overthrow prowls about in the uninhabited desert. "Cast out of men, he cannot remain with men, as this would constantly remind him of his defeat." He flees the place where he fell. He flees from the stronger One who overcame him. He is "seeking rest." So does every creature. "Satan cannot find rest, for the creature can find rest only in its God, and Satan will not submit himself to Him, heavily as the hand of God lies upon him." So he con-

cludes and resolves within himself in genuine Satanic fashion, "I will turn back unto my house. In man I can rest." He seems to have in a measure recovered from his defeat. He views the man from whom he came out as his house, his rightful property. He talks as if he had departed of his own accord and could therefore at any time return at his own option. The deceiver deceives himself, as is commonly the case. See his pride, which shows itself from his whole speech. "Let those whom Christ has re-deemed be on their guard, Satan will soon be round reconnoitring."

25. "And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished."

Matt. xii. 44: "empty, swept and garnished." Is this a favorable or unfavorable mark? Is the emptiness an unhappy sign? Meyer: "A climax by way of describing the man's condition as one that is calculated to induce re-possession, not to indicate that healthy state of the soul which forms such an obstacle to the demon in his efforts to regain admission, that he is led to call in the assistance of others," as if the gates were barred. On the other hand Luther: "The man is sanctified and so adorned with beautiful spiritual gifts that Satan well sees that with his former devices he can accomplish nothing." But Meyer thinks the reënfacement by seven other spirits is not to be ascribed to the need of greater strength to regain possession, but rather to the fiendish desire now to torment the man much more than before, which says about the same as the final clause, "the last end is worse than the first."

"He finds." Bengel: "The house was not so before the enemy had been cast forth." Again: "Purged from evil things, adorned with good. The enemy seeks especially clean places to rest in, not that they may remain clean, but that he may defile them." He is not satisfied with the discovery he has made. He is seeking rest, and rest he cannot have until he may destroy the good work of God and recapture the soul snatched from him.

26. "Then goeth he, and taketh with him seven other spirits" . . .

The Christian dare not rest upon his laurels in this warfare. He may be conscious that Satan approached him, also that he left him finding nothing in him, yet it behooves him to watch and pray without ceasing, against his return.

Tôre, a new epoch begins, one of terrible assaults. As Satan withdrew even from the Lord only for a season, Luke iv. 13, so we may be sure that the enemy will again return, and that with a sevenfold increase of power.

"Seven other spirits more evil than himself." With the aid of these he seeks to force an entrance. Nebe: "The Holy Ghost unfolds his entire fullness in seven spirits, so the entire fullness of the prince of darkness is expressed in the seven more wicked spirits. The totality of hell is poured out against such a soul."

Πονηρότερα, "more evil." Stier: "They are not morally worse, for all evil spirits are equally bad, but mightier(?)." Nebe: "If outwardly mightier, then they are also mightier within, for in spiritual beings the outward and the inward correspond." Of course there are both inward and outward differences among the fallen angels. Some operate with greater subtlety. Satan has a kingdom which implies ranks, some inferior, some superior. Bengel: "There are unclean spirits who are less evil than others; and there are other spirits exceedingly malignant."

Having with these mighty assistants effected his entrance, the evil spirits dwell there. Their habitation is permanent. The eight spirits settle down now—and the end is awful—"the last state becometh worse than the first." Peter must have had this clause in mind in writing 2 Peter ii. 20. The language is almost verbatim the same. "It is worse to fall back than to fall." Nebe: "Not the attainment of salvation, but the keeping of it, is the most difficult. Thus did our faithful Lord defeat His adversaries, urge the wavering to decision, and inculcate watchfulness upon those who had been won, that they lose not their salvation"—when He is interrupted not by a Pharisee, but by a woman:

27. "A certain woman out of the multitude . . . blessed is the womb that bare thee . . ."

This is peculiar to Luke.

In the most direct contrast to the Pharisees and Scribes, an unprejudiced, ingenuous voice from the crowd attests the impression which the words of Jesus had made upon the susceptible mind of an impulsive and happy mother. "These words full of naivete and innocence are an offering of thoughtful homage to the Lord."

Some think she was moved to speak thus by admiration for the discourse of Jesus; others, by joy over His triumphant refutation of the wicked insinuations which had been made; others, by partly sensuous, partly spiritual love to the person of Jesus. The outburst seems to have been but an unrestrained expression of nature. It required to be corrected. It is turned to the highest personal interest. Mary was not blessed, or saved, because she bare and gave nourishment to Jesus. Notice the word of Elizabeth to the Virgin, Luke i. 45. She, like all of us, was saved only through faith. Luther says, "she could not have paid a nobler tribute than

before all the people to bless the mother who gave the world such a son, yet Christ thrusts aside her praise." She spoke from a carnal, feminine tenderness.

28. "But he said, Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it."

Luther: "I want no praise according to the flesh. My mother is not blessed on this score. You do not savor the things of God, but the advantages of the flesh. Such reflections do not bring salvation and blessedness. Turn your heart away from such vain and idle thoughts and learn that those are eternally blessed who diligently hear the word of God and keep it in their hearts, and base all their comfort and confidence in it." "This answer contains absolutely the highest truth that lay at the heart of Jesus in His ministry."

"*Μενούργης*," Meyer holds, may serve as corrective as well as confirmatory, and he makes it here the former, cf. Rom. ix. 20; x. 18. Bleek and Godet take it in the sense of "at least," *i. e.* this is at least the more sure and reliable course. Jesus does not deny His mother's blessedness, but He defines it as not a special external relation, but as a general moral relation, which might be established in the case of every one. Others: He makes no allusion to any advantage from physical relationship. "He leads back the woman's praise to a proper basis, and opens to her the blessed prospect, to become herself even such a woman as His own mother." The benediction upon the mother as such is corrected. Nebe says: "In the practical treatment of the Pericope regard may be had to the demeanor of our Lord, or the demeanor of the people toward Him, or the typical elements of the scene."

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

A TRUE PASSION SCENE.

1. The misery of sin.
2. The cause of sin.
3. The impotence of sin.
4. The conquest of sin.

HOW VARIED THE EFFECT OF THE WORK AND WORD OF CHRIST.

1. To some a savor of death unto death.
2. To others a savor of life unto life.

HOW CHRIST BEARS THE CONTRADICTION OF SINNERS.

1. He meekly reproves them for their folly.
2. He humbly shows them His superior power.

3. He earnestly warns them of an evil end.
4. He graciously shows them the way of salvation.

WHAT THE LORD HAD TO ENDURE:

1. Open contradiction.
2. Perilous indifference.
3. Carnal affection.

THE CONTRADICTION OF SINNERS,

1. Flows from the most unthankful hearts.
2. Consists in the most obdurate folly.
3. Leads to the most fearful condemnation.

YOUR ATTITUDE TO CHRIST, IS IT

1. That of enmity ?
2. That of indifference ?
3. That of external relation ? or
4. That of faith ?

THE FEARFUL POWER OF THE EVIL ONE:

1. From its unnoticed commencement.
2. From its rapid progress.
3. From its wretched issue.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT (LAETARE).

John vi. 1-15.

THE tone of the Introit is changed. From the key of deep distress it passes to that of holy joy. The subject is the feeding of the 5000. The motive for the Pericope on this day given by some is, that Christ should be presented on this Sunday as Prophet, on the next as Priest, and on the following (Palm Sunday) as King. But Nebe objects that the dogmatic presentation of the threefold office of Christ is not as ancient as the choice of Scripture for this day. Besides, the Pericope itself not only gives the testimony of the the people that this is the Prophet, but also their forcible attempt to make Him King.

It is surprising, Nebe admits, that the Church did not select this miracle as reported by the synoptics. If the aim had been to present it for its own sake, the account of the Fourth Gospel would not have been taken, for this does not give the fullest particulars. John does not record the miracle for the sake of the miracle, but for the sake of the discourse which grew out of it. It is the kernel of this miracle, that Christ imparts the bread of life, which He Himself is. It is a mirror of the saving work of the Redeemer; as He breaks the bread, so He breaks His body, that His death may become the life of the world—which is an exceedingly appropriate thought for the Passion season.

The three synoptists give this miracle. It is the only one common to the four evangelists. Matt. xiv. 13 ff.; Mark vi. 30 ff.; Luke ix. 10 ff. There are immaterial discrepancies. John's account is independent. The historical connection is different.

1. "After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee" . . .

An immediate connection with what preceded is not to be thought of. Chap. 5 shows Jesus at Jerusalem, vv. 1, 2, 14. He had left Jerusalem in the meantime and had been occupied with divers miracles. He now proposes to withdraw from Galilee. The Apostles, according to Mk. vi. 30 and Luke ix. 10, have just returned from their first missionary journey, and the Master deems it desirable to take them across the sea to its north-eastern point, and pass

with them a season in retirement. There they could not only enjoy a period of rest, but also undisturbed report to the Master their measure of success, and receive further instruction. Matt. xiv. 13 gives an additional reason for the withdrawal, namely, the execution of John the Baptist, which had just been communicated to Jesus. His hour has not yet come—only in Jerusalem was the Messiah to die—and Herod would very naturally, after he had put one discomfiting prophet out of the way, strike next for Jesus if He were found within his reach.

Jesus "went away" ἀπῆλθεν. Some: from Jerusalem. Others: starting from Capernaum.

The addition of τῆς Τιβερίδος is perplexing, "a very peculiar designation of Lake Gennesaret." "Sea of Galilee" is the name it bears in Matt. iv. 18; xv. 29; Mk. i. 16; vii. 31. "Of Tiberias" may have been added for the sake of Greek readers to whom this was the current designation. Pausanias calls it Lake Tiberis. As there was another lake in Galilee to the North, Merom, this designation may be intended to distinguish it from that lake. Some: At Tiberias, He set sail at Tiberias. Others: Tiberias was the town at which He disembarked. Bengel: "Sea of Galilee designates the whole; Sea of Tiberias, a part of the lake." Meyer holds that a more exact description of the locality is intended and renders "on the other side of the Galilean Lake of Tiberias," *i. e.*, the southern half of the lake on the western shore of which lay the town called after the Emperor, Tiberias. Nebe adds that the evangelist describes the locality so precisely in order to guarantee the faithfulness and genuineness of the following narrative.

2. "And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw his miracles . . ."

"The people need a deliverer. They cannot long endure the Lord's withdrawal." Their unrest and great distress impel them to follow Him into the desert.

The text varies. According to some the verb for "seeing" ("saw") has a Pluperfect sense, but Meyer objects that the multitude followed Jesus because they "saw" Him work miracles along the way. They continued following, as He continued performing miracles. Such is the force of the Imperfect in the three verbs. Still as Matt. xiv. 13 (cf. John vi. 17) has Jesus making the journey by ship, while the people going around the circuit of the lake made it on foot, they cannot have witnessed any miracles on that journey. Good expositors claim that the Imperfect maintains its force even if the sense be that the people had before-

hand witnessed His miracles, *i. e.* the miracles of Jesus were not a few scattered signs, but they formed an unbroken continuous chain. "The people followed because they were all the time seeing the Lord work miracles, and they brought to Him their sick in great numbers." This is a statement true of every period of His career and need not be limited to any particular time.

3. "And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there he sat . . ."

The article must be recognized: not *a* mountain, but, according to the Greek, *the* mountain which was in that locality. Cf. Matt. v. 1. Some have thought that the New Testament points to a particular mountain, a gospel Sinai, or holy mountain. Against this view, the fact that not a single passage mentions this mountain by name, is decisive. Many hold that in each case where *the* mountain is spoken of, it always means the particular mountain that has special interest in the narrative, or as Meyer, the mountain in the immediate locality where Jesus was at the time, the mountain near by, definite enough from the context, or the situation.

Tholuck and others translate τὸ ὄρος, mountain region, highlands. The phrase occurs Matt. v. 1; xiv. 23; xv. 29; xvii. 1; Mark iii. 13; vi. 46; ix. 2; Luke vi. 12; ix. 28, etc. Sometimes the reference is to a ridge this side, then to the other side, of the lake, and the comparison of these passages leads to the conclusion that the mountainous region on both sides of the Sea of Galilee is meant, in contrast with the plain, and without reference to any particular height or peak. The mountain formations of Palestine are peculiar. The whole country may be called one mountain range, simply cleft by deep valleys. Robinson describes the Sea of Tiberias as "a beautiful sheet of limpid water in a deep depressed basin, with a continuous wall of hills on the sides."

There on the mountain side Jesus is sitting, His disciples forming a circle around Him. Luke ix. 11 says "He welcomed them (the multitude) and spoke unto them of the kingdom, etc." By sitting, "the Lord shows that He will not retire any farther to withdraw from the people. He will tarry there and let them come to Him." And they came, and according to the synoptists they gave Him a plenty to do. He healed all manner of sick and He proclaimed the kingdom. His desire for rest was forgotten in His compassion for the unhappy multitude. He foregoes the coveted respite and renews His labors, teaching and healing, among the masses.

4. "Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand."

The object of the statement is variously explained. The simplest exposition is that of a mere chronological observation, some holding that the passover had not yet taken place, others that it had just been celebrated. Nebe: this violates the *usus loquendi*. According to Meyer the statement is introductory to v. 5, explaining how it happened that Jesus after He had withdrawn to the mountain was again attended by a great multitude. This is accounted for by the nearness of the feast, when people generally had left their homes and occupation. It was, claims Meyer, another crowd, from that described in v. 2 as following Him toward the lake, the pilgrims on their way to the feast moving in the opposite direction, away from the lake in the direction of Jerusalem. This seems forced, since v. 2 does not speak of a crowd accompanying Him to the sea and then turning away. That is a general observation noting how the crowd was wont to follow Him, and why: there was wont to follow Jesus a great crowd, because, etc. And now that He was on the mountain they come to Him. It is very clear from the synoptists that the multitude on His departure in the boat followed Jesus forthwith from the west shore to the east shore. To introduce two crowds here is undoubtedly contrary to the text. Those followers on the west side, who were so impressed by what they saw that they did not hesitate to make the tour around the sea and over the Jordan, still form the main body of the present mass, having been joined by many, Mk. vi. 33. The road for the pilgrims to the feast did not lead through that desert region. But if the feast and the crowd bore no relation to each other, why are they mentioned so closely together? If the crowd had been so captivated by the miracles and teaching of Jesus as to make a wide detour around the lake in order to be with Him, then no reason can be given why the pilgrims on their way to or from Jerusalem might not as readily go far out of their way in order to see and hear more of the prophet of Nazareth.

The synoptists make no mention of the feast. "The passover." the feast par excellence.

b. "Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes and seeing that a great multitude . . ."

According to Mark the sight filled Him with compassion. They were as sheep not having a shepherd. He perceived their distress while they, hanging intently upon the lips of the Lord, were not sensible of their hunger. "They are so occupied with his words, which are spirit and life, that in them is fulfilled the saying, Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth

out of the mouth of God." They are also to experience the truth of the other saying, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Knowing their condition, Jesus takes the initiative in bringing them relief. The synoptists present the disciples as taking the initiative. They report to their Master that the day is declining, and ask him to send the multitude away so that they might go into the surrounding villages and find lodging and victuals. Meyer would admit a discrepancy here, John purposely bringing to light "the autonomy of his Master," but a better solution makes the discussion with Philip supplemental to the account of the synoptists. Nebe: "The disciples, from whose midst Jesus calls one to Himself in order to give all of them a much-needed lesson, had long been asking anxiously in their hearts (and perchance of one another), whence shall we find bread here in the wilderness to feed them? They recognize themselves as the responsible hosts." Perhaps, too, they had already informed themselves of the extent of the destitution among the people and the numbers present. With this information they come to Jesus and beg Him to solve the problem by dismissing the crowd. But He anticipates them and puts to Philip the question "Whence are we to buy bread, etc."?

Nebe says: "The prevenient grace which streams upon us so often from the life-picture of our Lord is shown here again. Christ cannot wait till the people realize their pressing want, till they come to Him as suppliants. He is the fountain of grace, and as the fountain does not just then begin to flow, when the thirsty pilgrim approaches to slake his thirst, but pours out its stream continuously, so the people are to find here on the mountain a fountain of grace welling up. They need but gather around it to drink with joy from the well of salvation."

Why is Philip asked to advise or propose? Bengel: "He had charge of the commissariat." But as Judas bore the purse he was most likely the commissary, John xii. 4, 5. From John i. 44; xii. 21 and xiv. 8—the synoptists have no special reference to him—we gather that Philip was a thoughtful character, a man of practical sense, prudent, deliberate, cautious. Nebe: "With a wise pedagogical interest the Teacher directs His question to the most considerate of all His disciples. As He gave the distressed opportunity to unburden their griefs, so He offers Philip occasion to draw from his thoughtful understanding. He discloses to him His purpose to feed the multitude, and the very thoughtful disciple is invited in the trying situation to offer counsel and assistance to His Master, whose cheerful unconcern he never could understand."

Knowing his mental idiosyncrasy, our Lord would reveal to him the impotence of the human understanding, and the inability of man's resources to meet the demands of human want and human woe.

6. "And this he said in order to prove him, for he himself knew what he would do."

Scarcely has the evangelist recorded the question put to Philip, when to prevent misunderstanding he adds its motive, and shows that it was not intended to elicit information, or to obtain advice, but for the salutary purpose of discipline. How often our Lord put questions to all manner of people—but never to gain information. He had in this instance no need of suggestions, for He Himself knew what He was about to do. John may not at the time of the occurrence have understood this object, but later everything became clear to him. *Πειράζων*. is used here of course in the good sense. Tholuck has suggested that the point of the trial for Philip was to test his resources, to see what expedient he would suggest to relieve the embarrassment. Nebe regards the following clause in conflict with this, and thinks the gist of the "proving" was a trial of Philip's faith. The question already suggests the miracle, and is calculated to make it more impressive. Some think that had the miracle been wrought without any conference it would not have been so striking, but after an estimate had been made of what would be required and of the insignificant quantity on hand, the grandeur of the miracle would so much the more excite wonder. Philip would, after this planning and calculating, feel, on witnessing the miracle, the more deeply how superior is the power of faith to all the calculations of the human intellect.

Then the trial had great educational value both for Philip and for the other disciples. They were taught to realize the inadequacy of human agencies and resources in the kingdom of heaven. A well-tried faith is of great account with the Master. Nebe: "He had already given His disciples so many proofs of His glory, that they should have left all care with him; Philip is the most careful and anxious of them, and the Lord addresses him in order to see to what extent the glory of the only-begotten Son had been revealed to him of the Father. As He already knew how He would furnish a table in the wilderness, so he knew also, John ii. 24 f., in what state of mind was His Apostle. What He knew, however, the disciple should also know. That he might better know his heart and come to a better state, he must by way of rebuke realize how poorly he had recognized the glory of the Father in the face of His Son." It is obvious from v. 10 that while the question was ad-

dressed to Philip in particular, it was heard by and meant for all the disciples.

7. Philip answered him, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient" . . .

A *denarius* was about 16 cents of our money. The sum total may be put down as about \$33.00—a large amount at that time, yet even this would be inadequate to meet the demand even scantily. Mk. vi. 37. The trial was too much for Philip. He is at his wits' end and does not show himself the enlightened, confiding disciple of the Lord any more than the Samaritan woman, John iv. 11. Jesus said *πῶθεν*, from what overflowing granary or depot of provisions shall we obtain the bread needed for the feeding of these thousands? Philip had been present at the marriage in Cana and beheld the resources of his Lord's power and goodness, supplying exceeding abundantly, above all that was thought or hoped, the need of the guests. Yet he thinks now only of human storehouses of food and of the absolute insufficiency of the means to purchase them. He thinks only of the flesh, only of human resources. The earth alone brings forth bread, and that by the hand of man. And it can be bought only with money. And money, the amount required to give each one a small piece, is out of the question. A full satisfaction of their hunger is not to be thought of. He certainly needed a faith trial. He has not yet learned Christ, who neither brings bread from far, nor doles out a scant measure. Philip does not imagine that the Master might provide even the minimum necessary to save the multitude from fainting in the way. Insuperable difficulties confront him everywhere. He can give no advice. His figures, his reckonings, lead to despair. "This," says Nebe, "is because he reckons without his host. He left out of his calculation Jesus Himself, who means to provide a table for His people in the wilderness." This sojourn in the desert, with the passover so near, ought to have reminded the disciples of the march of God's people through the desert and of the supply of bread from heaven, when God gave them of the corn of heaven and man did eat angels' food. Ps. lxxviii. 24 f. The people here, after He had provided bread in the wilderness, hail Him as truly the prophet who was to come into the world; and Philip, who has so often seen heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man, John i. 51, does not yet recognize in his Master the prophet that is greater than Moses.

Nebe: "Because the eyes of Philip are holden so that they do not yet recognize the Lord, is the reason why He stands here so perplexed and disconsolate. Such an experience ever repeats itself

with all who do not from the whole heart believe in Jesus." They are ever ready to give up in despair. The difficulties always transcend the resources.

8. "One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him" . . .

"One." Another one besides Philip, makes an effort to come to the rescue: Andrew, a brother of Simon Peter. He seems to have had a temperament somewhat like his famous brother's. John is an excellent delineator of character, cf. John i. 19 ff. We know but little of Andrew, but John has left us a fine touch of his individuality. The evangelist himself goes along absorbed in deep thought after he had found Jesus, i. 37 ff. But Andrew follows with his heart in his mouth, and the moment he encounters his brother he exclaims, "We have found the Messiah." Philip, when called on by the Greeks who would see Jesus, hesitated to assume any responsibility and turned to his colleague Andrew, who was a man of more prompt decision, xii. 22. Here again he comes quickly on the scene. He appears to be anxious to come to the assistance of his embarrassed friend. "He had better kept quiet," says Nebe, "for his statement betrays the fact that he, too, has not yet recognized in the Messiah the Son of God." Possibly his quick impulsive disposition had frequently been of service to the cautious Philip, which may account for Philip seeking his counsel in John xii. 24. Here he offers his assistance unbidden and says:

9. "There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves, and two fishes . . ."

Andrew is a practical man—he has carefully cast around among the multitude and has found a boy, a mere boy who of course could not carry much, "one boy," according to a certain MS. One little fellow, one single market-boy or huckster, is here, who has for sale all the way five barley loaves and two little fishes. Out of their scanty common purse Jesus and the Twelve might purchase the meagre insignificant content of his basket. It is hardly worth thinking of.

"Barley loaves." Barley bread was no dainty dish. It was mainly eaten by the poorer classes. Barley was not reckoned of much account as food in ancient times. It was at first prized highly by the Jews, 1 Kings iv. 28, but later it was held in contempt. Judg. vii. 13; 2 Kings iv. 42. Everything is calculated to draw attention to the poverty of the situation: one little boy had with him two little fishes, and five loaves of barley.

Ὠψάριον. This was usually the only cooked or smoked article eaten with bread, a very common dish. John xxi. 9, 13.

This is all there is, and what will this amount to before such a throng? Attempt a division with mathematical precision and you will scarcely have a crumb apiece. All planning and devising is based on purely natural conditions. And the arithmetic of Andrew leads to a yet more desperate result than that of Philip. The two between them have made a wonderful exhibit of their capacity to provide for the extraordinary occasion. The one computes the cost, the other the available supply. Neither of them has an eye of faith—neither reckons on the divine power, which out of very little can create boundless stores.

They look only at what is seen, and end with an interrogation. And yet the Master in gentle patience bears with their dullness and hardness of heart to believe. O the depth of love and grace! What weak vessels He had selected for His Apostles, that the power of His Spirit might shine forth all the more in their career!

Unbelief finds itself ever in this dilemma. The more it considers a trying situation, the more hopeless it seems. Jesus listens to the proposal and suggestions of these perplexed disciples, and though deeply concerned for their improvement, He does not stop to administer a rebuke on account of their unbelief. He has in mind a different form of correction which will enter more deeply into their hearts. They are to learn the momentous practical lesson that human possibilities are not gauged by apparent difficulties. Bushnell in "Sermons on the New Life" has an excellent discourse on "Duty not measured by our own ability."

10. "And Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass . . ."

He does not address the people. Nothing of what has passed may have been heard by them. He directs the disciples to have them seated—just as in Mark He commands the disciples to feed them. Why does He not deal with the multitude immediately? Certainly not from any considerations of dignity. He had laid His own hands upon the sick whom these people had brought to Him.

He doubtless meant still further to exercise and prove the disciples' faith. And a severe trial it was. Had they not just been demonstrating to Him that it was impossible to procure bread in this desert for the hungry multitude—and He had Himself suggested no means of relief. And now they are told to have the people recline in order to eat a meal? What are they to eat? The 200 pennyworth has not been purchased. The five loaves—well, it is not worth the while for 5000 men to take their seats in order to divide these between them. The Master requires them to go ahead as if they believed that He could create, could provide, bread where all

human resources' fail. Against hope they are to believe in hope, Rom. iv. 18.

Ἀνακτίνειν is the technical term for sitting at meat. In the east it was customary not to sit (upright) at meals, but to recline, John xiii. 12; xxi. 20; Luke xi. 37; xxii. 14. The people are not to lie down, to stretch out and rest their weary limbs, so as to recover strength for their journey home. They are simply and without concern to recline in festal companies (cf. Mark), and in this attitude confidently await the turn affairs might take. The Master has just fed them with spiritual food, while they were surging around Him; He will now also feed them with bread for the body. And He is so considerate for them, and He means to serve them so amply, that He asks to have them take a comfortable position, as if to eat a full meal, and tarry long at the table in social enjoyment of it.

The Apostles endure the test. They promptly obey, whatever may have been their unbelief, or their ignorance of the Master's purpose. This is always assumed by the evangelists, that whenever the disciples receive a command from the Master they render implicit obedience, however much it may have conflicted with their own ideas. All considerations of the flesh, of reason, of self should vanish like mist before the rays of the sun, when Jesus speaks, and implicit obedience to His word is the best cure for doubt and perplexity.

Ἄνδρες. Only the men are formally seated. Women and children held a subordinate position, though they were not excluded from the feeding.

The people offer no resistance to the direction of the Apostles, tacitly accepting their orders as authorized by the Master. "Much grass." This indicates the nature of this desert. The spot was inviting, as if designed and adorned for this feast. The ground offered a soft carpet, the bright flowers of early spring bedecked the green table of nature. The sun was declining, the shadows were lengthening. It was a delight at this hour to sit down amid such a scene after the heat and burden of the day.

Nature itself offered a prophecy of the power and goodness of God. The wilderness was changed into a charming garden. Nebe: "The luxuriant grass was an ocular demonstration that the arm of God had not been shortened. It can still work miracles. Cannot He who makes the grass grow for the cattle, also provide bread in the desert for His children to eat? You cannot see the grass grow. It grows of itself by the living breath of God. So does the same Lord here mysteriously provide bread."

The multitude is divided into groups of fifty and a hundred. Nebe thinks that there was a row of fifty on one side, and then another row of the same number facing them, just as if they were surrounding a table, (Mark: *symposia*,) or to allow the disciples passing between them as they handed around the bread and fish. Mark vi. 40. Some have interpreted the object of this division and seating of the multitude so that thereby the miracle might be recognized by all. It is better, since Jesus never sought to display, but rather to conceal His miracles, to refer it to the considerate kindness and the loving compassion of our Lord. It was a gracious gift He provided, and He would have them share it with the fullest and keenest enjoyment. Not one is to be overlooked, or passed by in the crowd. They are not to eat hurriedly, or standing, but with the utmost decorum and with the greatest comfort. Each was to receive the bounty. In God's kingdom everything is to be done decently and in order. A solemn rest, a holy quiet, are indispensable conditions to the full enjoyment of the divine gifts.

11 "Jesus then took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them" . . .

The Lord takes the bread into His hands. "This much the people were to see, that He it was who gave the food." The procedure is just the same as subsequently at the institution of the supper. He acts as the father of the family, the people are the children, the Apostles the servants. It was not necessary that Jesus' hands touch the bread in order to multiply it for the thousands. He might have caused bread to rain from heaven. Nebe: "As He afterwards has all the crumbs gathered up so that nothing be wasted, so here nothing that is really on hand is to be wasted. What is present He uses, the little He multiplies, the weak He strengthens, from that which is nothing before the world He makes something to the praise of His glorious grace."

After taking the bread in His hand, He gives thanks over it according to Jewish custom. The host says the grace before the meat. We cannot of course tell whether as He broke the bread He said the customary grace of the Israelites: "Blessed be Jehovah who brings bread out of the earth," or whether He used an extempore prayer. But knowing how He generally used the sacred customary forms we incline to the former.

This much we do know, that He consecrated the bread through an uttered form of thanksgiving. While some think that no more is meant by the *ευχαριστεῖν* than the ordinary human expression of thanks, others find here as in the thanksgiving at the grave of Lazarus an anticipation, in assured faith, of what is yet to occur, a special thanksgiving and prayer for the miracle that is to be.

Certainly the force of Christ's example for prayer and thanksgiving at our meals must under no circumstances be overlooked. Luke says: "He blessed the bread." Some regard this as the crisis of the miracle. As He breaks the bread He offers thanks *i. e.*, a special, formal, prayer, though His whole inner life was an unbroken life-communion with the Father. It was not a mere silent grace of the heart. The three synoptists mention His lifting His eyes toward heaven, hence by outward posture and, in harmony with that, also with an audible voice. Thus His prayer satisfied not only His own heart, but was calculated to kindle by the force of example the hearts of the multitude to pray with Him now for daily bread, and ever to give thanks to the Almighty for the supply of bodily needs.

After the Lord had given thanks over the food, He distributed it through the twelve to those reclining. The other evangelists declare explicitly that He broke the bread—the loaves were flat and quite thin, thick as a finger and the size of an ordinary plate. John simply indicates the breaking in the *διεδώκεν* ("distributed"), according to which each of the Apostles received a specific portion of the loaves—about five-twelfths of a loaf. The text varies in John, but of course the plain import of the whole account is, that they carried what each had received, to the reclining multitude. Mark adds "that they should set them before the multitude." There was no need for the mention of this. Though they did not yet understand the power of God dwelling with their Master, yet they were so impressed with His entire action that their eyes were sharp enough to recognize every wink of His.

Words were unnecessary. When He directed them to have the people recline, it was a clear hint of what He proposed to do. It must have been clear, too, that what He meant to accomplish, He would carry out through their instrumentality. Otherwise He Himself would have directed the people to sit down. They are to be co-laborers. God's gracious gifts are communicated through human agencies. Yea, they are not yet done learning, and by the practical exercise of loving affection and sympathy toward the people, as well as through the further trial of their faith, they will have a capital experience. It is time that they catch the great lesson of the Master's life, who came not to be ministered to, but to minister. The gifts of His love are not bounded by the circle of His immediate followers. They are to be shared with the world. His hand is extended over all to give them their meat in due season, but His own shall absorb the same spirit from Him and spread the divine bounty among their fellow-men, be adminis-

trators of God's gifts. The mind that was in Christ is to grow also in them, and they are therefore put to work so as to be exercised in the distribution of the gifts from the Master's hand. In one sense they give their own—lay it in the hands of the Lord, and then take it from those hands as a new divine gift now to be given through their hands unto their needy fellowmen.

This charge to feed the multitude was doubtless one more trial of their faith. Those of little faith, properly represented by Philip and Andrew, were sent by the Lord with diminutive morsels among the mass. All they know and see are the five loaves in regard to which they have been making estimates—how far will they reach? But they no longer ask or protest. Obediently they comply with the Master's recognized will.

The little fishes, too, are divided up into at least twelve parts—and served unto the people so that every one received from the Apostles going to and fro, all the fish he wanted. Matchless goodness! Boundless power! Fathomless wisdom! Here man can only adore. He cannot explain.

12. "And when they were filled, he saith . . . Gather up the remaining pieces, lest . . ."

Grace does nothing by halves. God's mercy is not bestowed scantily. All is granted in an exceedingly abundant measure. "They were all filled" (Luke vi. 25; Rom. xv. 24.) expresses the complete satisfaction of their hunger, of the hunger of every one—and that without regard to the personal attitude of any toward Jesus. Doubtless there were mixed up in the throng some of His bitterest enemies. He giveth unto all richly. The miracle reflects most impressively the profusion and fullness of divine grace, which is more than sufficient for all the needs and longings of the spirit.

After all had enjoyed what they wanted alike of the fishes and of the bread, the Lord, conscious of having satisfied the hunger of 5,000 men, besides the women and children, knows, too, that notwithstanding the vastness of the crowd there is a surplus, and He directs the waiters to gather the pieces remaining.

Why not let the people do what they like with these? Bengel suggested that they were in danger of taking them along and laying them up as relics, making them in this way minister to the worship of relics, a strong propensity for which has always shown itself in human nature.

But the text itself gives the motive for this command: "lest something be wasted." These people were for the most part improvident, or they would never have been found in this hapless

condition, and instead of carrying away the leavings for another day they might indifferently let them lie in the grass. God's noble gifts are not to be thus despised, to be trodden under foot. An object lesson on the sin of wastefulness is given to the disciples and to the multitude. The Lord forgets nothing. He seizes every opportunity of teaching truth, of promoting virtue, of doing good. Nature, we learn from science, allows no waste. In its grand economy every atom is utilized, nothing is lost or destroyed. The law of the natural world is the law of the spiritual world. The frugality which obtains in the midst of nature's abundance points to rational creatures the lesson of conserving and husbanding all the gifts of the Creator entrusted to our use.

The abundance of our possessions is no excuse for extravagance. We are never justified in despising the fragments left over, or in casting away surplus relief when a great deliverance has been vouchsafed us. The pearls are not to be cast before swine, which tread them under foot. How readily one may interpose: the hand which created all this food, can as easily create a thousand fold more when it is needed. Should distress again befall us, He will ever be present with an outstretched arm to help. But He does not create for us to destroy. He does not help so as to encourage our prodigality, to promote the vice of wastefulness. God's goodness is not to serve as a premium on our idleness and thriftlessness. The Son of man is not come to destroy men's souls, but to save them, to make true men of them, to develop the virtues of manhood. Luke ix. 56. He is a householder who takes care of His own, that in due time He may bring forth out of His treasure things new and old. Matt. xiii. 52. He requires His own to be faithful in that which is least, so that they may be faithful also in much and have much entrusted to them. Luke xvi. 10.

The Lord thus charges His disciples to collect the fragments. John is the only evangelist who records the command. Chrys. held that Jesus had the disciples feed the multitude to show that they were to be the teachers of the world, taking the word of life from their Master and giving it to mankind. They are now therefore sent to gather up the surplus so as to be most effectively convinced of the miracle, and to have a powerful reproof for their weak faith. Nebe: "Jesus would reward the disciples for their implicit obedience under very trying circumstances. If in their previous going among the people they were on a strain of suspense, their present trip among them would be one of gladness, as the Lord had done great things." Others suggest that Jesus meant to show once more both to the disciples and to the multitude, that

He and no other one spread a table here in the desert for 5000 men.

13. "So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the pieces which" . . .

John does not mention any leavings of the fishes. The synoptics do. "Twelve baskets" were filled by the Apostles. There was more after the feeding than before. Whence the baskets? Some: every Apostle, like every soldier on the march, carried a bread-basket. Thus each filled his own wallet. It was customary for persons traveling to have such with them, carrying from place to place provisions and other necessities, even hay to sleep on. Nebe suggests that as a lad was there with a basket containing five loaves, so there were many in the crowd, especially as some of them at least were journeying to or from the feast, who were carrying a basket. It was a proverb among the ancients that a Jew was never seen without a basket. The twelve baskets have to some a typical reference to the twelve tribes.

Paulus reduces the whole scene to a natural occurrence. Jesus and His disciples shared their provisions with strangers, and by their example incited those in the crowd who had provisions with them to do likewise. The spirit of hospitality was awakened. The self-sacrificing bounty of Jesus was contagious, and the result was a general love-feast in the desert! Of course other Rationalists find the story embellished with legend. Meyer protests that the attempt to explain away the miracle is in absolute contradiction with the marvellous unanimity of the four accounts of the evangelists, especially that of the eye-witness John. The miraculous fact stands historically firm, the incomprehensibility of the proceeding must be admitted, all natural analogies must be foregone. Here, as at Cana, there was exercised the creative power of the Lord Jesus. To admit that John in his later years should distort a simple natural occurrence, of which he was an eye-witness, into one of the most extraordinary displays of supernatural power, would be equivalent to charging him either with the total wreck of his intellect or of his conscience. The overwhelming effect of the miracle upon the Galilean multitude, v. 14, in opening their eyes to recognize in Him the prophet who should come into the world, *i. e.*, the promised Messiah, and impelling them to make Him King by force, can be accounted for only by something of a most extraordinary character. What provisions were on hand among the 5,000 was ascertained by Andrew. The people dine on what the Lord through His disciples sets before them—and the twelve baskets full of fragments gathered up are something more than a

reward to Him for having moved those who had a plenty to open their baskets.

Strauss and others resort to the myth theory: This story had its origin in Ps. cvii. 4-9, and in the historical occurrence of the feeding of Israel in their march through the desert, as also in the miraculous support of the prophets when suffering with hunger, 1 Ki. xvii. 7 ff.; 2 Ki. iv. 38 ff., 42-44. The Jews expected from the coming Messiah a miraculous provision of food. This expectation is realized (in imagination) in this distribution of the loaves. But the construction of this myth is not clever, since the true counterpart is wanting in the Old Testament. The little fishes which proved the seasoning for the bread are not mentioned in the Old Testament passages, which speak of miraculous feeding.

Bleek says: "While the symbolical import of the miracle is not to be overlooked, exhibiting Christ as the one who fully satisfies all our wants, and giving us in the bodily feeding a figure of the spiritual nourishment which He dispenses to us through His word and Spirit, we are compelled at the same time to hold fast the external occurrence as a historical reality, even though we are not at present able to solve satisfactorily all the difficulties."

The meagreness of description has perplexed expositors. They want to know in whose hands or at what point the multiplication of the food occurred. Hilary: in the hands of the 5,000 as they were eating. Some: in their mouths. Meyer. in the hands of the disciples as they passed the pieces from the hands of the Lord to those of the hungry crowd. As we serve others God blesses and multiplies the labor of our hands. Sublime lesson for all who in spiritual or temporal things are employed in serving with God's gifts the need of their fellow-men!

The FF. generally held that the increase occurred in the hands of the Lord. By His word and blessing He effected the immediate increase. Luther and others speak of the visible increase in the hands of Jesus. "When He broke a piece in two and gave out one piece, the remaining piece at once became as large as it was before." But the disciples may have had a similar experience, the bread in their hands never diminishing, as long as they kept handing it out. It is not for us to analyze a miracle or to follow its successive stages. Yet as the evangelists make it clear that the prayer of Jesus brought the miracle about, and as they state that He gave to His disciples what they gave to the multitude, it is likely that the increase of the bread occurred in His own hands.

To illustrate the miracle, some have resorted here as in the miracle of converting water into wine, to analogies in the natural

world. There remains always this difference: in the latter the creative causality works through secondary causes; in the former no secondary causes appear, and everything that takes place is produced immediately through the first and final cause.

Olsh. assumes an accelerated process of nature, but the natural process has to be supplemented by the hands of men, the miller, the baker, whereas here an immense mass of bread is produced without the action of nature or the hand of man. It is doubtful whether we make a miracle more intelligible, or more credible, by an attempted comparison with the course of nature. Miracles involve an immediate interposition of divine causality. The present miracle is in entire harmony with all the other signs wrought by Jesus. Great distress confronts Him. By this action He saves a multitude from fainting in the wilderness. That it was purely from compassion and not to display His power as a worker of miracles, He shows by His conduct immediately after the sign. It is called *σημειον*, "sign" v. 14. In fact all miracles have their tongue and speech to signify the mind of God to us. They are a word of God. The present miracle forms the text of the following long discourse of Jesus. Notice in connection with this miracle the widow's cruse of oil and barrel of meal, 1 Ki. xvii. 16.

14. "When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This of a truth is the prophet" . . .

John alone gives this resultant popular impression of the miracle. He usually gives the result upon the witnesses of every miracle narrated. The people have their eyes opened. They discover who this miracle-working Rabbi is, whom they have among them. This "sign" reveals Him as "the prophet" foretold, cf. Deut. xviii. 15. So most expositors. Von Hoff.: "The servant of Jehovah concerning whom Isaiah spoke." Isaiah in the second part certainly portrays the prophet and the priest, but the king (who is to appear in the coming one) falls into the background. Deut. xviii., it is true, also speaks of the coming one only as prophet, and yet the people recognize in the prophet also the king. This prophet, said Moses, is to be like unto me, and Moses was a leader, a ruler of the people. The multitude, in our passage, had doubtless in mind the prophecy in Deuteronomy, but along with it also the other prophetic announcements, which expand the idea of the coming One into that of a Ruler and King. The miracle itself is an exhibit or mirror of the Messianic kingdom in the very sense in which they understood it: a kingdom of power bringing outward relief, introducing better times. "With this shell they were satisfied. Of the kernel they were ignorant." Note what Jesus tells

them the following day: "Ye seek me, not because you saw the miracle, etc., v. 26." He knew what carnal sense dominated the multitude.

15. "Jesus therefore preceiving that they were about to come and carry him away by force, in order to make him king, withdrew" . . .

The "sign" produced intense excitement. It is evident from this why Jesus often prohibited the noising abroad of His miracles. The Messianic epoch has dawned, they think. A splendid feast has inaugurated Messiah's reign. The Jesus who thus provides for the masses is the Christ. He answers their ideas and their yearnings for sensuous temporal blessings. A kingdom of righteousness and truth is far from their minds.

It is the accepted time to celebrate the new regime. The people are pouring in masses toward Jerusalem, and they propose to carry Him along even against His will (*ἀρπάζειν*, Acts viii. 39; 2 Cor. xii. 2; 1 Thess. iv. 17) into the capital, where they will proclaim Him king. In harmony with the externalism which dominated the Jewish mind of the period, the people understood by "the prophet," and by the Messianic ruler, whom they would force upon the throne, something very different from what was taught in their Scriptures, one very different from what He really is and what He would fain be to them. How grossly they misunderstood them and how far they were from truly acknowledging Him, the sequel shows. At this Passover they would crown Him by force, at the next one they crucified Him.

Jesus conscious of their purpose "withdrew again." He had come down the mountain for the purpose of feeding the people whom He saw coming towards Him; v. 5. *Πάλιν*, "again," refers to v. 3 where He had gone to the brow of the hill. He now again ascended the height. He cannot be the king of these people—such a king as they desired. Their movement is but a repetition of the third temptation, which He had successfully resisted—to make Him an earthly, secular king. "He escapes from their hands. If they desire Him to be their King, then their false Messianic expectations must be laid at His feet that He may crush them."

"Himself alone." He retires into absolute solitude, flees from the temptation to the closet for communion with His Father. He sought the solitude of prayer, Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi. 46. Luthardt: "Jesus realized in this occurrence the signal of His rejection and crucifixion. He saw that the antagonism between the spiritual redemption He came to bring, and the demand of the Jews for His secular reign must soon reach a crisis, and when the moment of

decision came the people would become bitterly hostile to Him. The fact that He would not let them conduct Him to the throne of David conducted Him on the way to the cross." A reaction overtook the masses. "In the following discourse Jesus proclaimed definitely that He will give His flesh for the life of the world, v. 51, that His flesh and blood are the true food and drink, v. 55. He views Himself as the Priest and King of His people, lifted up on the cross. The conduct of the people convinces Him anew, that there is no other way for the salvation of the world. He goes alone up the mountain to prepare Himself in prayer for the drinking of this cup of His passion, which He solitary and alone is to drink for all."

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE FEEDING OF THE 5000 A GENUINE PASSION PICTURE.

1. The general distress.
2. The overflowing mercy.
3. The customary thanks.

THE LORD'S PATIENCE WITH

1. The little faith of His disciples.
2. The unwisdom of the people.

THE PASSION SEASON IS

1. A season of trial.
2. A season of grace.
3. A season of judgment.

JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE.

1. He has the bread.
2. He gives the bread.
3. He is the bread.

THE BREAD OF LIFE.

1. We need it.
2. We cannot procure it ourselves.
3. The Lord alone has it.
4. He imparts it abundantly,
5. That we may know Him.

THIS MIRACLE A FIGURE OF THE HOLY SUPPER.

1. The Lord invites to it the hungry.
2. He spreads for them His gracious table.

3. He imparts to earthly elements a heavenly power.
4. He nourishes soul and body; and,
5. Thereby reveals Himself as the promised One.

THE PASSION SEASON PROVES AN INVITATION TO THE HOLY
COMMUNION.

1. It shows us our distress and helplessness.
2. The prevenient and overflowing grace of the Lord.

THE TABLE OF THE LORD REVEALS,

1. The love which spreads the board.
2. The bread broken with thanksgiving.
3. The satisfaction which is experienced by a miracle of
almighty grace.

THE TREASURES OF GRACE IN THE HOLY SUPPER ARE

1. Deliverance from woe and death.
2. Impartation of new strength and new life.
3. Self-revelation and self-impartation of the Lord.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT (JUDICA).

John viii. 46-59.

THE way of the Lord for the Christain to follow is pointed out here according to Augustine: *per patientiam ad potentiam, per crucem ad lucem*. The Pericope sets forth the enmity, the contradiction of sinners, which Christ had to endure, and which Heb. xii. 3 recognizes as a characteristic feature in the passion portrait of Christ, commending to our imitation his marvelous patience. The Lesson is taken from the midst of a long colloquy between Jesus and the Jews at the Feast of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem, and it opens *mediam in rem*.

Matters have reached the utmost tension, the grand decisive turning point in the position of the Jews in Jerusalem towards Jesus. He has even told His adversaries, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father, etc.," while they in their pride had claimed, "Abraham is our father, we be not born of fornication, we have one Father, even God."

46. "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not" . . .

Jesus demonstrates to His enemies the groundlessness of their unbelief. He appeals to His sinlessness, not in the form of self-attestation, or of the testimony of His conscience, but in the form of a challenge, to wring from their own lips the testimony that He is speaking the truth. His witness of himself they would have spurned. He makes bold therefore to challenge their own testimony, knowing well the extremity to which this must reduce them.

Nebe: "The very fact that He makes on this point His appeal to them must surprise, confuse and disarm them—and on the other hand His innocence radiates with such a splendor, that one might sooner with the naked eye discern dark spots in the sun, than the slightest trace of a shadow in this Sun of righteousness, even though the searching eye were rendered sevenfold more acute by the bitterest malice."

The question, "which of you convinceth me of sin," is *per se* perfectly clear, but the question immediately joined with it renders its meaning somewhat ambiguous. Some, since the question is put

in order to furnish the proof that He teaches truth, explain *ἀμαρτία*, as error, intellectual defect, departure from truth. Some: Sin in speech, untruth, falsehood. Thus the one question correlates the other. Others take it as a moral offense: sin, unholiness of character. This is throughout the New Testament meaning of *ἀμαρτία*, and even with the classics it does not mean error, deceit, unless with a defining addition. The difficulty resolves itself into this: Do the two questions convey the same thought, or does each independently of the other bring forward its own proposition? If the latter then we might have expected: If ye cannot convict me of sin, why do ye not believe me? "The intellectual life is inseparably connected with the ethical." "The sinless one is the purest and safest organ for the perception and communication of truth—the knowledge of truth rests upon the purity of the will." Better: He puts the former question to show what is the real cause of their rejection of Him. It is not because of any sin in me, but because I tell you the truth, that ye do not believe in me. You do not accuse me of any sin. Solely and exclusively for this reason ye do not believe me, because I tell you the truth, v. 45. Truth and faith are correlatives. Belief of the truth is the normal action of the human mind. If then I tell you the truth and ye believe me not, the explanation for this is found in the fact that ye are not of God. "He that is of God heareth God's words."

Meyer and Nebe taking the first question as pertaining to sin, interpret it as an appeal to His innocence and moral perfection. The spotlessness of His life attests the truth of His testimony. "He who acts out the truth in a blameless life, must be admitted also to speak the truth and to be worthy of faith."

Meyer: "If I am without sin—and none of you can prove the contrary—I am also without error; consequently I speak the truth, and you have no grounds for not believing me." His unassailable moral purity is a guarantee that He speaks truth. He claims that a lie falls under the category of *ἀμαρτία*, and that the conclusion is from the genus to the species. Am I really without sin? then am I also without falsehood. I speak the truth, and ye have no excuse for not believing me. Out of the same fountain cannot proceed bitter and sweet. Words and works are the two streams through which the hidden life of the heart is manifest. A sinless life attests a sinless heart. And so out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Nebe: "As work and word proceed from the heart, the truth of the work proves the truth of the word." Purity of life guarantees purity of doctrine. Absolute holiness of life vouches for the truth of what He proclaims.

Luther coördinates the two questions: "Christ asks why they did not believe Him, since they could censure neither His life nor His doctrine. My life is pure, for none of you can convict me of sin; my doctrine also, for I tell you nothing but the truth." Their ground of opposition to Him was due to innate and diabolical opposition to the truth; it was because they were the children of the false one, of the deceiver, in whom there is no truth and who is the father of liars, that they would not believe the truth which fell from the holiest lips.

This passage is of great importance on the doctrine of the sinlessness of Jesus. He here asserts for Himself absolute moral perfection, assuming a position incomparably superior to that of all Old Testament saints, and this in the teeth of His enemies and with a view to exposing the groundlessness of their unbelief. His consciousness of being without sin—and their silent admission of it, stamps Him as infallible in His statements of truth, and cuts from under them every excuse for not accepting His doctrine.

Meyer: "The proof of the sinlessness of Jesus furnished by this passage is purely subjective, so far as it rests on the decided expression of His own moral consciousness in the presence of His enemies; but, at the same time, it is as such all the more striking in that the confirmation of His own testimony, cf. xiv. 30, is added to the testimony of others, and to the necessity of His sinlessness for the work of redemption and for the function of judge. This self-witness of Jesus, on the one hand, bears on itself the seal of immediate truth (otherwise He would be chargeable with boasting of self-righteousness, or with self-deception); whilst on the other hand it is saved from the weakness attaching to other self-witnessings, both by the whole Evangelical history, and by the fact of the work of reconciliation."

"The sinlessness itself, to which Jesus here lays claim, is in so far relative, as it is not absolutely divine, but both is and must be divine-human, and was based on the human development of the Son of God. He was actually tempted and might have sinned; this abstract possibility, however, never became a reality. On the contrary at every moment of His life it was raised into a practical impossibility. Thus He learned obedience, Heb. v. 8. Hence the sinlessness of Jesus, being the result of a normal development which, at every stage of His earthly existence, was in perfect conformity with the God-united ground of His inner life, Luke ii. 40, 52, must always be regarded as conditioned, so far as the human manifestation of Jesus is concerned, by the entrance of the Logos into the relation of growth; whilst the unconditioned corre-

late thereto, namely, perfection, and accordingly absolute moral goodness—goodness absolutely complete and above temptation at the very outset—belongs alone, nay necessarily, to God. Thus the apparent contradiction between this passage and Mk. x. 18 may be resolved. For the rest, the notion of sin as a necessary transitional point in human development is shown to be groundless, by the historic fact of the sinlessness of Jesus.”

He challenges not merely the Jews of Jerusalem, nor alone the whole Jewish nation, nor alone the human race, but the Searcher of hearts, to produce proofs, not that He is guilty of this or that sin, of any sinful act, but that there is in Him any taint whatever of sinfulness. Only a hardened hypocrite could have asserted such a claim as He did here, unless the claim were absolutely grounded in fact. Only one who was perfectly stainless, who was in his innermost heart perfectly free from the common corruption of his race, could offer such a challenge before man and God.

Nebe objects to Meyer's use of “relative” here, as if it bore the interpretation of approximate sinlessness, but acknowledges that such is evidently not Meyer's meaning, since he ascribes spotless perfection to Jesus. The Son in the flesh was as truly free from sin as God who cannot sin. His oneness and communion with the Father was never disturbed. See Schaff in “Lange” *in loco*. Also Ullman's “Sinlessness of Jesus.”

The challenge to convict Him of sin Jesus addressed to His enemies. They are silent, not because they would break off the colloquy and cease the contest, for v. 48 they return to the attack. But they are silent now because in spite of their desire they can bring no accusation against Him. Their silence affixes the seal to His astounding claim. They admit the uniqueness of His personality. They can take up stones and cast at Him, v. 59, in order to kill Him, but they can bring no accusation, furnish no proof, which would forever effect His moral destruction.

Immediately upon the assertion of His sinlessness Jesus puts the question, “If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?” Nebe assumes that He allowed the Jews a brief pause to bring forward their accusation, and then He Himself makes a fearful charge against them, viz., that they have set themselves against the truth. They cannot deny that He speaks the truth to them. Yet they do not believe Him. He forces them into a state of self-condemnation from which there is no escape.

According to Meyer the reasoning proceeds thus: “Am I really without sin, then am I also without *ψῆδος*, “a lie,” but am I without *ψῆδος*, then do I speak the truth, and you on your part have no

reason for not believing me." As is quite common with John, there is an abbreviation, Jesus passing at once from the impossibility of charging Him with sin, to the positive, special contrary which follows therefrom. The thought, that inasmuch as He has no sin, therefore He cannot be chargeable with error, "the middle link," is passed over, in order to hasten to the main subject.

Ancient expositors saw in these questions the transcendent meekness of Jesus. As He declares to them the truth and they will not hear the truth, He might have demonstrated to them that they were of their father the devil, who abode not in the truth and in whom there is no truth, whereas He only responds "He that is of God heareth God's words; etc." Rather may His procedure be interpreted as that of judicial severity. He had just told them outright that their father was the devil, and that because He told them the truth they did not believe Him. As children of Satan they were so given to τὸ ψεύδος that the very fact that He spoke the truth excited their opposition to Him. This was the reason for their disbelief. A more terrific sentence could not be passed on rational beings.

47. "He that is of God, heareth the words of God : ye therefore hear them not" . . .

"The words of God," here, are evidently the same as "the truth" in vv. 45, 46. By an inexorable syllogism they are made to bite the dust.

The major premise is grounded "on the necessary sympathy between God and him who springs from God," who of course gives heed to what comes from God. The minor premise is: Ye give no heed to the words of God which I speak. Conclusion: Therefore you are not of God. The conclusion is proved by the effect. You show by your hatred of what proceeds from God that there is no affinity between you and God. You sustain no relation to Him. He is manifestly not your father. Thus the "why" of v. 46, is answered by "therefore." Cf. v. 43.

Ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ. The Gnostics, who held the theory of dualism, taught that some men sprang from God, and some from the evil principle. Augustine on the contrary held that by "those who are of God" are meant "the predestinated." So Calvinistic expositors. The Lutherans understand it of "the regenerate." The Greek Fathers, Pelagius and the Arminians refer it to the remains of the divine image. But such remains are yet found with more or less distinctness in every human heart, while Jesus here draws a broad line between such as are of God and such as are not of God. Several other passages of similar import occur in John iii. 20, 21;

x. 26, 27. The human race is divided into two large classes. Baur and others have claimed that these classes are represented in the Fourth Gospel as originally and radically distinct. The metaphysical basis of this dualism is found in the generic relation, either to the devil or to God, two opposite states of dependence, which determine respectively unsusceptibility or susceptibility to divine truth. But all are alike under sin and the curse. The distinction which becomes manifest in due time between those who receive the light and those who love the darkness rather than the light, between those who have God for their father and those who have Satan for theirs, did not originally obtain, for the Logos is the light which shines upon every man that cometh into the world, and those become children of light, children of the truth, children of God, in whom the light as it falls upon them can have free course and full sway. It is of the very nature of light to dispel the darkness and to produce life, and the separation which takes place in the family of man is due to the exclusion of the light on the part of some, their preference for darkness. It is man's own fault, if the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation, has not made him a child of God. While it is of grace that hearts like closed eyes open to the light, it is the willful, obdurate closing of the heart against the light that is the decisive factor in the forfeiture of salvation. Some make response to the call from God, some do not. "Who maketh thee to differ?" Only the disciples heard the words of the Father regarding the Son. John xii. 29. The people simply heard a strange noise and some supposed it thundered. Meyer thinks the reference is not to Christian regeneration which "first begins through faith, but merely to a preliminary stadium thereof, to wit, the state of the man whom God draws to Christ by the operation of His grace, vi. 37, 44, and who is thus prepared for His divine preaching, and is given to Him as His." This is regeneration in its first stage.

"The problem of the metaphysical relation," adds Meyer, "between human freedom and the superhuman power referred to, remains, however, necessarily unsolved, and indeed, not merely in this passage, but in the whole New Testament (even in Rom. ix.-xi.; cf. also 1 John iii. 12; iv. 4. But the freedom itself, in the face of that power, and the moral imputation and responsibility remain intact, cf. iii. 19-21."

48. "Then answered the Jews, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan" . . .

Stung by the truth, pressed to the wall, confounded and embittered, the Jews, like all who are beaten in argument, resort to insult

and abuse. They first throw mud, afterwards the stones. As Jesus had reproached them with being not true children of believing Abraham, but the offspring of Satan, they seek to escape by freely casting a similar imputation at Him. "Thou art a Samaritan, and possessed of the devil." By the former term of reproach they would characterize Him as a heathen and alien, excluded from the covenant people, one of a mongrel nation, whose worship was impure and with whom, as apostates from their religion, God's people dared hold no intercourse. This was, it seems, not the first time they employed this foul epithet. They were accustomed to reproach Him with it. So the charge of demoniacal possession was a common one. His severe judgment upon them they attempted to explain as betraying His Samaritan origin and His being possessed. Only a heretic, a bitter foe of the true religion under the influence of a demon, could speak thus of God's elect people. Though they cannot bring the charge of sinfulness against Him, they assume that He must be a being of the vilest character and subject to infernal power, an outcast from men and from God. Thus after all they may place a poultice on their conscience for having rejected the truth.

Καλώς: "aptly," cf. iv. 17; xii. 13. They adopt the interrogative form, not as if implying the consciousness of any doubt on the subject, but as if to invoke the agreement of all present to their charge. The affirmative is assumed. Very justly we are wont to say this of you. They express the highest pitch of insolence. Maybe, too, they mean herewith to put a cloak over their blasphemy. Bengel: "They utter the awful insult with some degree of fear as yet."

Δαιμόνιον and δαίμων are not distinguished by the *usus loquendi* of the New Testament.

Nebe says: "The Jews were justified in this from their point of view. Jesus had spoken in such a manner of His relation to God, that they must either accept Him as the Son of God or abhor Him as the Son of perdition, whom Satan has deprived of reason. They do not hesitate to accept the latter." This alternative is still before men. But thousands who will not believe in Christ as the Son of God, quail nevertheless before the other horn of the dilemma. What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?

49. "Jesus . . . I have not a devil (demon), but I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me."

That He who stood before them was not possessed, the Jews might have learned from His whole bearing and life, and especially from the manner in which He met this calumny. Nebe: "The

more they insult Him, the more He manifests His calmness, His meekness and His patience."

The emphatic *ἐγὼ*, Meyer holds, does not contain a retort by which such a charge is in turn fastened upon them. It stands simply in opposition to the following *καὶ ὑμεῖς*. Leaving unnoticed the stigma of being a Samaritan—not wishing to give any countenance to the use of that word as a term of reproach—Jesus replies "I am not possessed, but I honor my Father (by discourses which you consider demoniacal, but which in reality glorify God); while you notwithstanding this are dishonoring me." Thus He unveils to them the unrighteousness of their abusive language.

Calvin held that in repudiating one reproach, Jesus repudiated both. Their two-fold charge was climactic. He meets both by hurling back the highest one. Simply repudiating this, He proceeds: "but I honor my Father," which as His specific work is at once the actual proof that such a thing as His being possessed is not to be thought of. He that is possessed of Satan thinks, speaks and acts that which is Satan's. And it is Satan's work to attack the honor of God, to rob him of his honor. Honoring God and being possessed are incompatible with each other.

The glory of God was the aim of Christ's whole life. The song of the angels over His cradle penetrated His inmost heart. "His thought, word and action were all a "*gloria in excelsis Deo*." And here, too, in His sharp conflict with the Jews, He is seeking not His own honor but the Father's. With severity, as mildness has failed, He would bring these apostate children back to their Father. But while by His testifying to the truth He is honoring the Father, they dishonor Him—He does not say "the Father,"—as might have been expected. Some have thought that His unity with the Father being implied, His charge is equivalent to their dishonoring the Father. But the connection suggests the following: I honor the name of my Father, my life is consumed by my zeal for His glory, and what reward do I receive from you who claim to be the genuine sons of God? v. 54. Instead of thanks for this service to your supposed Father, I receive the basest ingratitude and insult. You dishonor me because I honor the Father. Your conduct towards me is due to my conduct toward Him. He thus not only exposes the unrighteousness of their reproaches, but He proves the truth of what He had just said to them, that they were apostate children of God. They have become their own judges.

50. "But I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh (my glory) and judgeth."

"Once more Jesus lifts up His faithful, warning voice; He would

have His despisers know what judgment they are bringing on themselves." He is not going about concerned for His glory, as they imagine. He is the servant of God, who in order to serve Him left His glory, and became a lamb which is dumb before her shearers, and even when led to the slaughter openeth not her mouth. He voluntarily entered the state of humiliation, the form of a servant. "The star out of Jacob is dimmed that the figure of the cross may appear upon it."

And there is no need for Him to seek His glory. The Father will see to that. He who does not seek His honor will attain to honor, just as He who for His sake loses His life, the more assuredly saves it. He will obtain the crown of honor and glory from One who is the First and the Highest, His Father, who seeks glory for His Son. His desire and purpose are that men shall honor the Son as they honor the Father, that He shall have the name above every name. Not content to devise means whereby the hidden glory of the Son shall be made to appear, the Father as the Supreme Judge will see to it that He attain the glory which is His due. Phil. ii. 6-10. He will pronounce the judgment that will invest Him with His proper and merited glory.

Meyer adds: "He pronounces judgment as a matter of fact between me and my revilers." *κρίνων* includes a reference, on the one hand, to the glorification of Jesus, by which He was to be justified, xvi. 10; cf. Phil. ii. 9; and, on the other, as regards His opponents, a hint at their just punishment (with eternal death v. 51). Both participles have thus the same accusative. Meyer holding against some others, that v. 51 is a direct continuation of the import of *καὶ κρίνων*, interprets it as a solemn assurance concerning what is necessary to the obtaining of eternal life, (instead of this punitive *κρίσις*) to wit, the keeping of His word: their exclusion from eternal life is inevitable as long as they do not repent; the only way of salvation still open to them is the keeping of His word. This declaration here is not in conflict with chap. 22. Not in His own name, nor of Himself, nor in His own interest, does He pronounce judgment. Even in the judgment He is the faithful servant who executeth the will of His Father. The Son does nothing of Himself.

51. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If any man keep . . . he will never see death."

Jesus had not said what the punishment of those who reject Him would be. Here it becomes manifest. But He does not let fall the sentence upon them. He maintains, even amid the contradiction and scoffs of sinners, His merciful attitude which shows that

He came not to judge, but to save. Bitterly as these hearers have reviled Him, He views them as still susceptible of truth, and therefore capable of being won. He, ever conscious of His mission, is striving even yet to save His maligners. In the one hand we see indeed the sword to destroy the foes who would hinder the building of His temple; in the other the trowel with which to build.

One thing alone will save them from the eternal death to which His rejection leads, that is to hold fast His word. "My word" is emphatic, as indicated by the position of the pronoun. It is the word of Christ whose keeping has so great an effect. The language is an almost literal repetition of v. 31, and is to be regarded as addressed to the same body of hearers.

"The cause of His Son, God will so guard and thereby so determine His glory that believers on Him shall not see death." It will become manifest that salvation is included in Him and connected with His person—and therefore that He has nothing in common with the murderous devil.

"Amen, Amen,"—the double form never occurs in the synoptics, but often in John—is designed to give the following clause special emphasis. Jesus seals therewith a great promise, the one condition of which is the keeping of His word. Only those keeping His word have the power of an endless life. No other word conveys such power.

Τηρεῖν, according to some: keeping in the heart, same as *μένειν* *ἐν τῷ λογῷ* v. 31. But this seems in conflict with v. 55, where Jesus speaks of Himself as keeping God's word. Bengel: "We ought to keep the doctrine of Jesus by believing in it; His promises by hoping for them; His injunctions by obeying them." Meyer: "to keep by fulfilling them, xiv. 15; xxi. 23 f.; xv. 20; xvii. 6, which of course includes the faith demanded by Jesus, iii. 36, and also the accomplishment of all the duties of life which He enjoins as the fruit and test of faith."

Those keeping His word have the promise that they "shall never see death." Some: they shall not die forever, not see eternal death, not see death forever. Meyer: "Death is here the antithesis to the Messianic life, which the believer possesses even in its temporal development, and which he will never lose." This is the first time Jesus expresses Himself thus. He had, indeed, previously promised to give life to believers and to raise them up, but to this positive promise He adds here the definite negation of death. Cf. v. 52; xi. 25 ff.; v. 25; vi. 49, 50, 58.

The difficulty which arises here is, that notwithstanding this promise, believers are continually dying. Nebe: "Christ declares

most positively that for His believing ones death no longer exists, that death has lost its power with those who believe on Him." Stier: "Death properly is spiritual death, bodily death is but the figure of that. Bodily death, which follows as the result of our having through sin been torn away from God, the Fountain of life, is only a result and a mirror of that invisible death." Augustine, too, holds that Jesus speaks here of spiritual and eternal death.

But the Jews did not so understand Him, v. 52. And He does not correct their misunderstanding, if such it was. They apply it to physical death and refer to Abraham, the father of believers, as proof that His promise is incredible. Bodily death is, in fact, something very different to believers and to unbelievers. To the former, it is the laying off of this body, the departure from the earthly house, a transition to glory. To the natural man, whom death removes from this world in which he had his delight and deprives of this body of flesh and blood, which he especially nourished and cherished, death becomes a terrible visitation, even if it were not written, "it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment."

Luther: "In death we must all die, but a Christian does not taste nor see death, he does not feel it, has no terror of it, and he passes over safely and peaceably, as if he were falling asleep and not dying. But the ungodly one feels death and it comes to him with eternal horrors. To taste death, therefore, is the same as the power and bitterness of death, eternal death and hell." See his comment on this the day prior to His death. Also Seiss: *Lectures on the Gospels*.

Not to see death, then, is to escape its sting, wrest from it its victory, experience none of its terrors. To see death or to taste death, v. 52, is in classic and Scripture usage the same as to die, to experience death, used of all sensible experience of a thing, Ps. iv. 7; xvi. 10; Jer. v. 12; xlii. 14; Luke ii. 26. Whosoever shall keep the word of the Lord will be kept in time and in eternity from the power of death. Death cannot harm him. Christ's word gives us the victory. He does not here explain this mighty power of His word, but in vi. 63 He said: "My words are spirit and they are life." He, the eternal Word which was in the beginning with God, puts Himself, His divine life and potency within His word.

52. "Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil: Abraham died and the prophets; and thou sayest" . . .

His asseveration now confirms their charge that He is raving, be-

ing possessed of a devil. He is not responsible for what He says. They make no accusation of immorality, but plead insanity as the explanation of His extraordinary utterances. "Have we not justly said," has now grown to assured conviction, "we know." Before, they had said this with some doubt, now His own assertions put it beyond doubt. Their unbelief is impregnable. They prate against the Exponent of the truth: "It is a senseless self-exaltation for Jesus to ascribe to His word, and therefore to Himself, greater power of life than was possessed by Abraham and the prophets, who were not able to escape death." Quoting His own language ("Taste" is stronger than "see," though hardly so intended by them. Seeing is an external perception, tasting is the innermost experience. It implies the bitterness of experiencing death) they find it only a monstrous assumption.

· Their logic is:

The greatest and holiest men have died,
You say those keeping your word shall not die,
Therefore, etc.

The not-dying of believers they incongruously apply to the dying of the fathers. They evidently do not think of eternal death. They restrict the language of Jesus, which includes both forms of death, to natural death. We are not warranted, then, in charging them with distorting His words, but only with making a one-sided application of them. The fact is, however, not to be overlooked, that by "the Jews" John always means those hostile to Jesus, the leaders, His avowed enemies. And it is to be remembered also, that according to Christ's own teaching, Abraham was not dead. Matt. xxii. 31 f.

53. "Art thou greater than our father Abraham? . . . Whom makest thou thyself?"

"Thou" (emphatic) possessed of greater power against death? What sort of a one dost Thou make Thyself? Chap. v. 18; x. 33; xix. 7. For what, or for whom dost Thou pass Thyself, that Thy word should produce such an effect? What assumption is this? "Their conclusion is veiled under a malicious question." His superiority to the patriarch and the prophets stands forth the more conspicuously by this very claim, that His mere word, kept in faith, delivers from death in time and eternity. What in comparison with such a One is even Abraham, the father of Israel, the friend of God? He died, so did the prophets. What diabolical self-exaltation, they argue, must here voice itself in one who assumes superiority to the greatest worthies of the Old Testament? But here is One greater than Abraham, at whose appearance all the

lights of sacred story paled. Withal they understood Him. And His very enemies serve the manifestation of His glory and become the stepping-stones by which He mounts His throne. Had they not sought to degrade Him and to deride His claims by calling up Abraham and the prophets from the dead to testify against Him, He would not have had occasion to set forth the relation which He sustained to those representatives of the Old Covenant, for He is not seeking His own glory. But they constrain Him to remove one fold after another of the veil that hides His glory, and force from Him the avowal that He is not only from henceforth the dispenser of life, but that He was from the beginning the hope and the joy of the fathers.

54. "Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me". . . .

In reply to their charge He once more assures them that He is not seeking His own honor. Jesus gives His justification a general form, and then proceeds to make a special declaration regarding Abraham, which makes it clear that He is really greater than Abraham.

Δοξάσω, Subj. Aor.: in case I shall have glorified myself. Ἐγὼ ἑμαυτόν. Emphatic designation of self, chap. v. 30, 31; vii. 17. This would nullify His honor. It is the Father who is my glorifier, and that not in a remote future, even now is the Father occupied in seeking and defending My glory. Meyer: "The Partic. Praes. with the article has a substantival force, and denotes habitual, continuous doing; hence it refers not merely to a particular mode and act of "glorifying" exclusively, but to its whole course (in the works wrought, in the divine testimonies, and in His final glorification)."

In the face of their bitter and malicious assaults He remains calm, gentle, patient. He has long since learned to deny Himself, to command, to control Himself. Let us ever make Him our example. Nebe: "The repeated protestation concerning His self-abnegation is in place here, because He is about to make a most extraordinary assertion concerning Himself, and one that is entirely new, namely, that for the Old Testament believers also He was life and salvation."

His enemies, had they borne in mind His whole procedure, must have admitted that He was not seeking His glory, for in no instance had He taken the initiative to assert anything in behalf of it, but every time they compelled Him to testify concerning Himself. But they did not consider this, and hence the recurring occasion for this protest, which at the same time is designed as an answer to the question "Whom dost thou give thyself out for?" It is not I

but my Father that sets up for me superhuman claims. Should I seek glory myself it would be a nullity, but I can abstain from this pursuit since another One does it for Me. He whom ye call your Father is the One who is engaged in glorifying Me. The glory which radiates from My teaching, My character, My actions, is due to the Father dwelling in Me. It is He that gives Me the exaltation, the honor which accrues to Me. The One who is here said to glorify Him, is the same that in v. 50 seeketh and judgeth.

It is my Father who is glorifying Me, He says, the very one whom ye call your God. This shows not only His relation to Him as that of the same divine essence, but it discloses the basis of His confidence in God as the judge of His honor. Even a human father is moved to the sympathetic defense of a son whose honor is attacked. Most assuredly the Father will not be indifferent nor remain silent, when His only-begotten is calumniated here upon earth. The very fact that He is His Father will lead Him to vindicate the libeled innocence of His Son.

He is glorifying Me. In the face of His adversaries He brings to light the glory of the Son. Before the very adversaries who claim His Father as their God, His Father is gloriously vindicating Him. How can they have Him as their God, when they are casting dishonor upon His Son? Were His Father their God, they could not do otherwise than honor Him whom their God is honoring as His Son. Their conduct reveals the falsity of their claims. Their actions convict them of lying when they pretend that He whom He knows as His Father is their God.

Meyer: "Notwithstanding their theocratic fancy 'it is our God,' they have not known God—because they had formed false conceptions of the one true God, who had manifested Himself in the Old Testament, and had not understood His highest revelation in Christ, in consequence of their blindness and hardness of heart, v. 19."

55. "And ye have not known him: but I know him, and if I should say, I know him not, I should be like unto you, a liar:" . . .

Note the contrast "ye know Him not, but I do know Him." There is irreconcilable conflict between their claims and His. He is certain that He knows Him, He affirms with energy. The different verb Meyer explains by his speaking here "in the consciousness of his immediate, essential knowledge of the Father, (though considered in itself He might have used the same term which He employed for them, xvii. 25)."

Γινώσκειν implies a certain beginning; "but the Son's knowl-

edge of the Father is eternal." "His perfect knowledge of God is not the accumulated acquisition of His life, but it is the original possession with which He entered into this life." He knows the Father in an unique absolute manner, as is indicated in what immediately follows. Were His knowledge of the Father but approximate or partial, He would not be justified in adding "should I say I know Him not, I should be like unto you, a liar," cf. v. 44. But should He keep from us the fact that God is revealed in the face of His Son, should He who alone knoweth the Father, deny this absolute knowledge of Him, He would not only contradict His own consciousness and be false to His own convictions, but He would be a liar instead of being the truth itself.

Bengel: *Mendax est qui vel affirmat neganda, vel negat affirmanda.* Jesus could not, dared not, speak otherwise than as He did. His conscience, His mission, His innermost ego required Him thus to speak.

Ἀλλὰ: far from being a liar, "I keep His word," v. 51. Nebe: "with these words He once more emphasizes His union with the Father in two directions. He is not only theoretically but practically one with the Father, not only in His knowledge but in His will and conduct is He one with Him."

Meyer: "His entire life and work were one continuous surrender to the counsel of God, and obedience (Phil. ii. 8; Rom. v. 19; Heb. v. 8) to the divine will, whose injunctions He constantly discerned in His fellowship with the Father, iv. 34 (cf. v. 29)." First He says "I know," then afterwards "I keep." Believers reverse this: they keep the word and so acquire knowledge.

56. "Your father Abraham rejoiced (that he should) to see my day; and he saw it" . . .

Having maintained His perfect knowledge of the Father and His perfect union with Him in will and action, thus showing Himself superior to finite beings, He proceeds a step farther, and more boldly and more unambiguously proves to them the very thing at which they had stumbled, his preëminence over Abraham, proceeding in v. 58 to the last step, His eternal preëxistence with God.

At the same time He puts the hostile children of Abraham to shame. "Your father," with a reproving glance to vv. 37, 39. Ἀγαλλιάω, (a word of Hellenistic coinage), not merely of the happy wish, of longing desire, but the highest, exultant, jubilant joy. Meyer: "The object of His exultation is conceived as the goal to whose attainment the joyous movement of the heart is directed. He rejoiced in the anticipation of seeing my day, i. e. of witness-

ing the exact, particular day of my appearance on earth, the day of His birth, Christmas. My day from the Johannean point of view, is the day on which the Logos became *sarrx*. This was the great epoch in the history of redemption which Abraham was to behold." Some: simply the time of His appearance in the flesh. Luke xvii. 22. Some: the day of crucifixion, Good Friday. Others: the Second Advent, when he comes in glory. Phil. i. 10; 1 Cor. i. 8.

The context determines whether the day of the Lord is that of His humiliation or that of His glorification. As the entire context points to the present, so the day of the Lord must also be the day then present, *i. e.*, in the flesh. Jesus distinguishes two instances in the life of the patriarch in which the vision of Christ burst upon his bounding heart; one, when the longing culminated in the assurance of realizing the sight in the definite future, (because the sight had been promised him); one, when the sight was actually realized, when he had a blissful taste of the longed-for salvation. A promise and its fulfillment are included, a prophetic vision and a real vision. Exultation preceded the sight, joy accompanied it.

The first refers to his prophetic vision, Gen. xii. 15; xviii. 18; xxii. 18,—more particularly chap. xv. Both verbs are in the preterite. Meyer: "As Abraham was recipient of the Messianic promise (Gen. xvii. 16; xviii. 18; xxii. 16,) which described on the one hand, the Messiah as his own seed, himself, however, on the other hand, as the founder and vehicle of the entire redemptive Messianic development for all nations, the allusion is to the time in his earthly life when the promise was made to him. His faith in this promise, (Gen. xv. 6), and the certainty of the Messianic future, whose development was to proceed from him, with which he was thus inspired, could not but fill him with joy and exultation." Some think there is a reference to the laughing mentioned Gen. xvii. 17, which was interpreted already by Philo to denote great joy and exultation. Tholuck even imagines that there may have been a current idea on this point among the Jews. Meyer justly adds: "So much is presupposed, namely, that Abraham recognized the Messianic character of the divine promise; and this we are justified in presupposing in him who was the chosen recipient of divine revelations."

Nebe notes that Jesus does not say expressly that Abraham rejoiced that he should see Him. The subject is not the person of the Lord, but the day of the Lord. It is a question whether Abraham believed in a personal mediator and interpreted the promise concerning his seed distinctively of a person. He may

have viewed his entire seed as the bringer of salvation. But cf. Gal. iii. 16 f.

The sight and joy of which Abraham had an actual experience are to be referred to his paradisaical state, as he, "the ancestor" of the Messiah and of the nation, learned that the Messianic age had dawned on the earth in the birth of Jesus as the Messiah—just as the advent of Jesus was made known to Moses and Elias, Matt. xvii. 4. Abraham there maintained relations to the state and experiences of his people according to Luke xvi. 25 ff. The form under which Abraham enjoyed the sight we cannot know any farther than that it was a divine communication. We know only that "in the intermediate state of bliss he received with joy the tidings of Messiah's advent. He beheld him face to face." That the spirits of the just made perfect sustain a relation to this world is taught also in Heb. xii. 22 ff. The Church militant and the Church triumphant are one. "The Lord is the centre in which those meet who are locally and temporally sundered."

Some have objected that in His controversies with the Jews Jesus always argues on the basis of the SS., especially that in the Fourth Gospel He never leaves the basis of revelation. By means of Moses He condemns the unbelief of His adversaries and confines Himself to the consideration of acts universally recognized and capable of proof. The Jews might have asked, when did Abraham see you? What proof do you furnish for this? He must have answered, "it is written in your law." In His defence He could not avail Himself of anything hidden from them, but only of an acknowledged historical occurrence. Hence they allege this sight, like Abraham's longing, must fall within the earthly life of Abraham.

Thus according to different expositors, the sight of the Lord was either the appearance of the Logos to Abraham, Gen. xviii, (here, however, there is nothing of the day of the Lord), or, the vision of faith with the heart at the announcement, Gen. xxii. 18, in which he recognized Christ; or, the birth of Isaac, an event prefiguring the birth of Christ; or, the offering of Isaac, typifying the atoning sacrifice and resurrection of Christ. Abraham did not see immediately the day of Christ. The connection and the explicit language require the sense that "Christ Himself was the immediate subject of the day," as the One whose appearance constitutes the day emphatically His.

And this day had come when Jesus spoke. The subject is not that of a joyful vision of a day yet to break. So, too, a typical vision is not a real sight—not such a sight certainly as that which

requires that he who sees and he who is seen be contemporaneous. There is force, it must be admitted, in the claim that Jesus refers to the occurrence in Gen. xviii., if we accept the interpretation that the Angel of Jehovah was the Logos, who appeared to Abraham and who prepared the great day of the Lord, the morning star, the early dawn of redemption. "He who in the fullness of time is to come in the flesh, presents Himself in advance in the Messenger of Jehovah, as He who is to come in the flesh." Nebe offers Gen. xvii. 17, as the rejoicing over the promise that he should see, and Gen. xviii., as the actual face to face beholding of the Lord. This shatters this whole interpretation. Though we admit, that Jesus was the Sun which shone into the heart of the fathers and made them rejoice, that before His appearance in the flesh Jesus was the mediator for the believers of the Old Testament, yet it cannot be shown that in the long colloquy before us Jesus confined Himself to ground accepted and understood by His antagonists.

Ἐχάρη is not specifically different from *ἡγαλλιάσατο*, "the latter corresponding to the first outburst of emotion at the unexpected proclamation."

57. "Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and Abraham hast thou seen?"

Understanding Abraham's sight as having fallen within his earthly life, they claim to understand Jesus to imply that he had lived in the days of the patriarch, had been personally acquainted with him. Preposterous! They also change His assertion that Abraham had seen His day to this, that He had seen Abraham, but this may have no significance. The question form is adopted to show the absurdity of His assertion. Not yet fifty years old—and claim to have seen Abraham, who lived 1900 years ago? *Πεντήκοντα* is emphatic: This is the period when a man "attains his full growth." Tholuck: "the term of a full human life." The Levites were superannuated at fifty. Num. iv. 3, 30, 39; viii. 24 f. Thou hast not yet passed the prime of manhood. It is not meant that Jesus was above forty (Bunsen: forty-six years); that He looked so old; showed signs of decrepitude, premature old age. "In instituting a comparison with the 2000 years that had elapsed since Abraham's day, they do not care about precisely determining the age of Christ." Conceding not a few years, thou still belongest to the younger generation. Thou art by no means an old man. The phrase may have been an adage. Thus they compel Him to withdraw the last fold of the veil and to present Himself as the eternal Son of God, in order not to surrender His claim that Abraham had seen His day.

58. "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, I am before Abraham was born."

Their scornful deduction is the truth itself. Their ridicule is the confession of His transcendent personality. The solemn "Amen, Amen," which show that this verse answers v. 57, must not be overlooked. The reply asserts even more than the Jews had implied in their question. I was even then. I saw Abraham, and he saw my day. I did not begin my being afterwards. Before Abraham became, I am; "older than Abraham's origin is my existence." Abraham had not preëxisted, but came into existence, *γενέσθαι*. *ἔμει* denotes being *per se*, which belonged to Jesus so far as He existed before time as to His divine nature, without having previously come into being. The two verbs express different forms of existence, *fio* and *sum*, cf. i. 6, 15; Mk. iv. 22; Acts xxvi. 29, 1 Cor. iii. 18. "The present denotes that which continues from the past;" or, a former condition which is continued in the present. It is an abbreviated form of expression: I was and I am. See Bengel *in loco*. There is a solemn, positive assertion of eternal existence, cf. LXX.; Ps. xc. 2; Jer. i. 5. It is the boldest utterance concerning Himself ever made to His enemies or to the public. The claim puts Him beyond all the limitations of time. It declares, like i. 1, His pre-existence as an ego, a person.

At last He stands without a veil in the sanctuary before the chosen people, having revealed Himself not only as one without sin, but as one who gave joy and life to Abraham, as the eternal Mediator between God and man. Their response to this revelation is not Amen, Hallelujah, but the loftiest confession excites the bitterest hatred.

59. "Then they took stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself" . . .

Not believing on Him, they regarded these claims of divinity as the height of blasphemy—which indeed they must have been were Jesus less than God—and as zealots for the law they at once proceeded to inflict punishment, x. 31.

His first testimony concerning Himself, v. 12, says Luthardt, evoked the opposition of their unbelief supported by a word of the law. This last testimony calls forth the bitter fury of unbelief which proceeds at once to execute the law. Thus the law inflicts death. "Nothing but the self-attestation of Jesus to His divine Sonship, wherein the promise and the hope of Israel are fulfilled, will conduct him to death, the execution of which accords with the letter of the law—though the real cause of it is the opposition of unbelief which rejects salvation in His person." The assertion of the divine Sonship has always been the target for unbelief.

And the choice must always lie between accepting Jesus as the eternal Son of God, or rejecting Him as an unblushing blasphemer.

The stones were probably building stones lying in the fore-court of the temple, as building at the temple was always going on.

"But Jesus hid Himself and went forth," *i. e.*, either withdrew from their sight rendering Himself miraculously invisible, or, as He is not known to have wrought a miracle in His own behalf, He concealed Himself and soon after went away. Tholuck: "He withdraws into the crowd, and is thus able to pass out unobserved." He escapes the stones of His enemies. He triumphs outwardly over them as He had in the argument. Jesus passes freely away from judgment and leaves the holy place. They proceeded from debate to abuse and from abuse to bodily violence. Meyer: "*Ἐκρύβη* explains how He was able to go out, and therefore precludes the notion of anything miraculous." The providential protection of God, he admits, is "a matter of course, but is not expressed."

He notes, also, how the breach between Jesus and the Jews gradually approached the extremity, and how "admirable, even in the details, is the delineation of the ever-increasing intensification of the crisis."

The practical treatment of the Pericope may proceed from two points of view. We may either present the Lord as contending and the foes with whom He contends, or present the entire transaction as a prelude and prefiguration of the whole struggle of His Passion.

CHRIST'S TESTIMONY OF HIMSELF:

1. That He is without sin.
2. That salvation is in Him.
3. That He was from the beginning the joy of all saints.
4. That He was with God from eternity.

THE SINLESS CHRIST REVEALS HIMSELF AS

1. The true Prophet.
2. The eternal High-Priest.
3. The Almighty King.

CHRIST IS THE CONQUEROR

1. Of sin; and 2, Of death.

THE SUFFERING SAVIOR OUR PATTERN.

1. No guile is found in His mouth.

2. When reviled, He reviled not again.
3. He committed His cause to Him that judgeth righteously.

THE MARVELOUS CONTRADICTIONS OF THIS SCENE.

1. He is without sin, yet is not believed.
2. He is reviled, yet promises life.
3. He is dishonored by men, yet honored of God.
4. He is in time, yet also in eternity.
5. He is persecuted, yet secure.

THE ENMITY OF THE WORLD TO CHRIST MANIFESTS ITSELF:

1. By unbelief.
2. By derision.
3. By persecution.

BEHOLD IN THE HOLY PASSION

1. The innocent sufferer.
2. The opposing sinner.
3. The judging God.

II. THE CHIEF FESTIVAL—EASTER-TIDE.

PALM SUNDAY.

Matt. xxi. 1-9.

HOLY WEEK begins with the same Lesson as that prescribed for the first Sunday in Advent. This may cause surprise and, were it in place here to discuss it, an explanation might be called for. It does seem strange that this Pericope should be repeated in the midst of the Passion history, and a more suitable introduction or prelude to the Holy Passion may readily be suggested, as for instance the anointing at Bethany. Jno. xii. 1 ff; Matt. xxvi. 13.

Nebe thinks that strict chronological interests determined the appointment of this Lesson for this season. That momentous scene of the triumphal entrance into the capital, which the Fathers reckoned as occurring six days before the crucifixion, was assigned to this day.

"It is not to be denied," he adds, "that this Pericope forms a splendid introduction to the main Festival. Christ celebrates His royal entry; He will now place the crown upon His head. But the way to the crown is according to the predetermined counsel of God the way of the cross; He must bitterly suffer in order to enter into His glory. Palm Sunday puts, as it were, the candle upon the lofty candlestick, which comfortingly illumines the hour in which the prince of darkness prevails, and the night of the cross which to the natural eye remains so dark." It is by being lifted up upon the cross that Christ mounts the eternal throne. Phil. ii. 6-10.

In the practical treatment of the text the whole context should be kept in view. Jesus the King of glory and the Man of sorrows, the hosannas of the people, to-day, and their shouts of "crucify, crucify," to-morrow, present striking antitheses.

The full exposition is found in the exposition of the Lesson for the first Sunday in Advent.

THE MARCH OF CHRIST TO HIS DEATH IS:

1. A march of His own accord.
2. A march of obedience to His Father.
3. A march in the meek form of a Servant.
4. A march to royal glory.

WHY DOES CHRIST PASS INTO DEATH?

1. To perfect Himself in obedience.
2. To fulfill the prophecies.
3. To take possession of the kingdom of grace.
4. To pour out holy joy over all.

BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.

- For, 1. He comes to suffer for us.
2. He suffers for us, that He may rule over us.
3. He rules over us, that He may save us.

CHRIST'S DEMAND OF HIS DISCIPLES:

1. Faithful regard to His word.
2. Voluntary sacrifice of their all.
3. Holy joy over His state of humiliation.
4. Solemn prayer to God in the highest.

THE KINGDOM JESUS ESTABLISHES.

1. It is rooted in humility.
2. It involves obedience.
3. It builds up a praying congregation.
4. It unites heaven and earth.

BEHOLD THY KING COMETH:

1. Freely out of love.
2. According to God's eternal purpose.
3. Through the obedience of faith.
4. Amid the praises of His people.

EASTER.

Mark xvi. 1-8.

NEBE justly observes that the parallel passage in Matthew has notable merits above the narrative of Mark. It enters more into details, is more complete, more dramatic. The earthquake is the great prelude of this day which broke the shackles from the world, and lifted the Lord upon the throne of majesty; the enemies of Jesus, the guards of the sacred tomb who had stood there in triumph, the hand of God has prostrated on the ground like dead men; the women appear having their hearts filled with anxiety and love; the Easter angel comforts the sorrowing ones and kindles in the unbelieving the hope of life, and finally the Lord Himself meets with His precious Easter greeting, *χαίρετε*, the devoted women as they are hastening away. This greeting, All hail! forms the finale, which Christ addresses to His own to the end of time.

In contrast with this, our Pericope seems meagre. It has nothing of the earthquake, nothing of the guards, nothing of the appearances of Him who was dead and who now lives as the One living from everlasting to everlasting. Our Pericope, however, as Nebe admits, is only a link of a chain, a member of an organism. Thus regarded, he deems it fortunate that the church took the Lesson for the day from Mark rather than from Matthew. "The latter is too rich for a sermon, too overwhelming. It exhausts everything and would have seriously trenched upon the Lesson for the Second Easter," which we shall take as the second or evening Lesson for Easter. The two embrace substantially what is comprehended in the parallel passage of Matthew.

Besides Matt. xxviii. 1-10, Luke xxiv. 1 ff. and John xx. 1 ff., offer parallel narratives. To take up in the interest of Apologetics all the alleged discrepancies which the enemies of the gospel from the time of Origen down to David Straus have claimed to discover, and have employed against the truth of the evangelical narrative, does not fall within the scope of these Lectures. We shall simply, in passing, notice such variations in the representation of the different writers as come within the circle of the Lesson. Olshausen

says: "The account would have been far more suspicious, if in unessential points it were entirely free from discrepancy. It is now perfectly harmonious in the main facts of the narrative, but moves independently in reference to secondary matters. Assuming, further, that the discrepancies were utterly inexplicable, yet even this circumstance would not damage the credibility of what is essential in the narrative. But an explanation of particulars will show that these variations are but free modes of conceiving the same occurrences, such as generally occur where several persons, unconnected one with another, recount the same event."

We should enter upon the contemplation of this momentous event, the greatest in the world's history, with such feelings of awe as overcame Moses at the burning bush when he was directed, "Take off thy shoes, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." The open sepulchre was the rallying point for the dismayed disciples. Here was rekindled that faith by which they overturned mountains and by which they overcame the world. The resurrection of Jesus is historically and apologetically the one secret which explains the faith and the career of the twelve, which accounts for the organization of the Christian Church, which has sustained the Church in all its terrific conflicts, and which will preserve it under all possible trials in the future against the gates of hell.

We cannot stop to consider the various theories by which rationalists oppose the supreme event in human history. They have all been abundantly shown to be untenable. Baur's assumption that the faith in the resurrection more than the fact of the resurrection was the motive power of the apostles in their future activity, admits that the apostolic activity was due to this belief, but that the apostles could have been inspired and sustained in their prodigious enterprise through evil report and good report by a delusion and a falsehood, demands a greater strain on human credulity than the actual resurrection of Jesus. "Faith in mere visions or phantoms may produce phantoms, but not such a phenomenon as the Christian Church, the greatest fact and the mightiest institution in the history of the world." What beneficent or far-reaching institution has been founded by the spiritualists?

1. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary . . . bought spices that they might come and anoint him."

The Jews reckoned the day from evening to evening. The evangelist accordingly does not introduce us at once to the Easter morning, but to the Easter eve, the evening of the peaceful Saturday. Nebe: "The Sabbath which had begun on the evening of

Good Friday had declined, and the Sabbath which then came to an end was to be the end of the Sabbath. A new time, a new era, was now to begin. Old things had passed away, all things were to become new. The Sabbath was to be replaced by the Sunday of the Christian Church; the Sabbath was the last day of the week, Sunday is the first. The light of this Sunday illumines all the other days. They receive from it their consecration, their fullness, their blessing. The days of the Jews verged toward the Sabbath; they sought for the light in the future, for Israel was not yet in possession of salvation, but only of promise, of hope. The ancients accordingly, and quite properly, named Sunday (day of the sun), the day of the Lord, *Κυριακή*, *Dies Dominica*, for it is Christ who has made the day what it is."

Additional grounds for the observance of the day are furnished by the Fathers: Barnabas, Epistle, ch. 15, says: "Ye perceive how He speaks: Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to me, but that is which I have made; when giving rest to all things I shall make a beginning of the eighth day, that is, a beginning of another world. Wherefore also we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead." Justin Martyr, First Apology, ch. 67, says: "Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead."

Undoubtedly it was the commemoration of the resurrection that led to the observance of the first day of the week instead of the last. Among Jewish Christians both days were observed; among the Gentiles only the first day. Ignatius, Epistle to the Magnesians, ch. 9, speaks of those who had been brought up in the ancient order of things, having "come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death."

The Sabbath being past—Saturday after sunset—certain women who had followed the Lord from Galilee purchased spices. The first divergence in the accounts occurs here. Luke xxiii. 56 says of these women: "And they returned (from the sepulchre in which the Lord had been laid) and prepared spices and ointment. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment."

The solution offered by some is that the Aorist is to be rendered as a Pluperfect, "had bought." Meyer admits, of course, a difference in the two accounts. Nebe holds the divergence to be imma-

terial, and suggests that while the women were on the Sabbath preparing their perfume they discovered that in their purchase, during the excitement on the evening of Good Friday, they had not gotten the right proportions, and that as soon as the law at the close of the Sabbath allowed buying and selling, they proceeded promptly to correct their mistake. Love can never do enough; possibly, too, they had obtained some further contributions from friends and disciples of Jesus, and being enabled thus to procure a generous supply, they made further purchase.

Mark mentions three women who, v. 2, together also make the journey to the sepulchre. He mentions first Mary Magdalene. As there were other Marys, this one had the surname, the Magdalene, named after the locality of Magdala, where she was either born or resided. Some locate it east of the Sea of Galilee; others near Tiberias, on the west shore. Cf. Matt. xv. 39. A small village called Mejdal is found there to-day. In Luke viii. 2 and Mk. xv. 40 the Magdalene is mentioned among the band of women who accompanied Jesus and ministered to Him. He cast out from her seven devils. Cf. Mk. xvi. 9; Luke viii. 2. "She presents herself quite conspicuously on Easter, alike through the depths of her sorrow, the fervor of her love, and the genuineness of her faith."

A Greek tradition made her the daughter of the woman of Canaan, and reported her as making afterwards a journey to the court of the Emperor, in order to lodge accusation against Pilate, and as dying in Ephesus while on a visit to the mother of our Lord. A western tradition identified her with the woman that was "a sinner." Luke vii. 37 ff. Other interesting and sentimental hypotheses have been proposed, even to the identification of the Magdalene with Mary the sister of Lazarus.

Mary, "she of James," is the second one mentioned. This is a remarkable designation, especially if she is the same who in the previous verse, xv. 47, is called Mary "of Josés." The latter Mary had besides Josés yet another son. Quite explicitly she is called the mother of James the Little and of Josés in xv. 40. As our passage does not characterize James more specifically, and as the change is unaccountable, some have held that this Mary is not the same as the one so particularly described in xv. 40, 47. But since the three women appear in close fellowship in the first passage, and in the second at least Mary Magdalene and Mary (of Josés), and in ours the three are again together, Mary being designated "of James," and as Matt. xxviii. 1 must have the same woman in mind, "the other Mary," which he mentions in the same manner,

xxvii. 61, and whom in xxvii. 56 he calls the mother of James and Joses, we conclude that the Mary of the three verses is the same. Salome, the third of the devoted circle, was the wife of Zebedee, the happy mother of two of the disciples.

Ἀρώματα: aromatic herbs, which were mingled with oil so as to anoint a dead body therewith. This does not conflict with John xix. 40, where spices were used when the body was wound in the linen clothes. Meyer thinks that on account of the nearness of the Sabbath Joseph and Nicodemus had hurriedly performed their tender ministrations, and that these women meant to supplement any defect in the anointing. But Nebe justly holds that if the two men had finished the embalming in the best manner possible, the women would still have proceeded to the sepulchre with their ointment. Love is not satisfied to have the services of another substituted for the ministrations it fondly performs as its own offering. These women clung to Him with their whole heart, and in order to follow Him had forsaken all—what such devotion would minister even to His lifeless body may be easily imagined. Bengel: "Such offices were performed by those who were not connected by the closest relationship; so that it is not wonderful that our Lord's mother was not there with them."

The embalming of bodies is not original with the Israelites. Jacob is the first of the patriarchs who was embalmed, Gen. l. 2, 3. Joseph also was embalmed, l. 26. Command to embalm Jacob had been given by Joseph to his servants, and these servants ("physicians") were undoubtedly Egyptians. It was specifically an Egyptian art, being confined (with one or two possible exceptions) to the Egyptians and nations which may be supposed to have borrowed it from them. The feeling which led to the practice probably sprang from the belief of the Egyptians in the future reunion of the soul with the body. "Such a reunion is distinctly spoken of in the Book of the Dead, and obscure as is the subject, the statements are sufficiently positive to make this general conclusion certain."

It may be admitted that a disbelief in immortality may have been the spring of this practice; that, having no hope in the future, nations embalmed their dead so as to preserve them artificially as long as possible from absolute annihilation. But the Greeks and Romans, who generally regarded existence as terminating with this life, were accustomed to commit their dead bodies to the flames, so that they might be speedily reduced to nothing. Among the Egyptians, on the contrary, there prevailed the belief in a life after death. Their great river annually called forth life from death in

nature; and they seem by this to have been impelled to the hope of life's breath returning to the dead members of the body. Accordingly their kings, immediately upon mounting the throne, proceeded with the erection of their mausoleums, in which they expected to repose until the great day.

Thus embalming seems to have been designed as a preservation of the germ which on the morning of the resurrection shall burst forth into imperishable life. It was long after the exodus that we find any record of Jewish embalming, and then we have in the Old Testament but one distinct mention of the practice, the case of King Asa. 2 Chron. xvi. 14.

The women with their perfume sought the Lord among the dead. They believed like Martha, John xi. 24, in a resurrection of the dead in due time, but they had not attained to the faith of a resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

2. "And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen."

Τῇ μιᾷ τῶν Σαββάτων. Σάββατα denotes in the first instance sabbath, then week. This expression corresponds exactly to the Rabbinical mode of designating the days of the week.

The impression which Mark leaves on the reader is that as the three women together prepared the spices, so they went together to the tomb. But the other evangelists present the matter somewhat differently. Matt. xxviii. 1 mentions only Mary M. and the other Mary as proceeding to the tomb. Luke xxiv. 10 gives the names of Mary M., Joanna, Mary mother of James, and "the rest." John xx. 1 mentions only the Magdalene as coming to the grave. Some have supposed that Mary M., the one most deeply moved by grief, came first of all to the grave (Bengel: much sooner than the other women), and then, finding the stone removed, hastened back to the city to inform Peter about the body of the Lord having been taken away, and that during her absence the other Mary, Joanna, Salome and the rest of the women arrived. Some: they all went to the grave together, but on the way back Mary M. outran the others. There was no doubt a considerable body of women who hastened early on the Easter morn to the sepulchre. All the synoptists mention Mary M. conspicuously. She is the leader, the head and guide of the company. Mary, mother of James, is mentioned by the three; Salome is added by Mark, Joanna by Luke, whose reference to yet "others" offers a key to the variation. Each evangelist mentions the women who to him are best known, or appear most notable. John names only Mary M., but in v. 2 has her speak in the plural, "we know." His course is consistent

with the others, all placing her at the head. She is the chief person in this blessed circle.

Nebe's view is that when Mary M. hurried away without having entered into the grave, to report the disappearance of the body, the other women remained by the grave until the return of Mary with the two apostles. But while waiting they cannot remain inactive, they take courage and enter into the grave to see for themselves what had actually taken place. They find the grave deserted, but they receive specific directions from an angel, and they hasten away to carry out his instructions. To the objection that as they were returning they must have met Mary M., Peter and John, Nebe answers that as Jerusalem lay upon a hill surrounded by deep valleys, it is likely that two ways led from Joseph's garden to Jerusalem, and by different gates.

Λίαν πρωί. "Very early" the women went forth. John and Luke agree precisely with this. The former says "early, while it was yet dark," the latter "at early dawn" (deep in the morning). Rightly understood Matthew's account agrees with these. But Mark's addition, "when the sun was risen," seems to conflict with the others, "at early dawn," "while yet dark;" and even with himself. Some have rendered "the sun rising," which is grammatically inadmissible. Meyer: "the sun had only just appeared above the horizon." Nebe thinks there is no difference, because "the transition from darkness to light and from light to darkness is much briefer in the east than in countries lying within the temperate zone. It is therefore quite possible that the women departed from their lodgings while it was yet dark, and by sunrise they had already reached the sepulchre." He also regards the present "they come" as significant on this point.

"Mark does not as historian report that the women went out to the grave; he portrays like a painter, leads us *mediam in rem* and brings us at once to the grave. At that moment when they come to the grave the sun had already risen."

V. 3. "And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door" . . .

Woman's love and woman's lack of reasoning appear here side by side. The women were so absorbed in the offering of their fragrant ointment which love meant to lay as a sweet smelling sacrifice upon His body, that they took consideration of nothing else. The guard of Roman soldiers, the stone rolled into the entrance of the tomb from without, and the imperial seal by which it had been closed, had never entered their minds, though as the two Marys had long lingered about the tomb on Friday evening, they of

course knew of the stone. The one thought dominated them to the exclusion of every other. At the last moment it occurs to them what an insurmountable obstacle blocks their way. Knowing that their combined strength would be insufficient, they yet cherish hope against hope, that some one may be found who can remove the very large stone from the mouth of the sepulchre. Love has no idea of being thwarted—and it seldom is.

“The door of the sepulchre” is the opening of the gallery, which leads into the rocky chamber where the tomb had been hewn out. As they express no anxiety about the seal and the watch, it is inferred that they knew nothing of these, Matt. xxvii. 66. Luke xxiii. 56 says, the women “rested on the Sabbath.” They remained absorbed in their terrible bereavement, and the other disciples evidently did not communicate with them during its silent hours. Every one had enough to do with his own distress. The prophecy of Christ, Matt. xxvi. 31, “All ye shall be offended because of me, for it is written I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad,” must be fulfilled. The women were thus kept in ignorance of what transpired after they went away from the grave. It was well they were. Had they known all, they might have felt constrained to forego the preparation of the spices, an occupation which beguiled their stricken hearts as a sweet solace.

The Sun with healing in His wings had in great power and majesty risen in the sky of grace, but to these pious women this Sun had not yet risen. The darkness of Good Friday still overshadows their hearts while they seek the living among the dead, and in the utmost perplexity torture themselves with the question, “Who shall roll us away the stone?” Not yet had the stone been rolled away from their own hearts, or we should hear them shout :

“Hail, day of days, in peals of praise
Throughout all ages owned,
When Christ, our God, hell’s empire trod
And high o’er heaven was throned.

This glorious morn, the world new-born
In rising beauty shows,
How with her Lord to life restored,
Her gifts and graces rose.

Lo ! He who died, the Crucified,
God over all He reigns.”

Nebe says, this question (“Who shall roll,” etc.) which resounds in the morning dawn, re-echoes throughout the entire world. The

creature which through sin was made subject to vanity, trembles and shudders in the prospect of death, the king of terrors, and yearns and groans for a glimmer of the eternal light, for the shadow of immortality. The cry of the apostle, Rom. vii. 24, "O wretched man! who shall deliver me," etc., is the universal cry of anguish in humanity, the symbol of the profoundest earthly sigh. As the heart panteth for the water-brooks, so does the human soul pant for eternal life. Men have sought in all periods of history to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre; but their mysteries and their philosophies have not availed. The stone was immovable, and the children of this world at last gave up the vain attempt. Unless the hand of the Almighty remove it, that stone must close the tomb forever.

4. "And looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great."

Having entered the garden, with great perplexity they lift up their eyes to see what is to be done in respect of the stone. When lo! their anxiety was groundless. The unuttered sighs of their hearts have come up before God. Yea, before they cried He had answered their distress. He is ever beforehand with us, so that His prevenient care leaves no room nor excuse for our anxiety. He has cared for everything, even before we begin to care. Our cares always come too late; His fatherly care has foreseen and disposed everything. "This is true regarding things temporal and things spiritual. All our days are written in His book even before one occurs. The handwriting which testifies against us is blotted out by the blood of the Son of God, before even our sins take hold of us and our own heart condemns us."

Looking up they behold that the stone is rolled back. The variation in the text does not alter the sense. Nebe holds that the Present is here also purposely chosen to indicate that the women did not come gradually to realize what had occurred. "Suddenly, in a moment, the outward foil of the great Easter miracle is revealed to them." The stone is rolled away.

When? How? Why? Matt. xxviii. 2 answers: "There was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone." Nebe notes the difference in the form of Christ's manifestation at the nativity and at the resurrection. Then, a multitude of the heavenly host descended, but there was no trembling of the earth under their tread; now, at first, only one angel comes down, but his coming violently shakes the earth. "The Lord who now reveals Himself comes in such majesty that the heavens flee before Him, the hills melt and

the earth moves from her foundations.” With what power must He come to bring to His feet the nations, when even the messenger of His resurrection appears in this striking manner !

To what intent was the stone rolled away? Certainly not to open a way for the return of the Lord into the land of the living. Not that He might inhale the breath of life through the opened doors of the sepulchre. The Lord who on that same evening entered the chamber of His apostles, the doors being closed, had no need of some one unlocking for Him the portals of His sepulchre in order to return to life. It is an ancient view that Christ already during the night arose from the dead.

“The angel rolls back the stone from the empty grave, this both for the sake of the women and of the watch.” The latter, adds Nebe, should be convinced by the angelic appearance that they were fighting against God, and by the removal of the stone a sign would be given them that by no power could they block the entrance and triumphal march of the Lord and of His kingdom into and through the world. Aside from this, they were to be moved by deadly fear to desert their posts, that the friends of Jesus might gain admission to this small but glorious Easter temple. The stone was rolled back also directly for the sake of the women and the other disciples of Jesus. Their faith was still very weak; as Thomas was to lay his fingers into the yet open wounds of the body, so were these to explore with their eyes the open grave in order to be persuaded by their senses that the crucified and dead had arisen and was alive.

The stone is rolled away—not by the hand of the Risen One. For such a work He is too exalted and glorious. An angel, a ministering spirit, has effected this.

Only the stone rolled away, nothing else did the women see. Matt. xxviii. 2 says, the angel “sat upon it,” which some interpret as indicating that according to Matthew the women must have seen the angel in front of the grave, instead of in the grave, as recorded here v. 5.

But Nebe holds that Matt. xxviii. 6, “He is not here; come see the place where the Lord lay,” shows that “the angel sat inside the grave of the Risen One.” The women looked within and there beheld the angel who had invited them into the innermost chamber of the holy of holies.

Meyer: “Mark and Luke relate the angelic appearance as it presented itself, Matthew as that which it actually was.” He adds: “Here if anywhere, however, amid so much that is supernatural, must we be prepared to expect divergent accounts of what took place, above all in regard to the angelic manifestations, which are matters

depending on individual observation and experience, and not the objective perceptions of impartial and disinterested spectators." Further on, John xx. 12, he says: "Appearances of angels are certainly, according to Scripture, not to be relegated into the mere subjective sphere; but they communicate with and render themselves visible and audible simply and solely to him for whom they are real, whilst they are not perceptible by others." Cf. John xii. 29.

Nebe assumes that the angel sat upon the stone before the grave simply as long as the guards remained; and that when these recovered from their stupefying fright and fled; he left his seat in order to offer within the grave worship to the Father who had raised His only-begotten Son from the dead, which sounds very pious—and very fanciful. Such a solution will hardly convince a doubter.

"For it was exceeding great;" coming where it does, this clause is surprising and confusing. Bengel recognizes a trajection: "the particle 'for' intimates both the reason why the women were in anxiety (v. 3), and the reason why they perceived that the stone must have been rolled away with an unusually great power." Meyer holds the idea of a transposition to be arbitrary.

"It refers to what immediately precedes. After they had looked up (literally) they beheld (*i. e.*, intently gazed upon) that the stone was rolled away: for (specification of the reason how it happened that this perception could not escape them after their looking up, but the fact of its having been rolled away must of necessity meet their eyes) it was very great." He conceives the very large stone lying close by the door of the tomb. Nebe agrees with this. The added clause with *γὰρ*, "for," is to establish the fact that the women perceived the stone rolled away. They would not have made the discovery if the stone had not been so very large. They come quite early to the grave, at sunrise, when the narrow glen where Joseph's tomb was, still lay in the shadow of the morning. Hence as the women lifted up their down-cast faces, the joyful fact of the stone being rolled away might have escaped their discovery if it had not been exceeding large.

5. "And entering into the tomb . . . a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe" . . .

Drawn by love they enter the gallery with a view to the application of their perfume, though possibly, too, a divining faith was beginning to throb in their hearts. Instead of finding Him whom their soul loved, they see a young man, *νεανίσκον*. Matt. xxviii. 5 f. says, it was an angel who spoke to the women. For the most

part angels appeared in the form of a man, here of a youthful human form, cf. 2 Macc. ii. 26; Josephus, Antt. V., viii. 2 f.; Gen. xix. 5 f.

As cohorts of angels hovered over the fields of Bethlehem on the morning of the nativity, so faith certainly looks for angels on the morning of the resurrection, and some have thought it strange that there should be but one in the grave of the Risen One. "If the grave would not hold more than one or two, the garden, one would think, would be filled with their choirs."

Luke reports, "two men stood by them in shining garments." According to John xx. 12, Mary M. "seeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." Some explain: Only one of the angels presented himself and addressed the women. Cf. what is quoted from Meyer, page 370.

According to the rationalists, this was a young man employed by the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea, who rolled away the stone that fresh air might be admitted into the newly-hewn tomb, not having known that his master had granted the use of his splendid tomb to another! And this is called rational exegesis!

"Sitting on the right side:" ready at hand to his Lord, fitly ministering to Him.

The FF. were fond of allegorizing on this "young man" in the grave of the Risen One. What a lesson to those fearing death! In the grave of the Risen One sits the representative of eternal life, eternal youth. Where the eye of sense looks for dust, the eye of faith finds the pledge of immortality. The women enter into the grave, that having been buried with Christ they may rise with Him. The young man sits. The labor and toil of life are ended. The eternal Sabbath dawns, in which we shall rest from our labors. Boundless thought is inspired by the angel in the grave.

"Arrayed in a white robe," *στολὴν λευκὴν*, symbolical of the inner purity, emblematic of celestial light. It is only in the New Testament that angels have appeared in this dress. Acts i. 10; x. 30. This offers another point for allegorizing: Eternal life is a life in holiness and righteousness acceptable before God.

The sight of the angel astounds the women. The term *θάμβος* includes both amazement and fear. Matthew has *φόβος*, "fear." God prepared this state of mind in them by all that had happened. The grave itself is an awful place, which no man can tread without solemn emotions. Then the cords of their hearts are still vibrating from the heavy blow which stunned them on Good Friday. Nebe: "The open grave filled them with amazement; the vision

of the angel overwhelmed them with astonishment and terror. An extraordinary event must have occurred in the stillness of the night. The invisible world has once more perceptibly projected itself into the visible world. The women have a repetition of the experience of the shepherds on Christmas night."

6. "And he saith unto them, Be not amazed: Ye seek Jesus the Nazarene, which hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here" . . .

Matthew's account is almost identical. Commentators generally imagine they detect agitation in the language of the first herald of the resurrection, as well as in the astonishment of the women. The discourse is strikingly disconnected. "His heart is leaping, and there well up from it not regular periods, but detached and short sentences." Meyer: "Simple asyndeta in the lively eagerness of the discourse." Like the angels on the Holy Night, the angel here is first of all concerned to calm the fears, by which the women were overpowered. "Be not amazed." Suffer not yourselves to be overcome with fright and wonder. Bengel: "This is an expression used at the commencement of visions, which tempers fear, arising from the glorious sight overpowering the hearts of mortals, which promises security and conciliates attention."

This word of the angel, says Nebe, is at once the great prelude of the Easter sermon, it strikes the keynote which should pervade every Easter discourse. "He who has never celebrated an Easter in deed and in truth must needs be frightened and amazed, but why should he have any dread who believes and knows that Jesus has risen and lives? The Risen One breaks every fetter. Not only does His resurrection proclaim aloud to all injured innocence that every good cause must triumph, it preaches to all a liberation from the bondage of sin, from the power of death, from the gates of hell. Easter is a day of joy, the supreme Festival, the day not for terror but for rejoicing."

The poor women, beside themselves with fear, are tenderly reminded of the object of their visit. They are in search of Jesus, the Nazarene, the Crucified. By this reminder of their purpose he would also so impress their hearts as to prepare them to receive from him the announcement of what has, quite contrary to their expectations, occurred to their Lord. Not every heart is in a condition to meet the Risen One, to have part in His glorified life. Nebe thinks, the angel emphasizes their state of mind. Because they are seeking, they shall find. Their hearts are beating in holy love to Jesus, and though they have erred in seeking the Living among the dead, this does not seriously matter. The chief bent

and tendency of their hearts is toward Jesus, all else will therefore come right.

The emphatic position of "Jesus" shows that the angel has reference to this drift of their hearts. He says not, ye seek the Son of David, Christ, or the Lord, but Jesus. Nebe: "Their faith had suffered shipwreck. The One in the grave is no longer for them Christ, the Son of David, the Lord. They had hoped that He was the one who should redeem Israel, but this hope was now dashed. They had lost their faith in the Messiahship and the divine Sonship of Jesus, but love remained, love survives faith, love to Jesus, this blessed Son of Man. Him they are seeking, the crucified One, to present to Him the last offerings of grateful love. O that a spark of such love of Jesus might glow in every heart! Soon would the Easter sun arise with power!"

The angel follows this greeting with one word. It is not a creative fiat, like "Let there be light." It is only a word of narration, but this word creates a new world: *ἠγέρθη*, "He is risen." Literally "He was awakened." Either rendering does justice to the idea of the Scriptures. The resurrection of the Lord is presented at one time as His own work, Matt. xvii. 9; xx. 19; Mk. xvi. 9; Rom. xiv. 9; John x. 18, etc.; at another as the work of the Father on the Son, Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 23; xxvi. 32; John ii. 22; Rom. iv. 24, etc. The Son doeth nothing of Himself.

The rationalist theory of a merely apparent death, which makes the resurrection the recovery from a swoon, has been virtually abandoned by the critics. Meyer says: "It is so decidedly at variance with the predictions of Jesus Himself regarding His end, as well as with the whole testimony of the gospel, is so utterly destructive of the fundamental idea of the resurrection, undermines so completely the whole groundwork of the redemption brought about by Christ, is so inconsistent with the accumulated testimony of centuries as furnished by the very existence of the Church itself, which is based upon the facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and requires such a remarkable series of other theories and assumptions of an extraordinary and supernatural character in order to explain duly authenticated facts regarding Christ's appearance and actions after His resurrection—that with friends and foes alike testifying to the actual death of Jesus, we are bound at once to dismiss it, as an utterly abortive attempt to get rid of the physiological mystery of the resurrection."

Modern criticism treats the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, partly as subjective creations either of the intellect "in its efforts to reconcile the Messianic prophecies and the belief in the

Messiah with the fact of His death, or of ecstatic vision, and therefore as mere mental phenomena which came to be embodied in certain objective incidents." Some, attributing the appearances in question "to some objective influence emanating from Christ Himself," have felt constrained to regard them as "real manifestations of His person in the glorified form in which it emerged from out of death (not from the 'grave')"—"a telegram from heaven, after the extinction of Christ's earthly nature." All such attempts to treat what has been recorded as an actual fact as though it were based merely on mental phenomena, says Meyer, "are in opposition *in general* to the explicit and unhesitating view of all the evangelists and apostles, as well as *in particular* to the uniform reference to the empty grave, and no less uniform use of the expression 'third day,' classical testimonies which can never be silenced." See his Comm. on Matt. xxviii. 10.

The word of the angel appeals to our confidence more than these silly devices of unsanctified reason. And the resurrection of Jesus from the dead cannot be a myth, "unless the church as it now exists, and as it was founded by the apostles, is a myth, and joy and peace wrought by the Holy Ghost in the heart, the consciousness of adoption and of a state of grace, are only the conceits of the imagination." A church in which the living forces of eternal life are at work has not grown out of a corpse. It rests upon One who has conquered death and is alive forever more.

Nebe: "Not the hallucinations of nervous women, nor the dreams and visions of apostles, have enriched the world with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those women proceeding early to the grave of the Crucified did not betray any weak nerves, nor did their search for the living among the dead indicate in the least a state of mind prepared for a vision of the resurrection of Jesus. The apostles, too, were mentally prepared for anything but such a turn of affairs. It is hardly conceivable that their minds, in the state they were in, could have conjured up a vision of the glory of their Lord. And had such an ecstatic vision been possible, the menacing and murderous attitude of the world toward them, when they began to proclaim the resurrection, would have effectually dispelled the illusion."

"He is risen." The Church has always understood by the resurrection what Ignatius already taught, Ep. ad Smyr. C. 3: "I know that after His resurrection also He was still in the flesh." Theophylact: "He was taken up in the flesh and with a body." The orthodox faith is given very clearly by Hollaz: "The resurrection is the act of glorious victory, by which Christ, the God-

man, through the same power with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, led forth His body, reunited with the soul and glorified, from the tomb, and showed it alive to His disciples, by various proofs, for the confirmation of our peace, fellowship, joy, and hope in our own future resurrection." As Christ is the first-fruits of them that slept, 1 Cor. xv. 20, the spirit of them that fall asleep shall finally be reunited organically with the body, corresponding entirely with the higher, transfigured and spiritual condition.

"He is not here." The angel invites them to make a thorough examination to convince themselves. The empty tomb will help them to believe that He is risen, will confirm the angelic announcement which at first may have seemed insufficient to convince them. If ye believe not my words, believe the empty sepulchre. It offers strong evidence to the rising. The first thought of Mary M. was that the body had been stolen, John xx. 2. The empty tomb shows that this could not have been the case. Everything was left in perfect order, the linen clothes were lying there, "the napkin that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." John xx. 6, 7. No sign here of violent or hasty work.

Luther: "He is not here, as also St. Paul, Coll. iii. 1, 2, speaks: 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, . . . Set your affections on things above and not things on the earth.' This is to strip a Christian wholly of the world and to lift him above it, so that he belongs no more to this life, neither under the pope nor under the emperor, nor under any creature. But where Christ is, there also is a Christian to be. Christ is not here. Then a Christian must also not be here. Therefore, no one can put either Christ or a Christian into certain peculiar fixed regulations, such as monasticism. The word is ever: 'He is not here.' He has left the husk below, the righteousness, piety, wisdom and law of this world, everything of this kind He has utterly stripped off. You must seek Him not in the things you find upon earth. A Christian can no more be confined in such husks than Christ Himself. As Christ is above all, so is also a Christian above all. Christ has in Himself overcome all things, and because we believe this we can also say, 'not here.'" St. Paul says: "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

Nebe notes also the reference of these words to life viewed from without: "The Lord is not here, in the grave; that is too narrow for Him. Nor is He without in the garden, that, too, cannot contain His glory; no place in the world is any longer large enough to comprehend Him, no village, no city, no land, no continent. The

earth is too small for His magnitude. Heaven and earth together cannot contain His proportions. He is now the Lord who will take possession of all the kingdoms of this world, the Lord to whom is given all power in heaven and on earth."

7. "But go, tell his disciples and Peter, he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."

Bengel: In antithesis to v. 6, "He is not *here*," "*There* shall ye see him." Meyer, ἀλλὰ, breaking off, before the summons which suddenly intervened.

They had entered into the inner recess, but they must not celebrate Easter there. The angel has a special commission for them from their Lord and His: "Go." They are to be Christ's Easter messengers. Jerome: "Through woman death had been announced; through woman also life is resurrected." Nebe: "Women are to keep silence in the church, but when men fail to speak, then women must come forth, just as we are told that if human tongues do not proclaim the honor of the Lord the stones will cry out."

"And Peter:" to the disciples and especially to Peter. Meyer explains this special prominence "by the ascendancy and pre-*cedence*, which by means of Jesus Himself (Matt. xvi. 18) he possessed as *primus inter pares*, cf. Mk. ix. 2; xiv. 33, not by the denial of Peter, to whom the announcement is held to have given the assurance of forgiveness." The text has nothing of the latter, and Peter might have misinterpreted it. But Nebe holds that if we consider the course of Jesus toward the fallen disciple, and the depth of the godly sorrow which filled the latter's soul, we must accept the interpretation, that but for such a message from the angel, Peter must have felt himself excluded from the company of disciples, and would not have dared to appear any longer in the favored circle. Bengel reminds us how Peter subsequently proclaimed this testimony in his acts and epistles.

The women are to inform the apostles what they had seen and heard, not the angel. Accordingly, when, after the women, Peter and John came to the sepulchre, they saw no angel. After them Mary M. came a second time (to the grave, the first time into it), and she again sees angels. Regarding which Bengel says: "The apostles were especially bound to have believed before they saw; therefore the fact is announced to them through the women, and their faith is thereby tried." The angel carefully formulates the communication they are to make to the disciples, "He goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see Him as He said," xiv. 28.

They are to notify them of an appearance of Jesus in prospect, in fact invite them to this appearance, and that in Galilee.

"There shall ye see Him"—and yet the kind Saviour showed Himself to them before that. Here is a difficulty. The Lord manifested Himself to His disciples in Jerusalem, when His angel had notified them of a meeting with Him in Galilee. Nebe finds the solution in the last clause of the angelic direction, "as He told you." In Mk. xiv. 27 f.: "All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee." "Jesus solemnly declares that He who as the good shepherd will lay down His life for the sheep, when He shall have taken His life again from death will again show Himself to them as the shepherd in Galilee; He will there again lead them out and in."

Von Hofmann: "*There*, where among the lowly and the ignorant He found faith, and not in Jerusalem, where the hatred of the rulers had nailed Him to the cross, it was fitting that He should again gather His little flock, which His death had left like sheep without a shepherd." The Lord appears indeed in Judea, but not as the shepherd who collects his flock around him. He does not gather His flock together till He comes to Galilee. "In Judea He is concerned only that the sheep of His flock shall not be further dispersed, *e. g.*, the two walking to Emmaus, and Thomas, but that they proceed at the close of the feast toward Galilee, in the hope that there they shall again be led by Him into green pastures." There was the place where, as the Good Shepherd, He could best gather the sheep around Him, for it was not only the land of His disciples, where on a mountain more than five hundred brethren appeared at one time, 1 Cor. xv. 6, but it was a quiet and peaceful region. Bengel says the appearance in Galilee was very solemn and public.

8. "And they went out and fled . . . for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid."

Nebe thinks that they understood the angel's charge and meant to fulfill it as they fled in haste from the sepulchre, but according to Meyer "from fear and amazement they left the bidding of the angel unfulfilled. That subsequently they told the commission given to them by the angel is self-evident; but they did not execute it." Bengel renders τρέμος, "trembling" of the body, ἐκστασις, "stupor" (amazement) of the mind. Matthew adds "joy" to the fear. In spiritual matters these emotions can co-

exist. Nebe makes the ecstasy that of joy, hence identical with Matthew. He compares the hearts of these women to waves of the sea, rising now high toward heaven and then again plunging into the depths. How gladly would they have believed the announcement that Jesus was risen, and sung their Psalms of praise to His God and theirs, but as they were seeking the living among the dead and had forgotten all His Easter prophecies, as they were still in the flesh, they cannot rightly believe what they fain would believe. Their hearts oscillate between faith and unfaith, and so cannot rest. It is not necessary, Nebe holds, to assume unbelief in these women. It is possible that the glorious and sudden surprise simply overwhelmed them, so that they fled and kept silent. But it is likely that they were as slow as the apostles to attain the joyous realization of the Lord's resurrection.

While they were thus beside themselves with surprise, they could not bear testimony, "The Lord is risen and lives." "They said nothing to any one." Nebe holds that the angelic charge did not relate to the first days or hours, but to the time after the great Festival—the following week. As Jesus when He appeared on Easter evening did not direct the eleven to meet Him in Galilee, nor on the following Sunday evening, and as notwithstanding, we find the disciples gathered there later, we seem to have actual proof that they were directed thither by the mouth of the women, a proof also that the latter executed the commission of the angel. This is against Meyer's view above. The evangelist simply portrays the first profound impression, which the announcement of the resurrection made upon the pious women. They were so overcome that for a time they could not speak. Gradually they recovered themselves, as Luke tells us, on that very Easter day and faithfully reported everything. Luke xxiv. 22.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE FIRST EASTER.

1. The precious Easter offering.
2. The dear Easter Church.
3. The incontrovertible Easter fact.
4. The solemn Easter command.

THE STONE IS ROLLED AWAY:

1. From the grave of the Lord.
2. From the hearts of believers.
3. From the graves of our dead.

HE IS RISEN.

1. This is no old wives' fable.
2. This is a divine announcement.
3. This is a world-event.

JESUS LIVES:

1. In the hearts of believers.
2. In the glory of His Father.
3. In the revelation of His life-potency.

A BLESSED EASTER OBSERVANCE.

1. When we come with the offering of holy love.
2. When we cast aside all our cares.
3. When we believe the preaching of the angel.
4. When we with fear and trembling obey God's command.

THE JOURNEY TO THE TOMB OF THE RISEN ONE, A JOURNEY:

1. Of love. 2. Of solicitude. 3. Of hope. 4. Of joy. 5. Of Life.

THE RISEN ONE, THE LORD OF GLORY.

This is shown:

1. By the omnipotence of the Father.
2. By the salutation of the angel.
3. By the astonishment of believers.

THE RISEN ONE, THE PRINCE OF LIFE.

1. He is the life. 2. He gives life.

TRUE EASTER CHRISTIANS

1. Fervently love the Crucified.
2. Truly believe in the Risen One.
3. Patiently wait for Him that is to come again.

EASTER ADMONITIONS:

1. Away with all cares.
2. Away with all unbelief.
3. Away with all sins.

HE IS NOT HERE.

1. Not in the grave, for He is risen.
2. Not in the garden, for He now goes out into all the world.
3. Not in the world, for He has entered into the glory of His Father.

EASTER NIGHT, OR EASTER MONDAY.

LUKE xxiv. 13-25.

THIS is one of the most charming passages of Holy Writ, "a truly sweet history, containing many great and weighty matters." It makes an excellent Easter Lesson. The first Lesson is a strictly objective testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, while this Lesson subjectively appropriates the objective soteriological fact.

Here come into view such disciples as regarded at first the Easter tidings as "idle tales," but to whom the Risen One manifested Himself with such power, that they finally with burning hearts and flaming tongues declared that He had been recognized by them in the breaking of bread.

The second Easter Lesson closes with the "responsive testimony of the two pilgrims and the assembled disciples: The Lord is risen indeed." The real termination of Easter is, however, the "Peace with you," which follows our Lesson, the Lord having manifested Himself yet that same evening among His disciples with this significant salutation. The third Easter day was formerly kept, and gave this scene as the crowning passage of the glorious Easter text. There is no parallel to it. Mark xvi. 12 simply alludes to the fact that after His appearance to Mary M., the Risen One revealed Himself "in another form" unto two of them as they walked and went into the country, and this is generally held to refer to the scene in our Lesson—"a meagre intimation of the same history from another source."

13. "And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus . . . three-score furlongs from Jerusalem."

"Were going:" were on the way. The hour is not mentioned, some placing it late in p. m., others a. m. All depends on the determination of Emmaus, which in the New Testament is mentioned only here. Meyer fixes it according to Josephus 60 stadia ($7\frac{1}{2}$ miles) in a northwest direction from Jerusalem. Since the time of Eusebius it has often been confounded with the larger town of Emmaus, Ammaus, 1 Macc. iii. 40; ix. 50, in the plain of Judea, which since the third century A. D. has been named Nicopolis, and is 176 stadia (22 miles) from Jerusalem. This

would coincide with the Sinaitic text and others: "160 stadia." Nebe regards this as a correction, the copyist knowing only of the larger place. Josephus names the smaller and nearer locality also Emmaus, and says the Emperor divided some land there among 300 veterans.

"Two of them" were going along on Easter afternoon. They were not of the twelve, but from the whole body of the disciples. In v. 33 they found the eleven "gathered together." "Whether they were of the seventy cannot be determined. In other respects they are perfectly unknown." Luke v. 18 names the one Cleopas, introducing him as actually speaking. Meyer distinguishes this name from Clopas, John xix. 25. Luke may or may not have known the name of the other. In John i. 35, 40, two disciples are mentioned, but only one named. Some have conjectured Nathaniel. Bartholomew, Peter, Luke and some others have been guessed. Why should we seek to know what is not reported? A quaint writer advises that we take the unknown disciple's place. Some identify Cleopas with Alphaeus, husband of the other Mary, mother of James and Joses, and argue that James the Less was journeying with his father, and that Paul refers to his appearance to James in 1 Cor. xv. 7. But the James of this Pauline text was probably the Lord's brother and not James the Less—if we hold that there were three of that name—and the revelation there spoken of, it is specifically stated, was vouchsafed to an individual. Here the manifestation is to two. Cleopas is taken by many as an abridgment of Cleopatros.

14. "And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened."

What else could they have talked about than "these" tragic and momentous events, these namely related in vv. 1-12? Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. "They" is emphatic: "They, on their part, said in view of the appearance of Jesus to them." Cf. v. 15: "Jesus Himself drew near."

ὁμιλεῖν = *διαλέγεσθαι*. Confidingly they commune with one another on all that had occurred. They are true disciples. Though they do not yet believe in the risen Christ, yet "Christ is their One and their All. With them it was not, out of sight, out of mind. The One whom they last saw on Good Friday they would fain find again, that they might possess Him forever."

15. "And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus himself having drawn near was going with them."

He, of whom they were speaking, approached, "probably overtaking them from behind." Nebe sees in the questioning of these

two pilgrims "the entire peculiarity of the male sex. While the women, with fear and trembling, hasten away and treasure up in their hearts the momentous things which have transpired, allowing the Easter impressions to work inwardly, on the part of the men the interests of the understanding predominate. They want to understand the divine necessity for these events."

We have no warrant for distinguishing the two men as having different views of the situation. Both are reproved by the Lord for their unbelief and hardness of heart, both had taken offense at the cross, and it was only in minor matters that they differed in opinion. V. 17.

A third pilgrim joins them, He with whom in thought they had been journeying. "How could He, indeed, remain absent from them? He had truly entered into His glory that He might at all times be present with us." "It is precisely the resurrection," says Thomasius, "which renders practicable the proper and true communion of Christ with His own. Hence Matthew concludes his Gospel instead of with the ascension, with the promise of the Risen One: 'And lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.' Therefore, too, He Himself calls to Mary M.: 'Touch me not,' which Luther sententiously explains: shall she not touch Him until after His ascension? One would think, after He had ascended to His Father He must descend in order that He might be touched. But Christ corrected her opinion. She had supposed that the meaning of the resurrection was that He would again live among them, like Lazarus, Jairus' daughter and others, eat and drink with them, that Jesus had reëntered mortal life as before. Hence she would touch Him, enjoy His bodily presence, cherish the relations of intimate friendship with Him, and serve Him as before. But this is a misconception of the resurrection. Hence the Lord says, 'touch me not, for I am not yet ascended.' I have not risen that thou mightest touch and kiss me as before. I am not in being and life as before. I am not like Lazarus and others after they had been raised up by me. But I have arisen from the dead that I may ascend to my Father and enter upon another, an eternal life. Not thus did Lazarus arise. He did not ascend. The import of Christ's resurrection is that thereby He ascends to His Father and takes possession of His kingdom as Lord and King of all. He means to say to Mary M.: I do not care for thy touch, but I do care for thy right conception of my resurrection, namely, that thereby I passed into a different state of being."

But though our Lord passed through the resurrection into a different state of being in order that, His body having become

permanently transfigured, He might be everywhere personally present where His help is required, He Himself remains the same, His heart has undergone no change. The Risen One is ever the same merciful High Priest, the Good Shepherd. "Here are two poor lambs, that in their sadness have wandered away from the flock. The good shepherd follows them, in order to strengthen the weak and to bring back the lost." What a blessed fulfillment of His promise, Matt. xviii. 20, "Where two or three are assembled in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He joins them and walks with them.

16. "But their eyes were holden that they should not know him."

At their side He walks and their hearts are full of Him, and yet they do not recognize Him. Here is a field for the imagination of expositors. Meyer holds that the text "represents only a wonderful divine effect." The expression itself, *ἐκπαρόντρο*, which indicates a peculiar external influence, not to speak of its telic connection, as well as the correlative *διηνοίχθησαν*, etc., in v. 31, should have prevented their failure to recognize Him, from being attributed to an unfamiliar dress of Jesus, and to an alteration of His countenance by the tortures of crucifixion; or, on the other hand, to the disciples' own dejection.

Mark xvi. 12 says, He "appeared in another form." A great change in the body of Jesus was perceptible on the day of His resurrection. It was the same body, yet not the same. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. so connects the resurrection of the Lord with our own resurrection that we shall have to say, as the body of risen men will be glorified, so the body of the risen Lord must have been glorified. Of course we are incapable of apprehending or defining the bodily glorification of Jesus. But Nebe thinks that according to Paul the body of the risen Christ which had overcome the corruptible and the mortal was also free from the dishonor and weakness of our fleshly nature. It was on the one hand the translucent and perfect mirror of His glorified spirit, on the other hand a perfectly willing and in every way fully adapted organ of His will.

It was free from earthly shackles, lifted above the limitations of space, permeated with the fullness of theanthropic life, yet, without ceasing to be form and corporeity, serving the spirit as instrument of its activity, where and when it pleases. "In this body He can at any moment present Himself in any part of the world according to His promise, because in the unity and indivisibility of His entire person it has been transfigured into the heavenly life." The appearances of the Risen One fall into two groups: in the one the

bodily reality is made conspicuous, in the other the spiritual identity. According to the needs of the disciples the Lord revealed now more this, now more that, constituent of His glorified being. Where they imagined they had seen merely a phantom, His body was sufficiently palpable to show them that it consisted of flesh and bones; and where it behooved to show them that He had entered the state of glory the body became the organ for showing, by His becoming now visible, now invisible, that they had no longer to do with a gross material body. The disciples must learn both that He is still the same Jesus, and also that by His resurrection He has entered upon a new spiritual being and life.

Had the disciples been fully penetrated by the Holy Spirit, had they thoroughly known Jesus in the deepest spiritual sense, John xiv. 9, they must have at once recognized Him. But with the dimness of their eye of faith, they were not in a condition to know Him. It was not intended by Jesus so to present Himself to these two as at once to open their eyes. As in His humiliation He began with the word "believe the gospel," so in His state of exaltation the same demand of faith is made. They were to believe and then see, and not the converse. "Blessed are they that see not, and yet believe."

Olshausen holds that the reasons for not revealing Himself openly at first are "drawn probably from the personal character of the two disciples. They appear, v. 21, to have been entirely in error as to the Messiahship of Jesus, and hence were in need of some powerful support to their faith. This the Saviour vouchsafed by explaining to them the doctrine of Christ's vicarious death, as taught by the Scriptures." Nebe adds, that inasmuch as the Lord no longer intended to go in and out among them, but had risen in order to ascend soon to His Father, the effect of His making Himself at once known to them would have lasted only so long as they had Him before their eyes. If they had only recognized Him by their bodily eyes and not with the eye of the spirit, they would after the ascension have sunk back into the same disconsolate unbelief. "It is obvious, too, that the Lord was not intent upon immediate results, but upon thorough conviction and thorough conversion."

17. "And he said unto them, What words are these that ye exchange with one another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad."

Meyer takes the last clause as part of the address, "and are of a gloomy countenance." "The address passes over into the finite verb, bringing out this characteristic more emphatically." "Dis-

courses ('words') that ye in turn throw out to one another." The relative clause "that ye exchange" corresponds to the idea of questioning, v. 15. The Risen One does not address them as He did the women, who were flying from the grave, *χαίετε*, Matt. xxviii. 9, neither does He call them by name as He did Mary M. "They have gotten far away from the faith, and the Lord can only reveal Himself to them by degrees."

Their discussion appears to have been spirited, one vigorously answering the other, and Jesus cautiously and considerably inquires not only what was the nature of their animated discussion, but what occasioned the sadness of their countenance. This added inquiry would assure them that the question of the stranger was not one of mere curiosity, but of sympathy, and this was calculated to win their confidence. It was not meant as a reproof. Had He opened the interview with upbraiding, the inquiry which was intended to open their hearts to Him would have quickly closed them. His inquiry revealed a hearty sympathy. In tones of sincere and friendly interest He begged them to tell Him what is the matter, to pour out their grief, that by sharing it He may lighten their burden. Doubtless here their hearts began to burn. It is at once a necessity and a cordial for pain to give expression to itself. Note the wonderful tact of Jesus in starting a conversation. So He still insinuates Himself into our hearts. They promptly and gladly respond to this kindly question. According to one reading, they pause, they slacken their pace and stand still in their sadness, till they had answered the stranger's inquiry. He then joined His step with theirs, proceeding, as they walked on, to instruct and console the distressed pair.

Nebe observes: "Jesus who had entered into His glory, having laid aside His cross and having been crowned with honor and glory, yet keeps Himself near those who stand under the cross and with heavy hearts pursue their way." "Though to heaven and glory raised," it is the same Jesus' heart as before, beating with unutterable love to His own.

18. "And one of them, named Cleopas, answering said unto him, Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things". . .

Instead of a direct answer, Cleopas expresses his astonishment at the stranger's question. In Jerusalem, from whence this traveler has come, something has lately transpired of which every one must know and speak. If he does not know it he cannot belong to Jerusalem. He must be one of the multitude of strangers who during these Easter-days flock to the Holy City. The two are so absorbed in the destiny of Jesus, it appears to them so en-

tirely the only possible subject of discourse and of their sadness, that they cannot understand how any but an entire stranger could fail to know what has taken place.

Παρουεῖς may mean (1) to live as a stranger in Jerusalem, or (2) to have one's home near Jerusalem. Bengel, accepting the first, adds: "Jesus seems to have retained the dialect of Galilee, inasmuch as Cleopas does not take Him to be a citizen of Jerusalem."

Luther: "Art Thou alone among the strangers of Jerusalem?" Meyer holds this to be the usual and correct view, both from the LXX. and from Heb. xi. 9; Acts vii. 6; xiii. 17; 1 Peter i. 17; ii. 11, "since the disciples might recognize the unknown perchance as a foreign pilgrim to the feast, but not as a resident of the city of Jerusalem." Of course the two clauses, "dost Thou alone sojourn and knowest not," go together without a comma. *Μόνος*, "alone," belongs to both verbs, but especially to the second. Some: Dost thou live alone? The two taken together constitute the ground of their question, whether it is he alone in whose experience this is the case.

19. "And he said unto them, What things? . . . The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in deed and word" . . .

"The things concerning Jesus," after a description of Him, are detailed in v. 20. Cf. latter clause of vv. 14 and 18.

Ποῖα; What kind of things that I do not know have happened? "The qualitative word of interrogation presupposes things of a special kind which must have happened." He affects ignorance. With the object He had in view this seems to have been the only course for Him to take. Had He answered "Yes, I know it as no one else ever can," Cleopas must have deemed it useless to tell Him. Of course He could not have said "no." His answer is, therefore, neither "yes" nor "no," but, "What kind of things? tell me." And we may learn from the Master how to deal with the awakened, so as to get them to disclose their perplexities, and that without a resort to deception. They yearn to unburden their hearts and they are not slow to tell their mournful tale. Now that they have found an open breast into which they may pour their sorrow, they promptly proceed to tell it all. "They said." "Probably here also Cleopas was the speaker, and the other added his own assent to what was said."

Nebe thinks that each joined in the answer, since every oppressed heart seeks vent in speech. What each of them uttered is not recorded. The evangelist only sums up the entire reply in a few brief clauses. The subject was "the things concerning Jesus." Calvin and others hold that their answer amounts to a confession

of Jesus and shows extraordinary courage, but Nebe regards them as without faith and hope, but not without love to the Lord.

Ἐγένετο, not "who was," but "who became," who evinced Himself, "a prophet man," which, in Greek syntax implies an expression of honor or preëminence. This might not be saying very much if it were all. It would indicate that their faith was limited to the belief that Christ was a prophet. But it is only the introduction. "They admit, indeed, that they had taken Him for something more than a prophet, but all is over now." Hence they say "prophet," not "Lord." He is to them no more now than one of the prophets, who had from time to time been given to Israel, one, indeed, who was the peer of the greatest, for He was mighty in work and word! Thucydides speaks of Pericles as being very powerful both in speech and action. Stephen says the same of Moses, Acts vii. 22.

Ἐν marks the sphere wherein, etc., Acts xviii. 24. Meyer holds *ἔργον* ("deed") is put first as containing the first ground of acknowledgement of the Messianic dignity, cf. Acts i. 1; John x. 38. The word may refer to His miracles or to the whole life manifestation, conduct, action. Nebe says, as used by John *ἔργον* would undoubtedly mean the latter, but here the best expositors refer it to the miracles. Christ attested Himself to God and to the whole nation by His words and His works as a real prophet.

20. "And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered (him) up to the sentence of death and crucified him."

Meyer: *Et quomodo*, still depending on "knowest not," v. 18, which is mentally supplied as governing "the things concerning Jesus," etc.

They now touch the cause of their grief: This great Prophet, so approved of God and man, has been rejected. Not the common herd, not the rabble, had declared against Him, but the nation by its foremost persons, the high priests, the officials, our rulers.

"Our" is significant. They realize that they are a part of the nation, and feel bitterly aggrieved that their own rulers have done this. Yea, they "delivered" Him. Not content to turn their backs to Him, they arrested Him and handed Him over to the heathen executive. Not content to prevent by bonds the blessed activity of the Prophet before God and man, they surrender Him to the governor that he may pronounce on Him the sentence of death.

They instituted legal proceedings against Him, so that they might have His blood, and they succeeded in having Him condemned as a malefactor by Pontius Pilate, surrendering the ac-

knowledge and irreproachable Man of God to a heathen judge, **xxiii. 24.** Having secured His conviction, they crucified Him. "They," these Jewish rulers—"it was their work that He was crucified by the governor, although all the waters of the ocean would not wash from the latter's hands the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ." The responsible agents in the death of Christ were these high priests and rulers. **Acts ii. 23.** They were the moral and moving cause of the infamous judicial murder.

It must have required some courage to talk thus to a stranger in those terrible days when the wickedness of men had culminated in this awful tragedy, while, unterrified, the two are meekly disposed. The blow that has fallen on their beloved Prophet has left a mortal wound in their hearts. They do not threaten nor judge; they have learned of Jesus to submit all things to Him who judgeth rightly.

21. "But we were entertaining the hope that it was this one who should redeem Israel, but indeed, joined with all these things, he passes to-day as the third day since these things came to pass."

They stop before the hieroglyph of the cross; they cannot interpret that. "It is no symbol of victory to them, but a star deprived of all its beams." All is dark now. Utterly disconsolate, they open the secrets of their hearts to the inquiring stranger. "We were hoping," etc. "We" *vs.* the high priests and rulers. On our part we kept cherishing the highest hopes concerning this Prophet, that He would deliver us from our national enemies, but they in turn delivered Him into the hands of these enemies. Our own attitude was directly the opposite of theirs. We had placed all our hopes on Him, but "our hopes died and were buried with the Lord." He lives now, but hope is as yet dead within them—soon, however, to be revived. **Acts i. 6.** How great that hope had been! *Αὐτός*, He Himself and no other, was on the point of redeeming Israel, "according to the politico-theocratic idea of the national Messiah." He and He alone, He and no other, would prove to be the Messiah. These two shared the universal expectation of the establishment of a Messianic kingdom with external power and glory. That hope is forever shattered by the cross. "The King with the crown of thorns on His brow is not a King of this world."

How significant that the very event by which God accomplishes the redemption of the sinner, destroyed in these two disciples the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Redeemer.

Ἀλλά γε, "but indeed," antithetical, "although we cherished this hope." Nebe: "Having regarded Him as a true prophet of God, they were prepared to expect, as He died on the cross, especially in view of the extraordinary occurrences in nature, that some miracle

would be wrought in behalf of Him who had been innocently slain." They seem to have entertained some hope on the first and second days, which hope is now given up on the very day on which it is fulfilled.

"Joined with all this," *i. e.*, all that has already happened, there is yet to be added this: "He passes to-day as the third." So Meyer. "The subject is Jesus, who immediately before was the subject emphatically made prominent." Others make *ἀγχι* impersonal. Nebe says, Meyer's rendering has classic usage in its favor, yet it seems here quite forced. *Ἀγχι* referring to Jesus as the subject would presuppose life, whereas all consider Him as dead. Some have regarded as subject, Israel (the day which Israel to-day celebrates, etc.), God, time, or the sun. This is not warranted by the context. The plain meaning is, "this being the third day." On the afternoon of Good Friday occurred that which they bewail. They have yet more to perplex them and to add to their sorrow.

22, 23. "Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb, and, not having found his body, came, saying they had seen a vision of angels" . . .

A ray of the Easter Sun has fallen upon them, but it was only a flash followed by deeper darkness. Something might have been, but the tragical conclusion comes at the end of v. 24, "Him they saw not." Meyer: "Nevertheless on this frustration of our hopes the following also has occurred, which has again roused them, and still (v. 24) has left them till now unfulfilled."

"Certain women of us." Women belonging to the circle of Christ's disciples have "terrified" us. Others: "Amazed," "astonished." The effect of this announcement was to throw the two into deeper despondency and despair. It caused more of fright than of wonderment. The women had gone to the grave to embalm the body, but they had not accomplished their object. The body was missing, and beside the empty sepulchre they had seen angels who declared that He was alive. "The two can hardly believe the women, their report is apochryphal." Significantly it is observed "they say that they saw," etc.

ὀπτασία does not *per se* imply that the "vision" was purely imaginary. In Acts xxvi. 19 it is used of the real objective appearance of the Risen Christ who appeared to Paul. The whole phraseology seems to cast serious doubt on the statement of the women.

24. "And there went away to the tomb certain of them that were with us, and found it even so as . . . but him they saw not."

Besides the accounts of the women "some of those with us," that is, men from our company, went, etc. This is made clear by

their confirming what the women said. The women were *ἐξ ἡμῶν*, the men *σὺν ἡμῖν*. Who these men were is to be conjectured. Stier: "Peter and John, probably others of the twelve later, possibly only other ones who were not of the apostolic circle." As they themselves did not belong to the inner circle they were not on familiar terms with the company, hence named neither the women nor the men, perhaps not knowing definitely who had been to the grave. The stranger would not know them if they were named. Those sober and careful men who had gone to examine the tomb for themselves found the body not there, just as the women had said. But of what comfort was this? Their sad complaint continues, "but Him they did not see." Him who according to the alleged angelic assurance was alive, Himself, after all, they did not see. They have no faith. If those men had seen Him, if He had shown Himself to them alive at the grave, they would believe, but as no human eye has seen Him, there is nothing in the reported testimony of the angel. They want to be convinced through the senses of that which can only be realized by the eye of faith.

Nebe: "The Risen One allowed the two ample time to pour out their doleful tale. Possibly His heart was pained on the day of His triumph to find how His own were still lacking the eagle wings, how with their senses they still clung to the earth. Still, it was evident that the smoking flax was not quenched. Did not the feeble flame flicker to and fro for nourishment?"

25. "And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken."

With sharp words of reproof Jesus now speaks to them, contrasting with His manner at first. But this reproof arises not from concern for His own cause, but for their souls' salvation.

Αἰνός: He on His part opens His mind after they had thus helplessly expressed themselves. Nebe: "He now lifts the rod after He had thus far given them only props and crutches in order to raise them from unbelief." A salutary reproof is needed. They are lacking in mental apprehension. *Ἀνόητοι*: literally "void of mind," Rom. i. 14; Gal. iii. 2 f., without intelligence. "It refers to the understanding, and 'slow to believe with the heart' to the whole internal living activity, in respect of which its dullness, *i. e.*, its deficiency in the proper susceptibility and fixedness of purpose is reproved." Stronger language is used, Mark xvi. 14. Both the mind and the heart were lacking in right action, elasticity, freshness and energy. The final ground of spiritual defect lies in the heart. Their failure to understand is the more glaring, since they had recognized the prophecies which treat of the glory

of the Messianic kingdom, while of the predictions concerning the Lamb of God led to the slaughter, and the Man of sorrows, they had not the slightest conception. As Jesus points out to them the necessity for Messiah's death they must have possessed some historical knowledge, must have known, therefore, that the prophets spoke also of a suffering Messiah, but they had no conception of this, they knew nothing of the divine necessity for the sufferings and death of Christ in behalf of the world's salvation. To them as to the Greeks the cross was foolishness. But they "had the most definite predictions of the great Prophet Himself, and these predictions included not simply the proclamation of what was to come, but also reasons why these things must happen." Heubner says: "The hindrance of faith lay in the folly of the understanding which boldly assumed to know all things, and was frightened off by darkness and difficulties."

Had their hearts been possessed of the right desire to know the truth, they could have learned the truth. But their hearts clung to their own carnal imaginations, to their dreams of a glorious Messianic kingdom. This air-castle had been dashed, and now they mourn and lament over the fall of their Jerusalem, incapable of rising to the great thoughts to which by this very overthrow of their false hopes, God would now so manifestly lead them. Their hearts clung to false ideals, to earthly desires. They were too languid and too obtuse, too slow to believe what the prophets had written. "We ought to be quick in believing (like Nathaniel, John i. 49) where we have sufficient warrant from any word of God."

Von Hofmann puts a period after πιστεύειν, and begins the next verse with ἐπὶ πάντων, etc.; "after all that was predicted must not Christ have suffered?" They should have believed on the authority, on the basis, of the prophets—ἐπὶ: faith as confidence rests upon, supports itself, builds on, Matt. xxvii. 42; Rom. ix. 33; x. 11; 1 Tim. i. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 6. The words of the prophets ought to have sufficed as a ground of faith. "All that the prophets." Meyer: "Not merely referring to a single thing. There was wanting to them the faith without exception, otherwise they would have recognized the sufferings and death of the Messiah as prophesied, and have rightly discerned them." For they apprehended and believed the prophecies on other subjects.

Nebe: "After this reproof follows the announcement of the great theme of the discourse of the Risen One now to begin, namely, that the prophets already so distinctly and minutely portrayed the sufferings of Christ that only 'fools, slow of heart,' failed to discern

them. This theme is the sum of all the preaching which has resounded in the Church from the first Easter day to the present."

26. "Was it not needful for Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?"

How foolish these disciples! The very thing which offended them and shattered their faith, is the surest proof that this Jesus of Nazareth is the One who should redeem Israel. Bengel: "The very things which you make causes for doubt are characteristic marks of the Christ." The very thing which Jesus must do, if He is to fulfill the Scriptures and execute His mission, is what is unintelligible to them."

"These things." Note the emphatic position of *ταῦτα*. The things which He has suffered and which have made them so disconsolate. *Ἐδεῖ*. Delitzsch: "The inner necessity according to the counsel of God." Suffering and death did not befall our Lord accidentally, nor did they befall Him as a natural necessity from His position in Israel, neither was the cross a self-chosen death of ignominy; it was the eternal counsel of the eternal God. Christ is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Rev. xiii. 8. Bengel's explanation of the necessity, "because it was foretold," does not fully meet the case. Meyer: "According to the prophetically announced decree." Cf. 44 f. It was not accidental that the prophets predicted His sufferings, but they were moved to predict them because God purposed to save the world only through a suffering Christ. The inner and necessary relations between the passion and the work of Christ are the theme.

Jesus points to the ultimate ground of His sufferings: "to enter into glory." The "sufferings" and the "glory" are most intimately connected. Only through the former did He enter the latter, *per crucem ad lucem*. Meyer: "Not as though He had already by the resurrection in itself, and before the ascension, attained to His glory (for His heavenly condition is not until His glory after death, cf. ix. 26; xxi. 27; Phil. ii. 9 f.; 1 Pet. i. 21; 1 Tim. iii. 16; John xx. 17; xvii. 5, etc.), but out of the foregoing *ἔδεῖ, δεῖ* is to be here supplied: and must He not attain unto His glory? Wherefore, on the one hand, those sufferings needed first to precede; and, on the other, He must be again alive." But Nebe thinks it is an error that the New Testament does not date the entrance into glory from the resurrection. "The resurrection was for the apostles and their pupils so essentially the entrance into His glory, that neither Matthew nor John deemed it necessary to record the ascension, and Paul makes scarcely an allusion to it."

Suffering and glory are not connected by a mere copula. The

relation is causative. Jesus might have said, "Must not Christ have suffered in order to enter into His glory." The evangelist gives no account of a further explanation of the necessity. He doubtless employed those passages from Moses and all the prophets subsequently used by the apostles to confirm His sufferings and death, and so also the grounds, which these used to prove the inner necessity for His sufferings, were no doubt also the grounds He Himself brought forward here. "According to the New Testament it was requisite both for His personality and for His office that Jesus should die. Something essential would have been wanting both to His person and to His work without the cross." Even for our full development it is necessary for us to enter through great tribulation into the kingdom. So must Christ be proved and perfected through suffering the uttermost, *i. e.*, death. How could He otherwise have been our surety? He was made perfect through suffering, Heb. ii. 10. He learned obedience in the things which He suffered. Heb. v. 8 f.; Phil. ii. 8; Rom. v. 18 ff.

But His mediatorial work also demanded the cross. His glory is not that of His person merely, but of His office. His kingdom He could establish only by means of the cross. Nebe: "As death is the penalty of sin, Christ in order to redeem us must assume the punishment of our sins and expiate them in His own person, for only His death can persuade us of the power and glory of God's love, so that we smite ourselves and pour forth the bitter tears of Peter. For this love cannot affect us if the oppression of our guilt is not taken away, and that oppression will not disappear by a mere word of pardon. Such an acquittal would be a blow in the face of divine justice, and serve us as a cover for sin, making Christ to the frivolous soul the minister of sin instead of the Redeemer from it." The sufferings of Christ form the point at which the slowness of faith most exhibits itself, Matt. xvi. 22, yet the glory of Christ's person and work could not have been realized in any other way.

27. "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning him."

Ἀρξάμενος is to be conceived of successively. He began from Moses, and having finished him, from all the prophets, taking them one by one in succession according to their order in the Canon, making of each of them a new commencement with His interpretation. Note Jesus in His state of exaltation as in that of humiliation grounds His teachings on the Scriptures. He did not

begin with Moses and the prophets, and then also quote from other books, as some explain.

Von Hofmann refers to v. 44, holding that after Jesus had explained the passages from Moses and the prophets He passed over to the other books of the Canon. This appears to be less artificial than Meyer's explanation. The special passages are not given. Such passages concerning Christ are almost numberless, beginning with Gen. iii. 15. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The Master acts as interpreter of these passages which speak of the things concerning Him. He explained them according to their destination, and as having their fulfillment in Him.

Notice the order, "Moses and the prophets." The Lord gives His sanction to the traditional Canon, the light of eternal truth from which is at first dim, but as the time of fulfillment approaches, becomes brighter and brighter. Notice also the warrant which a believing exegesis has for discovering in the prophets not only general Messianic predictions and types, but very specific predictions concerning the suffering, dying and rising Christ.

Luther says this must have been a glorious sermon.

28. "And they drew nigh . . . he made as though he would go further."

Bengel: "Acted as though He was about, etc." In the midst of such a discussion, the two very quickly found themselves nearing the end of their journey. But it seems not to have been the end of the Lord's journey. The language is somewhat startling. He Himself "feigned, gave Himself the air." Bengel: "He had been about to go farther, had not they besought Him, and perhaps had been about to appear to them in another way." He would test them how far His word had been apprehended by them. "His assumed mien should bring *both* to the consciousness of what they had derived from His discourse, and make them realize that they could not yet consent to lose His presence." Meyer: "He desired to prompt the invitation, which was a matter of decorum, but knew that it would follow." "For appearance' sake He actually began to move forward."

29. "And they constrained him, saying, Abide . . . for it is toward evening . . . And he went in to abide" . . .

Note the Aorist for their constraint, *vs.* the Imperfect (of some texts) for His feigning to go. Their constraint was that of urgent entreaty, Acts xvi. 15; Gen. xix. 3; cf. Luke xiv. 23; Matt. xiv. 22. They felt their holiest interests engaged to this stranger, v. 32.

"They endure the test; now that the stranger wants to part

from them, they come clearly to the consciousness that they cannot do without Him. They must hear more, must strengthen their faith yet further." Bengel thinks the "constraint" was from love for His own sake, and from hospitality, that He should not venture to proceed on His journey by night." But it is natural that they in their weakness realize what a comfort His sojourn would be to them. There was more than a polite or affectionate invitation. They would not let Him go farther, though He had actually started. They felt the need of His presence. Love and fear united in the constraint.

"Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!"

The invitation was into the house, not merely into the village. The invitation "does not of necessity mean: stay in our lodging, but may just as well signify: stay in our company, pass the night with us in the house of our host." There is nothing to indicate that either or both of the pilgrims resided in Emmaus.

As they will not let Him go (like Jacob with the angel), as He has so charmed them by His explanation of the Scriptures, as they clung with all their hearts to His blessed interpretations, they pressed Him to stop with them, possibly even laying hold of His garments. They urged their request by the fact that night was at hand. They were perchance afraid of the night for themselves more than for Him. Night, too, "offers the best opportunity for confidential intercourse."

The Lord yielded. He desired to have them ask, hence His movement to proceed. "He went in in order to reveal Himself ("to abide with") in *fact* to those to whom on the way He had revealed Himself in *word*."

30. "And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them."

Constrained to abide with them He sits down to the table not as guest but as the host, taking the bread as He was wont in the circle of His disciples. As master of the house He gives thanks before the meal. He may have used the form customary among the Jews, or He may have used an extemporaneous prayer.

It is added that He "brake the bread and distributed it." The FF. arbitrarily thought He celebrated the Holy Supper, the Catholics deriving support from it for *communio sub una specie*. See Melancthon in the Apology, Jacobs' Ed., 244 f. Nebe suggests that these two did not belong to the inner circle of the disciples who received the Holy Supper. Besides, the terms "blessed and

brake the bread" recur at ordinary meals, Luke ix. 16; John vi. 11; Matt. xiv. 19; xv. 36 and parallels.

31. "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight."

This is the opposite of "their eyes were holden," v. 16. "Both are to be referred to extraordinary divine causation."

"*Airōn*" is placed first for lively emphasis. What Jesus did is previously described. We are not told here by what they recognized Him, by the customary bread-breaking, thanksgiving, His pierced hands, etc. But v. 35 says "by the breaking of the loaf" they arrived at the recognition of Him. Nebe thinks His prayer (grace) effected the opening of their eyes. "They had never heard another pray as He was wont to pray." "His prayer would fold in its wings all who heard it and raise them with power up to God the Father." They may have been praying while He prayed, and giving thanks for the spiritual bread they had received from the stranger as well as for that which lay before them, and thus their eyes opened as their hearts previously. "As the words of His prayer fell on their ears and hearts, the scales fell from their eyes." God richly heard their prayers and gave them the true sight of the true Bread. But the moment they know Him, He vanishes. There is to be no second scene like that with Mary Magdalene. Their faith having endured the test, the relation is now of faith—no longer of the flesh. Paul said that even Christ Jesus he knew no longer after the flesh, 2 Cor. v. 16. His appearances after the resurrection were generally of short continuance, "so as to leave more room for faith." He passed away from them invisibly, miraculously. "It was a sudden invisible withdrawal effected through divine agency." This against the rationalist view, that at the height of their surprise Jesus suddenly withdrew in a natural manner. His body was glorified. Hence He had the power of appearing or disappearing at will. This passage is used in support of the doctrine of the invisible real presence of Christ's body wheresoever He will.

32. "And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures?"

This sudden, supernatural disappearance does not suggest to them an optic illusion, a mere phantom. It confirms the faith in His resurrection. They have within themselves a proof of His having risen, a proof which nothing can shake; a spark of that very life has fallen on their own hearts. "Was not our heart set on fire within us?" they exclaim to each other when He is gone from sight. Meyer: "Extraordinarily lively emotions are repre-

sented, under the image of burning, of heat, of being inflamed." They naturally abstain from further explanation, the more so because of the depth and power of their emotions.

Note the periphrastic form. His kindly sympathetic inquiry no doubt threw the first spark, and as He opened to them the Scriptures they must have been all aflame by the time they constrained Him to tarry. May not we kindle men's hearts with a heavenly flame by kindly words of sympathy in their sorrows and by opening to them the Scriptures? The flame continues to burn after His disappearance—yea, they must go at once to kindle in others the same fire. Only as they resolved on this did they become fully conscious of the fire within them. As the phrase, "our heart burning," occurs only here in the Bible, they seem to have coined a new expression for the new and powerful sensation they felt.

"He opened the Scriptures." Bengel: "The Scripture is opened out when the understanding is opened," cf. v. 45. Their eyes were opened, their *νοῦς* (understanding) was opened, the Scriptures were opened. Closed and sealed things generally were effectually opened.

33. "And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and those with them,"

Whatever business called them to Emmaus, they at once abandon it and hasten back over the way they had come, no longer having any fear of a night journey, from which they had previously dissuaded their strange companion. "The fire burning in their hearts lights and lightens their journey." The faith to which they have now attained impels them to leave all and go proclaim the good news, and their love to the brethren impels them. They remembered what a desolate condition the eleven and those with them were in, when they left them in the Holy City.

"The eleven." Augustine held that all of them were present, but that Thomas, in a dejected mood, had gone away before the Lord appeared to them. It is best not to press the number here, and also not the twelve in John xx. 24; 1 Cor. xv. 5. "And those with them." The whole body as if assembled to consult on the emergency met them as they arrived, with the shout, "The Lord is risen indeed," etc., the chorus of triumph drowning the jubilant message of the two who thought themselves the first to have learned the event.

34. "Saying, The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared unto Simon."

The whole body greet the two with this shout of triumph. Each party confirms the other. It must by this time have been late at

night, yet all these disciples are gathered here and united in the faith of the risen Christ. How different now their minds, as contrasted with what they had been a few hours before! What can account for the marvelous change? Something most extraordinary and momentous has taken place. The Lord has risen and appeared to Simon, cf. 1 Cor. xv. 5, when and where neither passage tells us. Meyer: "In the interval, after what is contained in v. 12." Note the triumphant emphasis of the position of these two verbs.

Peter is carrying out the instructions given him in Luke xxii. 32. He gathers into the ship of the Risen One, Thomas and the rest, out of the sea of their doubts and their perplexities. Nebe: "If the Church is founded upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ, then Peter with his testimony of the risen Christ is the rock on which the foundation was laid."

"Simon" is not to be understood of the resumption of his old name in view of his fall. This was the name by which he was still generally known in the circle of the disciples. Jesus Himself, indeed, named him before and after his fall almost exclusively "Simon." Matt. xvii. 25; Mark xiv. 37; Luke xxii. 31; John xxi. 15.

35. "And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of bread."

"They," the two on their part, as contrasted with those who were assembled. "Was known," properly "He made Himself known," cf. Num. xii. 16. Meyer: "Not *in* the breaking, but at the time of the breaking."

Nebe: "The Easter greeting of the assembled Church is answered by the true Easter message of the two missionaries. There is the fullest accord, a glorious symphony."

"The Pericope offers inviting material for homiletical purposes. Attention may be fixed on the Lord, how He manifests Himself to His own, what Easter treasures He brings them; or upon the disciples, how they come to the revelation of the Risen One."

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

CHRIST AND THE SCRIPTURES.

Christ is the interpretation of the Scriptures.
The Scriptures are the revelation of Christ.

THE RISEN ONE REVEALS HIMSELF :

1. As the Prince of peace. 2. As the Prince of life.

THE DISCIPLES AND THE RISEN ONE.

1. They speak of Him, and He draws near to them.
2. He opens to them the Scriptures, and their hearts burn.
3. They constrain Him to remain, and He makes Himself known.
4. He disappears from view, and they go to be His witnesses.

WHAT A FRIEND IS THE RISEN ONE.

1. He comforts the sorrowing.
2. He instructs the ignorant.
3. He answers those who pray.
4. He unites those who are divided.

THE RISEN ONE BRINGS,

1. Comfort. 2. Light. 3. Life.

THE EASTER BLESSING OF THE RISEN ONE.

1. He draws near to journey with us.
2. He journeys with us to interpret the Scriptures.
3. He interprets the Scriptures to inflame our hearts.
4. He inflames our hearts in order to manifest Himself.
5. He manifests Himself in order to send us forth as Easter witnesses.

THE BLESSED JOURNEY TO EMMAUS.

1. From doubt to faith. 2. From faith to vision.

HOW WE MAY HAVE THE APPEARANCE OF THE RISEN ONE.

1. By seeking Him with loving hearts.
2. By hearing His word with burning hearts.
3. By desiring His presence with suppliant hearts.

THE PILGRIMS TO EMMAUS TEACH US:

1. To mourn deeply for the Lord, when He has departed.
2. To heed cheerfully His word, when it painfully corrects us.
3. To seek earnestly His presence, when He seems to forsake us.
4. To testify joyfully of Him, when He has graciously manifested Himself to us.

THE JOURNEY WITH THE RISEN ONE:

1. A journey in faithful remembrance.
2. A journey with invisible fellowship.
3. A journey of saving knowledge and experience.
4. A journey in the power of the Risen One.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF SAVING EXPERIENCE.

1. Instead of sorrow, hallowed joy.
2. Instead of doubt, cheerful testimony.
3. Instead of a sealed book, clear knowledge of Scripture.
4. Instead of a dead prophet, an eternal living Redeemer.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (QUASIMODOGENITI.)

JOHN XX. 19-31.

THE first Easter Lesson narrates the great event commemorated, the second the revelation of the Risen One to two disciples for the confirmation of their faith, the third His appearance in the circle of His apostles. Notice the progress in the three Lessons relative to the persons to whom He communicated His resurrection, women, two disciples, the elect witnesses. "There is also a climax in the contents of the revelation. The tidings of the women tell that superhuman beings are ministering to Him; the report of the two from Emmaus is that the glorified Lord will seek His own in Galilee with a shepherd's love and faithfulness; our text presents the Risen One with gifts which He has procured for them, and for all men." The Conqueror distributes the spoils of His triumph. A climax may be seen, too, in the victorious power displayed by the Risen One. By His servants He brings the women to faith, by His word He overcomes all the doubts of the two at Emmaus, by His personal manifestation He conquers the decided unbelief of Thomas.

The Lesson consists of two scenes. Luke xxiv. 36 ff. is parallel to the first, and Mark xvi. 14 has also a brief reference to it.

19. "When therefore it was evening, on that day . . . and when the doors were shut where the disciples were . . . Jesus came and stood . . . Peace be with you."

What is here narrated follows the return of the two from Emmaus and the delivery of their tidings to the eleven, who received them with the Easter salutation. It must have been late in the evening, for the day was already declining when they arrived at Emmaus; then they enjoyed their evening repast, after which they had to journey the 60 furlongs back to Jerusalem. It may have been near midnight. There are various conjectures concerning the selection of so late an hour. Nebe: As He had manifested Himself to individuals, He desired also to manifest Himself that very day to the little assembly. The late hour was chosen to make certain that they all would be together.

"The doors were shut." Some: Only a paraphrase for the lateness of the hour, but that has been expressed. Some: Simply an

allusion to the disconsolate frame of mind, the peril and insecurity in which they found themselves, but the same expression occurs v. 26, where there is nothing about "the fear of the Jews." The phrase introduces something new. "It points to a miraculous appearance which did not require open doors, and which took place while they were closed." Meyer adds: "The *how* does not and cannot appear; in any case, however, Luke xxiv. 31 is the correlate of this immediate appearance in the closed place; and the constitution of His body, changed, brought nearer to the glorified state, although not immaterial, is the condition for such a liberation of the Risen One from the limitations of space that apply to ordinary corporeity."

Jerome thought the doors at His coming flew miraculously open. Others held that He did not pass through the doors at all. To His glorified body doors and walls have no significance. Luther: "In that He came to the disciples through closed doors it is shown that after His resurrection He is no longer bound by bodily, visible, tangible, worldly things, time, space, etc., but that we are to believe and recognize that by His power He reigns as One everywhere present, that wherever and whenever we need it He is with us and willing to help us; unrestrained and unhindered by the world and all its might."

Calvinistic expositors, doubtless affected by their opposition to Lutheran Christology, held that He went through the doors, *i. e.*, the doors opened of their own accord, invisibly, by the agency of an angel, etc. Some: He came in through a window, or from the roof. The whole context points to a miracle, and we prefer to locate the miracle in the glorified person of Christ, rather than in the material doors. John, besides, says the doors were closed, which is the reverse of saying they sprang open miraculously. Notwithstanding that the doors had been effectually closed the Lord suddenly stands among them, in their midst, seen by all. This was the first intimation of His coming; evidently they knew not how He entered the chamber.

More minute information concerning this change is not accessible. Meyer holds that no proof is offered here for the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity, since the body of Jesus is not yet glorified. Others deny the force of the passage on that point, on the score that Christ was not yet at the right hand of God, which Lutheran theologians hold to be ubiquitous. But Nebe says that the sitting at the right hand of God is not the ground of the ubiquity of the body of Christ, so much as a subsidiary proof of the doctrine. The right hand of God is everywhere, hence, too, He who sits at

the right hand is everywhere, for in Him the two natures are inseparably united in one person. The door being closed He appears among His assembled disciples. By the resurrection His body has entered upon a new phase. "Corporeity is for Him no longer limitation or barrier, but unconditionally and purely the means of His presence and self-presentation." Some deny the full glorification of the body at this time, yet they admit that an essential change had taken place in the organism, which the ascension completed, that it approximated the pneumatic life with which we shall be clothed after the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. But if the resurrection body will be the final form of our glorification, why should we regard Christ's as but provisional? He will change our vile bodies like unto His own glorious body. Our resurrection is to be a repetition of His. 1 Cor. xv. 20; Col. i. 18. The Ancient Church with one voice regarded the risen body as fully glorified. Of the nature of a resurrection body we can form no conception; nor can we explain the passages in which Jesus invites the disciples to touch and test Him and assure themselves of His bodily identity, in reality eating and drinking with them. Luke xxiv. 30, 39 ff., 42 ff.; John xx. 20, 27; John xxi. 10, 12 ff.; While demonstrating that He still had the self-same body, He also showed that it was removed beyond the sphere of earthly and material restrictions. Matt. xxii. 30: "In the resurrection they are as the angels." Cf. the appearance of the angel to Zacharias, Luke i. 11, unseen by others, and the appearance of the one who delivered Peter, the doors being closed, Acts xii. 7 ff.

"The glorified body is the willing and fit organ of the glorified spirit; at the will of the spirit it becomes visible or invisible," even as Christ suddenly vanished from one scene and appeared at another. More than once He was not recognized by the disciples. Cf. Mk. xvi. 12, "in another form."

"Through fear of the Jews," may be taken with both the previous clauses, or simply with "the doors being closed." They knew what the Jews had done to their Lord, and might anticipate that the report brought by the guards would start their fury anew, and as Jesus Himself was out of their reach the revenge of His enemies would vent itself upon them.

The little company, cowering with fear, is suddenly apprised of the presence of the Lord—the first recognition being, perhaps, when they heard the gracious sound, "Peace be with you." This was the customary Jewish salutation, but from Jesus' lips it always fell with a significance and power such as characterized all His utterances and actions, truly imparting peace to them, tran-

quillising, soothing, strengthening their stricken hearts. "Not as the world gives, give I."

Thrice the same formula of extraordinary power is repeated, cf. xxi. 26. "No ordinary man speaks here at an ordinary time. It is Christ, whose words are spirit and life." The salutation must not therefore be regarded as an ordinary one. The peace is spoken here as the antidote of their fears, xiv. 27. Bengel: "The fear of the guilt which they had incurred by their flight, was thereby removed and the offence (at the cross) was healed." Even with the Jews, "peace" was not a meaningless formality. It was a wish expressed by one believing Israelite in behalf of another. Nebe: "Everything which the Lord has for His disciples after the resurrection, the spoils which after His victory over sin, death and hell He divides among His own, is embraced in this word peace." Luther says, He could not have dealt more kindly with them than to offer them peace, and show them His hands and His side, that they might be assured of His resurrection, and by that faith be comforted against all sorrow, fear and terror. The word is exceedingly rich and comprehensive in Hebrew. The peace of Christ is something quite internal and hidden from the eye, not visible or palpable in outward emotion, but something within and spiritual in the faith which cares for nothing and perceives nothing except what it hears here, "Peace be with you, fear not," and is content herewith, though outwardly in the world it has no peace at all.

"Peace is the great need of man. He has no peace in his heart, no peace with his neighbor, no peace with God. Sin has driven peace from the human heart; where sin rules no peace can dwell." Conscience ever gnaws at the vitals, and man despairingly cries, "Oh where shall rest be found!" The first announcement to the Church from the Risen One is "Peace be with you." "All strife is at an end. This is the answer from the mouth of the Eternal to the cry of the dying Redeemer, 'It is finished.' The resurrection of the Redeemer is the yea and amen of God to the work of redemption. Let your heart now be still before God. Sin is forgiven." The hand-writing of our debts was by the resurrection receipted for in full. The debt is not only paid, we have the certificate for it.

Note, too, "That the Risen One does not pursue the way to glory alone. He seeks out His disciples, joins Himself to them, the Head acknowledges the members, He comes to them to exhibit in them the power of His new life, we are changed into a new spirit, the enmity of the heart is overcome." He is the Prince of peace. He gives us His own peace, that in Him we may have

peace with God, with our neighbor, in ourselves. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

20. "And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore rejoiced." . . .

Luke adds "the feet" also. This followed forthwith and was done to remove every doubt of His identity. He is not a mere spirit or ghost. There is indeed no indication in John that they doubted His identity after they heard the salutation. But Luke xxiv. 37 says, "they were terrified and affrighted." While some doubtless needed this gracious exhibition of His wounds to convince them of the reality of His person, this exhibition sustained the closest relation to the salutation. The peace that comes to the sinner flows from those wounds. There it was born, thence it derives its perennial life. The Lord vouchsafed them an object lesson. He would demonstrate to them His power to give them peace. The veritable fountain of the eternal peace for which we sigh is the crucified Redeemer, risen again and glorified and seated forever on the throne. "They rejoiced." How delicately this is expressed. Their joy must have been exceeding great. "They saw the Lord." The reality could no longer be doubted. It was attested by their own eyes. They saw Him with His wounds in the hands, side and feet. "They recognized Him as the Lord. He stood before them in His majesty, in His glory."

21. "Jesus then said to them again, Peace be with you: as the Father sent me I also send you."

Bengel holds they had not yet comprehended the force of His former salutation; therefore it is repeated, and enlarged and emphasized. It was also repeated in xiv. 27. Rather is the present "peace" to be taken in immediate connection with what follows. Peace, reconciliation with God through fellowship with Christ, constitutes the foundation of the mission of the Gospel messengers. 2 Cor. iv. 1. No one is fitted to carry on this work who does not have the peace of the Risen Lord in his heart. Again, the very blessing which the ambassadors of the Lord are to convey is the peace of the Lord. They are to be men of peace and messengers of peace. Matt. x. 13 f.; Acts x. 36.

"As He in the night with closed doors appeared in their midst with His peace and His wounds, so they are to go out into the darkness and break through every barrier in order to preach the peace of the Lord and to show the wounds of the Risen One." His own work is completed, they are now to take His place and

go forth as His ambassadors, carrying into the world His peace. He was the Apostle of the Father, Heb. iii. 1. They are henceforth to be His apostles. He reveals Himself, indeed, as the Lord whom they had recognized in Him. He proposes to establish a kingdom and that through their agency. They are henceforth to sustain to Him the same relation which He sustained to the Father. Could they conceive of the honor thus conferred? the responsibility, the glory, of their mission? And do we appreciate it, that this commission now devolves upon us?

Note that the Lord does not enlarge on the subject of His resurrection, but takes for granted the evidence for it, and proceeds to give the command which is its chief corollary. Concerning the difference in the two words ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω, Bengel observes: "In the former, the will of the sender and of him who is sent, is had respect to; in the latter the will of the sender, as distinguished from the will of the person sent."

But had they not been previously sent? iv. 38; xvii. 18. They had received their first election and appointment, but reassuring them of their high destination, the Risen Redeemer now consecrates them anew, and authorizes and equips them for their divine calling. The occasion for this was exceptionally suitable and impressive.

The great commission here given to the apostles, is just before the ascension extended to the whole body of the disciples. The church is a missionary organization, commissioned by Christ and taking His place in the world.

22. "And when he had said this, he breathed upon them and saith unto them, Receive ye (the) Holy Spirit:"

The Lord sends out no one without proper equipment. If the church is to represent Christ and take His place in the world's redemption, it must be endowed with the spirit with which He was anointed, it must be armed with the word and the sacraments and the Holy Ghost, in order that by the forgiveness and the retention of sins it may conquer the world for God. They receive the Spirit under whose guidance they may discharge their commission.

See the creative office the Lord now assumes. He has the fullness of the Spirit. He is the dispenser of the Holy Ghost. The Word, through whom all things were created, John i. 2, resumes creative action. As God breathed into man the breath of life, so does the Lord now proceed to a new inspiration. He breathes into them the Holy Spirit, the life-giving breath of God, through whom in turn life is given to a dead world. Cf. Ezek. xxxvii. 9.

With the out-breathing is conjoined the word, "Receive Holy Spirit." Bengel: "Even as ye receive the breath from my mouth, so from my fullness receive ye the Holy Ghost." The breath of His mouth and the word of His mouth are the vehicle by which He communicates the Holy Spirit. They receive therewith from Him at the time this gift, the full measure of which was reserved for Pentecost. That witnessed the culminating point of the gift of the Spirit.

Some have thought, since the article is wanting, the gift here is not properly that of the Holy Spirit; but *πνεῦμα ἅγιον*, with or without the article, always stands for the Holy Spirit in the biblicodogmatic sense, John i. 33; vii. 39; Acts i. 2, 5; ii. 4; iv. 8; vi. 3, 5, etc. John brings the coming of the Holy Ghost into the closest connection with the departure of the Lord into His glory. Only the Lord of glory can dispense the Holy Ghost. But John does not mention the ascension, and speaks of His glorification as beginning immediately before His passion, xii. 28 ff. Cf. xvii. 1 ff., 5; iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 32, 34.

Why this impartation of the Spirit, and then the full baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost? Some: Here Jesus, the fountain and dispenser of all spiritual gifts, gave such a measure of the Spirit as was required for the immediate purpose of the apostolic office, for instance, the spiritual charism to remit and to retain sins. This authority is immediately mentioned as committed to them, an authority which indispensably requires the guidance of the Holy Ghost in connection with the word, since without it no one could judge of the moral condition of men and their fitness for the kingdom.

Some: Even previous to Pentecost they required supernatural guidance as a bond of union and for the transaction of important measures, Jesus being among them only occasionally and briefly. All divine gifts are bestowed only as they are needed. Since the Holy Ghost was to come in place of the visible Christ, His full coming must be deferred till after the departure of Christ. The present impartation belongs to the peculiarities of the miraculous intermediate condition in which Jesus at that time was.

Some: This partial gift is bestowed on them at this particular hour, as with His fresh wounds He has just come from the vanquished gates of hell, as an earnest of their full endowment with the Spirit hereafter, an assurance of the fullness of spiritual power they were to receive subsequently, Luke xxiv. 49. It is well to remember the explicit and emphatic promises He had given them concerning the Spirit, and they would now understand that this

gift was secured to them by His surrender to death and His triumph over it. The full gift for the whole church would come in due time. At all events, the Spirit is the primary and essential prerequisite to their investiture with the apostolic office. Acts xiii. 9. At the same time it is the most unmistakable verification at once of His resurrection and of the completion of His atoning work.

The present gift may have been the seal of their commission as apostles. On the day of Pentecost they would receive the plenary effusion, including miraculous powers. In the nature of things a gradual impartation or realization of the gift was to be expected. As in the individual so in the church, there is a beginning and a completion of the gift. It is only by the influence of the Holy Spirit that the sinner prays for the renewal and comfort of the Holy Spirit. The wind that blows with irresistible power has elsewhere had its beginning in a gentle zephyr.

We cannot see how the disciples could have enjoyed a proper spiritual realization of the resurrection, had they not received along with it and through it this inbreathing of the quickening and illuminating Spirit. Only a new life wrought by the Spirit can properly apprehend the Risen One. We distinguish between the Spirit as required for personal regeneration, and the Spirit as an endowment of the church for its establishment and extension. The apostles were alike subjects of the Spirit and organs of the Spirit. It was needful, too, that the apostles should know the immediate source of the Holy Ghost, yea, that it should be still connected with His personal presence, that the bestowal should take place face to face in this unique and memorable hour.

Some have interpreted the whole procedure as merely symbolical, a sign foreshadowing a future endowment. But what comfort or what sense even would such a figure have had for the terrified and perplexed disciples! It is, besides, not characteristic of the Lord to give empty signs to His own. A vessel from Him is always filled to overflowing.

23. "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; whosoever sins ye retain, they have been retained."

The apostles are now to take the place of Christ. For this they must be endowed by the Spirit, with which He also had been anointed for His mission. Cf. Isa. lxi. 1. They are to go forth with the gospel. They are to preach repentance and remission of sins. They are authorized to proclaim forgiveness. This is the essence of the gospel, the forgiveness of sins. Only forgiven souls are the proper members of His church which the apostles were to

found. Those, therefore, who reject forgiveness will have their sins retained. The one function involves the other, the valid remission of sins, the opposite moral disciplinary authority. Meyer: "The authorization not merely to receive into the church and expel from it, but also of pardoning and inflicting penal discipline on their fellow-members." The two words are opposites, but both refer to the same figure, loosing, holding fast. They are loosed by God, they are held fast by God. The latter verb is in the Perfect. "The *κρατεῖν* is, on the part of God, no commencing act, such as the forgiveness is." Cf. iii. 18, 36; xv. 6.

To some the gospel is a savor of life, to some a savor of death. Side by side, in its progress through the world, the gospel puts away our sins, or fastens them on us forever. This is its two-fold function, the two-fold mission of the church. The preaching of the cross is alike the proclamation of grace and of judgment, the unbinding and the binding of sins.

This is not to be taken as their formal commission. That was given in v. 21. But they are to understand that their work will not be impotent, ineffectual, but powerful and eternally valid. What they will speak will be in effect the same as if spoken by Him. "He that heareth you heareth me." He who gives them their charge will regard whatever they perform in accordance with that charge, as done by Himself. Here is the direct committal of the power of the keys to the church. In Matt. xvi. 19 the binding and loosing, "the keys," are given to Peter only; in Matt. xviii. 18 they are given to the disciples in common. Here the authority to forgive and to retain sins, to receive into or exclude from the church, is given not to the apostles only, but to the assembled church, for, according to Luke xxiv. 33, others were present besides the eleven, and John also here, in v. 19, speaks of the disciples in contrast with the twelve in v. 24. The Romanists can offer no proof for the claim that anything committed to the apostles devolves of right upon the ecclesiastics exclusively. All disciples, the universal priesthood of believers, have this authority from the Lord, whether they discharge the public official duty of the ministry or not. It was the service of the Reformers to fix this great truth once more upon the candlestick. "Whoever has the Holy Spirit," says Luther, "has this authority. And whoever believes has the Holy Spirit. Therefore every Christian has the same power as the popes and bishops to retain and to remit sins. To hear confession, baptize, preach, hand the Sacrament, is the prerogative of no one; but Paul says, 1 Cor. xiv. 40, let everything be done decently and in order. We have all, indeed, this author-

ity, but no one shall presume to exercise it openly save him who is selected for it by the church. Privately he may exercise it." For instance, one's neighbor may come and, unburdening his conscience, ask for an absolution. "I may then freely declare to him the gospel, and show him how to appropriate the works of Christ, and firmly believe that Christ's righteousness is his whilst his sins are Christ's. This is the greatest service I can render my neighbor."

Is then every binding and loosing fiat of those having this authority ratified in heaven? Nebe: "Only the binding and loosing word of the disciple which he has spoken not of himself, but in the spirit of Him who sent him, is verified by the Master. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, neither can flesh and blood pronounce sentence, whether the place of any is properly within or without the Church."

Hengstenberg: "The ecclesiastical office in the church has this authority so far as it has the Holy Spirit." For this exercise of the keys no special function or ordinance is necessary. It is vitally involved in the preaching of the gospel. Luther says, the whole office of the preacher, or the church, is embraced in this command, so that forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed and dispensed in the sermon and in the holy sacraments. For this purpose we preach, that men may acknowledge their sins and become righteous. Therefore we baptize, that through the death of Christ our sins may be forgiven. For this end He instituted the Holy Supper, that we might believe that His body was given and His blood shed for our sins, and therefore not doubt the forgiveness of sins. Thus the word in sermon and sacrament brings to believers the forgiveness of sins, to those who despise the gift the divine judgment, Mk. xvi. 16; Luke xxiv. 47; and this just as effectually in either case as if done by the Lord Himself.

It is to be accentuated also that the Lord designed His church to exercise discipline, to maintain her purity, to shut her doors against the impenitent as well as to open them wide for the repentant. No institution can preserve itself except by preserving its purity.

Having endowed the disciples with the Holy Spirit along with other infallible proofs of His resurrection, He vanishes again from their eyes.

24. "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Twin, was not along with them when Jesus came."

All of them having been scattered like sheep in the mountains, Thomas had not yet found his way back to the little company.

He may have resided at a greater distance and had been late in hearing of the resurrection. Doubtless his sceptical tendency had something to do with his absence. It is significant that just he and no other was absent on this occasion, cf. xi. 16; xiv. 5. Nothing was more remote from his mind than the expectation of the resurrection, and it is evident from the text that no statement of eye-witnesses was to him a sufficient ground of faith. He would have been out of place in the company which had attained to the faith of His triumphant resurrection. His whole mental make-up was against believing the report. He had ardent love for the Master, could never endure the thought of separation from Him, and he must have had spiritual enlightenment, but he saw only the dark side of things, and was extremely suspicious. Everything must be made clear to him. He must be able to convince himself.

John, who repeatedly mentions Thomas, is the only one to narrate this special appearance to him. He seems to have been better known in the circle for which John wrote, under the name Didymus, which is only a translation of the Hebrew Toma, *i. e.*, Twin, hence "the one called Didymus," cf. v. 24.

Though it is not related, yet it must be assumed that the impartation of the Spirit and the same full authority under it, "was further particularly and supplementarily bestowed" on Thomas in accordance with his position of equality among the twelve. Cf. Num. xi. 29.

25. "The other disciples therefore . . . We have seen the Lord . . . Except I see in his hands the print of the nails . . . and put my hand into his side, I shall not believe (it)."

Bengel infers from the first clause that he came a little while after. At once the disciples spread the Master's salutation. They offer to Thomas the peace of which he is still destitute. Luther imagines him as holding them to be a set of fools, in that they allow several women to persuade them and their eyes to deceive them with a ghost. When they testify that they have seen the Lord, when he perceives in them an entire change of mien, this does not in the least convince him. It only determines him to stouter resistance. They probably referred to the imprint of the nails and the spear, but even that will not satisfy him. He must place his finger into those very prints, lay his hand into the gash of His side. The others evidently made no critical examination, they were carried away by their feelings. He has no idea of accepting their united testimony—though all were eye-witnesses—but proposes with a cool understanding to make the most thorough test for himself. So far from concealing his unbelief, he resolutely

avows it, and declares that nothing will satisfy him short of the overpowering evidence of two of his own senses. He does not even promise then to believe, but that otherwise he will not believe. He had no expectation of such a disproof of the phantom which had deceived the others. He never expects to see what they alleged they had seen. He gives them to understand that so long as there is any possibility or excuse for doubt, he shall withhold his credence. His whole attitude shows that whatever credulity might be charged against ten apostles, one at least refused to believe his own brethren, though their character for veracity could not be questioned. His language indicates that he suspected an illusion. What he has not seen, no one has seen. What he does not know is not knowable, can't be true. Like sceptics, generally, he affects a monopoly of sound judgment and good sense, but in doing so only betrays the defects of his own understanding. It is most unreasonable, and in the face of universally accepted principles, to disbelieve the unanimous testimony of a company of eye-witnesses. It shows the fool far more than too great a readiness to believe. Matt. xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 25. Meyer notes "the circumstantiality in the words of Thomas, on which an almost defiant reliance in his unbelief, not melancholy dejection, is stamped." He makes demands which he regards it impossible to grant. The only commendable thing in Thomas is the openness and candor of his avowal. He is a genuine specimen of an honest unbeliever. Luther thinks it is a hard head that demands of Christ to do so and so, or he will not believe. This involves manifold sins. The first and greatest is that he holds Christ no higher than other prophets who were merely human. The second that he regards his fellow-disciples as fools and himself alone as wise. The third, that he thinks Christ must do just as he wants Him to, or he will put no faith in Him.

If for the second *ῥῆπος* we accept *ῥῆπος*, then the latter offers the correlative to seeing. The "print" is seen, the "place" is filled.

26. "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas along with them. . . . Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side: and become not unbelieving but believing."

Marvellous grace and condescension to the stubborn, defiant unbeliever, grants to him the conditions of his unreasonable, cruel demand. "He remembers that we are dust."

"After eight days," again on Sunday, an exact repetition of the previous one. "There had been no appearance vouchsafed during the intervening days." Thomas made sure of being there—possibly some favorable change had taken place in his mind. He is

seeking truth. He keeps in the circle of believers. He comes to the place where all his doubts may possibly be removed. Πάλιν ἦσαν ἐσω “points back to the same locality as in v. 19.” They were still in Jerusalem, though this was probably their last assembly there. “They were again within,” and again, from a like, self-intelligible reason as in v. 19, with closed doors. Nebe doubts whether they could any longer fear. The doors were closed to avoid disturbance. Some hold that they were gathered to celebrate the resurrection day and that the Lord meant by His appearance to sanction this solemnity, Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2, which Meyer and others pronounce “without any indication.” They tarried in Jerusalem till the close of Easter week. Again He gives them His “peace,” and this already may have powerfully affected Thomas. Had the others told Jesus about Thomas? He knows and repeats almost his exact language. Meyer: “The invitation presupposes an immediate knowledge of what is related in v. 25.” The omniscience of Jesus is implied, and with it is manifested a tenderness and a tact that are also superhuman. This omniscience and this goodness were enough to convince Thomas without probing the wounds.

Thomas is not cast off because of his paroxysm of doubt. Bengel: “If a Pharisee had spoken thus, he would have obtained nothing; but from a disciple that has been formerly approved of, nothing is withheld.” As he earnestly yearns for the light of truth, the eternal light arises to him, and so shall it be with every honest doubter. The chastening word corresponds strikingly to the sinful words of his unbelief, cf. xxi. 15. “Hither,” “see:” Touch with your finger here and at the same time see. He had said “unless I see,” but Jesus tells him to feel also. The wound in the side, under the garments, he could only feel.

Luther justly remarks, this appearance and revelation of the Lord, which is even richer and more glorious than the one eight days before, was specially designed for Thomas. Nebe notes the rhythmic character of the Lord's invitation, two parallel members with one concluding clause. To Thomas it is granted to touch and to handle His person, to the others had been vouchsafed only sight. All this, says Luther, is written for our sakes, that we may learn how dear we are to Christ and in what a friendly, paternal, mild and gentle manner He desires to deal with us. Not an angry, but a sympathetic heart has He towards sinners whom Satan has led captive. He tries everything, therefore, that is possible, that he may wrest them from the devil and from sin and convert them. Those weak in faith He does not cast out, but deals patiently and gently with their weakness. “He does not quench the smoking

flax." Thomas wanted to believe that Jesus had risen, but could not. He wished from the heart that it might be true, but he cannot believe that it is possible. Hence Christ graciously seeks him, bears with his hardheaded and stupid resistance, adapts Himself to his infirmity, and helps him to faith.

"Become not unbelieving." "Through his doubt of the actual occurrence of the resurrection Thomas was in danger of becoming an unbeliever (in Jesus generally). In contradiction to this vacillating faith he was, through having convinced himself of the resurrection, to become a believer." Thomas stood at a crisis which would be decisive for time and for eternity. "His unbelief had been partial, relative, but his attitude toward the testimony of his associates had driven him so far toward unbelief, that only the personal appearance of the Risen One could rescue him." Such an opportunity comes only once to a man. Then the issue is either Christ or against Christ. By His demand Thomas placed himself outside the sphere of faith. Faith is not a matter of the five senses. It grasps the invisible, the supersensuous world. Christ now approaches him with His imperative. He makes his appeal to the will. Faith is contingent on our will. He had said, "I will not believe."

28. "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and My God."

"Unto Him." Unto Jesus was this spoken, whom the disciples called Lord. It cannot be applied to any other. As an exclamation this word was not used by the Jews. It was incompatible with their reverence for the divine name. What has become of the conditions by which Thomas proposed to test the identity of Jesus? What of his threat? He is convinced, but not by seeing and feeling the marks of the nails and the spear. The two at Emmaus were convinced without perceiving these. The majestic appearance of Jesus, and His kindly but imperative words, sufficed to dispel every doubt. His inmost soul is persuaded, overpowered. It is enough. Expositors have always been divided whether Thomas accepted the invitation. V. 29 says, "Thou hast seen," nothing more. His faith when once aroused needed no test or proofs. The heart mastered the understanding, love conquered every doubt. As his doubt was greater, so is his faith now richer and more powerful than that of his colleagues. He now not only recognizes Him as the Lord risen from the dead, as they were affirming, "but even confesses His Godhead in a much higher sense than any one had yet confessed. The language is abrupt through the suddenness of the feeling excited in him, in

this sense, 'My Lord and my God,' I believe and acknowledge that thou art my Lord and my God: and the absolute appellation has the force of an enunciation." Cf. v. 16. Hos. ii. 23. It would not harmonize with the careful, reflective, prudent character of Thomas, to view this simply as a momentary impression to which his triumphant faith gives expression, but it is "the exponent of all the impressions cherished in the preceding period," and it is moreover approved of and confirmed by the Lord in the following verse. Herewith doubt is once and forever crushed. It can never again bring up any pretext or any difficulty. It has passed into a straightforward and open confession. Jesus is at once "my Lord and my God." Here is the first creed, unambiguous, spontaneous, all-comprehensive; cf. Luther's expansion of the II. Article of the Apostles' Creed. The disciples had said "the Lord." Thomas says promptly "my Lord." John wrote i. 1: "The Logos was God." Thomas says "my God." Note the climax: My Lord! in fact, my God! The astonished disciple keeps the two expressions apart, repeating the article and the possessive. Consider the import of "My." His Lord and his God holds him, owns him now. Thomas, too, has risen. He has come to newness of life. The command, "become not unbelieving but believing," was followed as by a flash of lightning with the response, "my Lord and my God!" Faith is truly a divine gift. It comes by hearing the word of God, cf. i. 49. "He spake and it was done." By a single leap Thomas suddenly mounts from the lowest to the topmost round of faith. In this we have a typical Christian experience. He surpasses even Peter in his confession of the essential deity of Christ. Suddenly the last became the first. The one last to believe was the first to pronounce the blessed name which is truly his. He may have recalled Christ's own repeated testimonies to his divinity.

29. "Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed."

This is possibly a gentle reproof. He should not have required this evidence. Why could he not believe the Lord's predictions of rising again, why not accept the unanimous assurance of his fellow-disciples? He came in a sensuous way to decisive faith, and thereby missed the blessedness of those who become believers without such a sensuous conviction. His conduct could not be commended as noble or wise. He should before have learned that his Master's cause lies in the domain of spiritual things, and therefore outside the sphere of the senses. Faith is the sense, the organ, which apprehends the spiritual, Heb. xi. 1. It is the essence of religious faith to hold fast to that which is invisible.

The capacity for the unseen would have inclined the mind of Thomas to receive the historic fact, for connected with it are momentous truths that belong to the sphere of ideas.

We do not understand that a blind faith is here enjoined, but a reasonable faith is commended. Thomas had sufficient evidence to convince a reasonable mind, but he ignobly demanded more. If those who at a later period received the gospel had like him refused to believe the resurrection except on the evidence of their own senses, the founding of the church would have been impossible. After the ascension bodily examination was out of the question, and the foundation truth of Christianity could be accepted only on the testimony of such as had been eye-witnesses.

Some deny that any censure of Thomas is implied. His doubt about the resurrection offers Christ an opportunity for stating an abstract truth touching the supersensuous and ethical nature of faith. Thomas has come to faith—note the force of the Perfect: “hast become and continuest a believer”—and the Lord in attesting this faith without denying its blessedness, accentuates “the rare and richly-favored lot of those who believe without seeing. For even in the case of the rest of the apostles, it was when they had seen, and not until then, that they believed.” The general multitude of believers, who had not seen Jesus, thus stood on a higher plane in this respect than the apostles.

Some take the first clause interrogatively, which “makes the element of reproof more prominent.” Note the Aorist of the two participles: “Those who, regarded from the point of time of the blessedness predicated of them, ‘have not seen and yet have believed;’ they have become believers without having first seen.” This point of time, the universal present, corresponds with the general proposition, and the *μακαριότης* is the happiness which they enjoy through the already present, and, one day, the eternal, salvation. The proper antithesis is that of faith” (in something that has occurred) “with and without a personal and peculiar perception of it by the senses.” Thomas’ course through sight to faith, through faith to blessedness, is no longer possible. The Lord passes away from sight and sense. A new epoch opens. Instead of the person of the Lord we have the word of the Lord, the testimony concerning Him whom God raised from the dead. Meyer regards this *μακάριοι* (“blessed”) standing at the close of John’s Gospel as very significant. The development of the church rests upon the faith which has not seen, 1 Peter i. 8.

written in this book : but these are written . . . Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."

These verses have no connection with what immediately precedes. They form the original close of the entire Gospel, a summary review by the evangelist of all that he has written and the statement of his purpose in writing. Quite appropriately it comes immediately after the mention of Thomas' outburst of a mighty faith, and thus recommends faith to all as the scope of this book. This last phrase shows that he had the entire book in view and not merely the last chapter; all the miracles he had recorded, and not merely the post-resurrection manifestations (τεκμήρια, Acts i. 3). It may be an allusion to other books extant, which recorded these many other signs.

"Many other σημεια," John narrates comparatively few of these Messianic proofs. This statement, therefore, strengthened by the use of the generic word "signs," accords very naturally with the close of the book. The object of describing them—not merely those after His resurrection but those as well before His passion (note the Aorist) is to beget faith in Jesus, xii. 37. The accumulated facts as portrayed in the selection made by Him are the basis of the faith and life of the church. They took place in the presence of the disciples, that they as witnesses might herald them, and John committed them to writing to furnish a ground for faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and thereby bring eternal life to his readers. Here we have an instrument wherewith to produce faith.

"In the presence of the disciples." The miracles (for a synopsis of them, see Bengel *in loco*) were not restricted to the view of these, but were performed "before all the people." Luke xxiv. 19. But the disciples were the immediate witnesses. John could therefore give an authentic and accurate account of them, and legitimately could ask for the confidence of his readers. Through the medium of the disciples' testimony the church arose throughout the world, and no agency has been more powerful than this glorious book of John. He aimed at the twofold contents of faith, that Jesus is the Christ, *i. e.*, the world's Redeemer, and that He is the proper, essential, only Son of God. The first acknowledgment of Jesus was as the Christ in whom the prophecies were fulfilled, but from these they progressed to His acknowledgement as the only begotten of the Father. "Faith in Him as the Messiah grew into faith in His deity. The designation 'Christ' refers to His office, that of 'Son of God' to His person." So it is now in Christian experience. The receiving of Christ as our

Saviour deepens into the apprehension of Him as God in the flesh. Owning Him as my Lord I come to know Him as my God. The last clause shows that faith is more than a theoretic or historic belief. It forms a life-union with its object. Its riches are not unproductive capital. They yield life. By faith we have eternal life through the name of Him in whom we believe. "His name:" that which represents Him, the word which reveals and proclaims Him. The gospel is not a mere narrative or history, but a vital and vitalizing power, which transforms believers into a blessed life that bears the stamp and indicates the power of His name. A sublime close to the gospel. Chap. xxi. is a supplement. Nebe thinks that since the church has united both scenes in one Pericope, the practical treatment should not divide them.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE RISEN ONE REVEALS HIMSELF AS

1. The Breaker of every bond.
2. The Prince of life (or of peace).
3. The Searcher of hearts.
4. God in the flesh.

THE RISEN ONE MANIFESTS HIMSELF AS

1. Lord over all things.
2. Saviour of men.
3. King of all hearts.

THE RISEN ONE FINDS AMONG HIS DISCIPLES

1. Believing ones, whom He cheers with His peace, whom He sends forth as His witnesses, whom He fills with His spirit.
2. Unbelieving ones, to whose hearts He addresses Himself, whom He helps to faith, and whom He brings to salvation.

THE RISEN ONE, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

1. Peace is His salvation, for by the blood of the cross He made peace.
2. Peace is His command, for with the Holy Ghost He endows His disciples for the message of peace.
3. Peace is His kingdom, for He brings unbelievers to the peace of faith.

THE RISEN ONE'S SALUTATION OF PEACE.

1. The ground of it, the wounds of Jesus.
2. The authority it bestows to carry the message of peace.
3. The conditions of it, living faith.

PEACE BE WITH YOU:

1. The joy of your heart.
2. The work of your life.
3. The end of your unbelief.

III. THE POSTLUDE.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (MISERICORDIAS).

John x. 11-16.

FROM the subject of both the Epistle and the Gospel this day is also called Shepherd Sunday. Luther found the ground for the selection of its Lesson, that Christ herein teaches how He must suffer and die, and yet rise again (v. 16), for if He is to be a shepherd of His flock, He must not remain in death. "It is a most comforting Gospel, which the Lord Christ beautifully and kindly sets before us, what sort of a person He is, what words He speaks, and what are His feelings toward the people."

In place of historical texts we have now doctrinal passages. "This Gospel makes the transition; it looks backwards and forwards; it teaches what the good Shepherd has done and what He still does and will do." It is taken from the longer discourses which Jesus held with the Jews on the occasion of His healing the man born blind. In contrast with the unworthy, faithless, hireling shepherds, Jesus portrays Himself as the good Shepherd.

11. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep."

"The good shepherd." This figure does not merely for the moment occur to Jesus; he keeps it in mind, and in a few brief verses repeats it twice, the *εγω* giving a lively emphasis to it. Meyer: "The good, the excellent shepherd, conceived absolutely as he ought to be: hence the article, and the emphatic position of the adjective. In Christ is realized the ideal of the shepherd as it lives in the Old Testament. Ps. xxiii.; Is. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv.; Jer. xxiii; Zech. xi.; Mic. v. 3." Thus we have simply the characteristic of a true shepherd. He will hazard his life in endeavoring to protect the flock. Others: "the good shepherd foretold by the prophets." Men of God who are to lead God's people are often compared with shepherds in the Old Testament. Cf. Is. lxiii. 11; Num. xxvii. 16 f.; Ps. lxxviii. 71. Jehovah is

called the Shepherd of His people both with respect to the individual, Gen. xlviii. 15; Ps. xxiii., and with respect to the whole people, Ps. lxxvii. 21; lxxviii. 52; lxxx. 2; Mic. vii. 14; Is. lxiii. 13. Israel is Jehovah's flock. Ps. lxxiv. 1; lxxix. 13; xcv. 7; c. 3; Jer. xxiii. 1; etc. By God's command, kings, priests and prophets are the immediate shepherds of His people. Hence the threefold reference to the shepherd in Zech. xi. 3; cf. Jer. xxii. 1 ff.; xxiii. 11; xxxiii. 34. But the gracious, faithful Shepherd of Israel is not satisfied with these under-shepherds. Hence He promises, Ezek. xxxiv. 23, to set up one Shepherd over them; "He shall feed them, and He shall be their shepherd." So Mic. v. 2, 4, "He shall feed in the strength of the Lord," and especially Is. xl. 11. Jesus applies the figure to Himself. Matt. xviii. 12 f.; Luke xv. 3 ff. His shepherd-heart impels Him to His work, Matt. ix. 36. His whole prophetic work was a shepherd activity, having been sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matt. xv. 24. As the Shepherd He suffers death for the flock, Zech. xiii. 7; Matt. xxvi. 31; Mk. xiv. 27. As the Shepherd He rises again from the dead, Heb. xiii. 20; Mark xvi. 7. As the Shepherd He rules over mankind to the end, 1 Pet. ii. 25. As the Shepherd He will again appear upon earth, 1 Pet. v. 4, to separate the sheep from the goats, Matt. xxv. 32. As the Shepherd He will, throughout eternity, glorify Himself in His own, guarding them, John x. 26, and feeding them, Rev. vii. 17. The image of the Good Shepherd was among the first symbols of Christian art, being produced on drinking vessels, on fountains, on the coffins of Christians.

It is a very suggestive figure, representing on the one side the loving, tender, pitiful care of God, protecting from all harm and providing for all want; on the other side, a corresponding frame of mind in man, in his sense of weakness and helplessness clinging to the Shepherd, following wherever He leads, not intent on going one's own way, but securely and joyfully submitting to His guidance. Jesus shows Himself the good Shepherd alike in seeking the lost and in caring for those He has found. "No other figure is painted for us in such tender and soft colors, no other is so condescending to the weak, timid creature." It comprehends the entire relation between God and man.

Christ the Good Shepherd, is the theme of the following discourse. All that follows is simply proof. "The good Shepherd dies for His sheep." This is His characteristic, a specification in which the Good Shepherd proves Himself to correspond to His idea, hence the repetition *ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός*. On *τὴν ψυχὴν τίθησιν* Meyer says:

"As to substance though not as to the meaning of the words, equivalent to *δοῦναι* τ. ψ. Matt. xx. 28. It is an exclusively Johannean expression, vv. 15, 17, 18; xiii. 37 f.; xv. 13; 1 John iii. 16, and must be explained from the idea of a sacrificial death as a ransom that has been paid, Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6. Its import accordingly is: to pay down one's soul, *impendere*, in harmony with the use of *τιθέναι* in the classics, according to which it denotes to pay." This is disputed on the ground that the context presents no one making a claim which such a ransom would satisfy.

"*Υπέρ*, for the good of, "in order to turn aside destruction from them by His own self-sacrifice," xi. 50 f. This, Meyer holds, is the specific point of view from which the sacrifice of the life of Jesus is regarded throughout the entire New Testament.

Some use the expression as in xiii. 4 merely of laying down or aside, unclothing one's self, renouncing. Ewald: to offer as a prize for competition. The idea is obvious: The good shepherd tends his flock; when the wolf comes, instead of fleeing he goes forth to meet the rapacious enemy, puts himself between the flock and the foe, thereby enabling the flock to escape. This is the reverse of what the hireling does, who by seeking his own safety leaves the flock to perish. Such is the love of the good shepherd for his flock, that to save it he will stake the dearest thing on earth, his life. The hireling on the other hand sacrifices the life of his sheep for his own.

Nebe thinks the value of the sacrifice is enhanced by the use of *ψυχή* instead of *ζωή*. He not only offers up the outward life, but with full realization of the pains of death, and that unconstrained, altogether voluntarily he lays it down, willingly accepts the suffering.

"For the sheep." As God's love and fidelity are so strikingly illustrated by the term shepherd, so the figure of the sheep characterizes most faithfully such as are pleasing to God, those consciously weak and helpless. Luther speaks of the peculiarity of the simple sheep in soon recognizing the shepherd's voice and following no one else. It cannot defend itself, it wholly depends on another's help. As the Lord's discourse proceeds under the limitations of figurative language, it is a question whether His vicarious death is here to be understood. Some limit the figure to the sacrifice of one's self in behalf of an object. Von Hofmann denies that substitution is implied in the phrase "in behalf of the sheep." It is not clear that the dying one secures from death those for whom he dies. The wolf not only seizes and tears, he also scatters, and to prevent every form of his destruction the

shepherd goes forth to meet him. Nebe: "Certainly Jesus does not say that when the shepherd is slain by the wolf, his flock will be torn and scattered; the death of the shepherd not only satiates the blood-thirsty wolf, but his death-struggle gives the flock time and opportunity for escape. Thus most certainly the death of the shepherd is in the wider sense vicarious. The wolf is not after the shepherd, but after the sheep; the sheep cannot, however, defend themselves, the shepherd enters the lists for them: they cannot save themselves, the shepherd can and does. This is, indeed, his proper office. He fights that the sheep may not have to fight, he dies voluntarily that the sheep may escape that death to which they were exposed." There is, therefore, substitution here, though not in the strict sense of the Scholastics.

Jesus does not yet say that He lays down His own life, only that He is the good shepherd, and the good shepherd does this. He promises, predicts, and designedly uses the present, for He is already engaged in jeopardizing and surrendering His life for His sheep.

12. "He that is a hireling . . . to whom the sheep do not belong, beholdeth the wolf coming, and he abandoneth the sheep and fleeth, and the wolf seizeth the sheep" . . .

A dark contrast to the good shepherd. Thus under the Old Testament, were found in contrast with the shepherds whom God sent to the people in the person of the prophets, hirelings who cared for themselves, not for the flock. And such hirelings abounded when the Good Shepherd appeared to seek the lost sheep of Israel. And they abound to-day. The hireling has two characteristics: 1. He is no real shepherd. He has no feeling for the sheep, no heart-interest in them. He has merely hired himself for the work to gain selfish ends. 2. He has no property in the sheep. They do not belong to him. He is not identified with them. There is no vital bond between him and the flock. There is nothing at stake for his heart or his purse. This is true of Pharisees in every age.

Some hold that Jesus referred to the Pharisees of His day, in their leadership of the people. These, Meyer thinks, are included among the thieves and robbers, vv. 1, 8. Some refer it to the priesthood. Christ probably meant to utter a general truth valid for all time, scoring all professed teachers and leaders of men, who, influenced solely by self-interest instead of being ready to suffer and to make sacrifice even of life for a community, are studiously intent upon their own comfort, and with heartless indifference abandon their charge just when their services are most needed. "Cross-forsaking teachers" have exposed the church to havoc and

destruction from its very first years. The question by whom the hirelings are employed, lies outside the purpose of the allegory.

There is here no conflict with the principle, maintained by the Lord and His apostles, that the laborer is worthy of his reward. One may receive hire without being a hireling. The reward promised to the good shepherd is "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." 1 Peter v. 4.

"Not a shepherd" Meyer connects closely with "a hireling," "he who is a hireling and not a shepherd—shepherd in the sense of being owner of the sheep which he leads out to pasture; hence the words 'to whom the sheep do not belong' are added for the purpose of more emphatically expressing the meaning." But Nebe, deriving ποιμήν from ποιμαίνειν, holds that he is not truly a shepherd because he is not concerned to feed the flock, he has no interest in the property of another's, except so far as it brings him fixed wages. Filthy lucre is the only consideration, and when he can do better in this respect, or if he is exposed to damage or danger, he basely quits the charge. The Old Testament presents no cases of the wolf devouring a flock, but often refers to the greedy rapacious animal, Zeph. iii. 3; Hab. i. 8; Gen. xlix. 7, and to the exposure of the sheep to his attack, Is. xi. 6; lxxv. 25.

By the wolf some understand the devil; some, heretics and schismatics, Acts xx. 29. Lange: the Roman Empire. Meyer: a general image of every sort of power, opposed to the Lord and bent on destroying His kingdom; this power, however, as such, has its causal and ruling principle in the devil, xii. 31; xiv. 30; Matt. x. 16. Whether consciously or not, the hireling really stands in the service of the enemy of Christianity. Whatever the form of the hostile power that threatens the flock, the selfish and cowardly shepherd consults primarily and solely his own immediate safety, and at first sight of danger leaves the helpless flock to its fate. The selfish man is sure to be a coward. He sees the wolf coming—possibly, moved by fear, he was watching for him. He never endangers himself for the sake of any cause. Even before the wolf is near he ignobly turns his back and flies as fast as his feet can carry him, never as much as looking back to see what has become of the poor sheep, never giving a thought to their fate.

Meyer notes that "Christ possesses a church even before His death; partly according to the old theocratic idea, His own (i. 11) ancient people; partly in reality, the totality of those who believed on Him (vi. 37); partly proleptically (vs. 16); though as far as He is concerned, they are first purchased (Acts xx. 28; Tit. ii. 14) by Him through His death, after which event began the extension of

His shepherd functions to all, by the drawing of His Holy Spirit (xii. 32)."

Nothing hinders the wolf in his purpose. Infuriated by hunger he now falls upon the defenseless and betrayed flock. The havoc is twofold. Individual sheep are torn to pieces, and the flock as a whole is scattered. This is always the course of the wicked one. Those whom he does not succeed in destroying he disperses. Some are overpowered by Satan, ensnared, taken captive at his will. Others finding no security or defense in their union as a body, betake themselves to every haunt of fanaticism and delusion.

13. "Because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep."

Here Nebe's interpretation of his not being a shepherd, is explicitly expressed, the ethical key to his behavior is given. He has no concern or anxiety for the flock. His flight is easily explained by his character as a hireling. Self-interest prompted him to take charge of the flock, self-interest prompts him, at the most critical moment, to leave it. A selfish minister, one that makes gain out of godliness, should never be entrusted with a church. The contrast between the good shepherd and the hireling is like that of day and night. Bengel puts it thus:

<i>mercenarius</i>	<i>ego</i>
<i>mercenarius est</i>	<i>pastor bonus</i>
<i>non est cura ei</i>	<i>novi</i>
<i>fugit.</i>	<i>animam meam pono.</i>

We see, too, the picture of the false shepherd making his own escape, and of the abandoned flock torn and scattered on account of him. The latter picture always deeply touched the Saviour's heart, and He here gives the reason for the deplorable, heart-rending condition in which Israel was then found, and in which His people have often since been found. Those who were charged with the flock are miserable hirelings, without heart, without a willingness to make sacrifices—who instead of grasping the sling and the smooth stones, grab for the bag and the thirty pieces of silver. They are moved by mercenary motives, and as quickly as possible take to flight, having no feeling for the weal or woe of the flock. The motto of the hireling is, "not I for the sheep but the sheep for me. Let them be sacrificed and not myself."

The Good Shepherd and the flock are bound together by a living communion. He carries them on his heart and sustains an innermost, unbroken, fellowship of life with them.

14, 15. "I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep."

Note the law of contrast observed in the discourses of Jesus. His own devotion to His people is strikingly brought out by the opposite course of a faithless mercenary. He now makes explicit application of the discourse to Himself, cf. v. 7.

That He is the Good Shepherd is evident: from (a) the relation between Him and the sheep, the tender, familiar, reciprocal relation, so that He fully knows and sympathizes with all their needs and dangers, and they in turn know and confide in His love, grace and power. The intercommunion between Him and them is in nature and mode like that between Him and the Father, a personal union and communion by which each is fully known to Him, and He is clearly revealed to their hearts through a vital experience. There is a continual outflow of His grace to them—and of their trust in Him; from (b) His sacrifice of Himself unto death for the sheep, this being in the greatest possible contrast with the flight of the hireling at the approach of danger. V. 14 brings out the fact that Jesus lives as well as dies for the sheep. He gives His life to His people; He lives for them, lives with them in the innermost fellowship. *Γινώσκειν* has the pregnant sense of a living interest, and as applied to both shepherd and sheep reciprocally, a living intercommunion, a reciprocal abiding with one another, xvi. 20; xv. 10; xvii. 3, 8, 21; Matt. vii. 23. "The reciprocal knowledge is a knowledge growing out of the most intimate fellowship of love and life." Some make the word about the same as love; Calvin says, *Cognitio ex amore nascitur*.

"The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know."

Luther interprets the passage of Christ alone knowing men's hearts, not judging by the outward appearance. Weiss: as the searcher of hearts Jesus recognizes His own in the mass of Israel. This Nebe deems inconsistent with the analogy of the reciprocal relation between God and Christ. There is nothing in the sheep unknown or indifferent to Him. They are in every sense His own, *τὰ ἐμὰ*, appropriated by Him. And so they have Him for their own, they live in and for Him as He lives in them and for them, xiv. 19–23. We know Him because He first knows us, and manifests Himself to us. God always takes the initiative. But for prevenient grace, grace could avail nothing. God comes to us before we come to Him, Luke xix. 9, 10; Gal. iv. 9; Phil. iii. 12.

It is only "His own" of whom Jesus says He knows them and they know Him. This gives no real support to the idea that Christ did not have to shed His blood to make these His own.

They became His only through the plan of salvation. It is not denied here that His sufferings and death were the means of making these sheep His own. In fact it was His knowing them and His purpose to be known of them, that led Him to give His life for the sheep. The dignity and the glory of the relation of believers to Christ is often illustrated and enforced by Christ's own relation to the Father, xiv. 20; xv. 10; xvii. 8, 21; Matt. xi. 27; Luke xxii. 29; 1 Cor. xi. 3; xv. 28; Acts iii. 21—a thought that must fill the mind with adoring wonder. It is the highest possible analogy of a life-union. The Father's knowledge of the Son precedes in the sentence the Son's knowledge of the Father. Hence some infer that the relation referred to is that which belongs to the economy of redemption, but the basis of the soteriological exterior relations of the Trinity has its basis in the ontological and eternal interior relations. Into these depths, however, the Scriptures give us only now and then a glimpse. Only through the exterior relations of the triune God can we form a conception of the mysterious inner relations entirely apart from the creature. Some introduce here the subject of the theanthropic self-development of Christ. The absolute sense of the term Father here and its repetition forbid the limitation of "I" and "me" to the historic person, Christ. The one known by the Father and knowing Him is the eternal Son. Luke x. 22. We interpret the clause of the intra-divine, essential, knowing in the immanent Trinity. "As Father and Son are one in the Holy Ghost, so the same Holy Ghost which Christ gives to His own and to which His own completely surrender themselves, is the bond of fellowship between Christ and His Church." It is one and the same kind of knowledge, of acknowledgment, of unfathomable and eternal love.

Sustaining this twofold yet kindred relation of life and love to the Father and to His own, Jesus is peculiarly fitted to do what He in v. 14 ascribed in the third person to the good shepherd. "I lay down my life for the sheep." By this love which leads me to die for the sheep, I show my love to the Father. On that account "I lay down, etc." Bengel renders *kai* "therefore." Doubtless the design of the preceding clause is to present the motive which impelled the Lord to this ineffable sacrifice.

"I lay down." Meyer interprets this present of "the near and certain future," but Bengel: "*tota illa vita Christi erat itio in mortem.*" Christ's surrender of His life does not date from His passion. He was a suffering Christ before His passion, Matt. viii. 17, etc. His whole life was an inward preparation for the final way of the cross.

16. "And other sheep I have . . . them also I must lead (as a shepherd), and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be brought about one flock, one shepherd."

This may connect with the last clause of the foregoing: "I lay down my life," etc. The sacrificial death of Christ has removed the partition wall which separated the Gentiles from the Jews, His ancient fold, Eph. ii. 13 ff., uniting them in one community of believers. Or, the connection may be with the thought contained in the last two verses. They treat of the confiding relation between the shepherd and the sheep: "He knows His own, but they are to be sought not only among the people of the election, but also among the heathen. Thus is brought to light the universality of His shepherd love and His saving grace." This serves too as an earnest hint to Israel of its liability to lose its precious divine inheritance. By willful blindness those that see shall judiciously become blind, while those not seeing shall see. ix. 39.

"Other sheep:" not Jews, outside Palestine. They form a part of the Jewish theocracy, of "this fold," within which Jesus Himself lived and spoke. The Jews of the dispersion are nowhere so distinguished from those in the Holy Land, as to be regarded as a distinct community or a different nation. Matt. viii. 11. The heathen are referred to. The Good Shepherd has also a heart for the poor, lost, languishing sheep, and will take pity on them.

"I have." A very expressive term. He is their owner, Acts xviii. 10. Even now they are His, and it devolves on Him to care for them, be their leader, as a shepherd. Certainly all who will hear His voice the world over are His sheep. Even though they be not in the enclosure, they are His, and divine love constrains Him to be their shepherd. But can they belong to the sheep of the good Shepherd as long as they do not hear His voice? Bengel and Nebe emphasize the present form, indicating that Jesus does not speak of future sheep, but that He then recognized genuine sheep of His flock in the heathen world. "One may in a sense be a sheep of the good Shepherd without the word and sacraments of the historic Christ; one may be an unconscious Christian." Nebe refers to the prologue of John's gospel, which represents the Logos as the personal life-principle of the whole creation, of the material as well as the spiritual world. To the latter He sustains the innermost relation; He is the light of spirits, the light which enlightens every man, which kindles a light in every human spirit. Some find there "a relation of solidarity between the Logos and all mankind." It is neither unreasonable nor unscriptural to hold that a measure of light is given to the heathen—and that while some receive not the light which shineth in darkness,

loving the darkness more than the light, others cordially receive its beams into their heart. God has nowhere left Himself without a witness. Nebe refers John iii. 20 f., "Every one that doeth evil," etc., to the difference which obtains in humanity outside of Christendom, some being drawn to the light, others repelled by it. He even thinks that the yearning for redemption among the heathen is not limited to individual souls, but that unutterable sighs of a sin-smitten creation resound through the heathen world.

Meyer, however, understands "the future when He (as the good shepherd lifted up on high, Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 25), shall be the guide also of the heathen, who have become believers, and whom He now prophetically terms His sheep. Cf. xi. 52; xii. 32, and prophetic utterances such as Mic. iv. 2; Is. xlix. 1 ff; lii. 13 ff; liii. 10 ff." He adds: "The heathen who are to be gained are, however, even before they are recipients of salvation, children of God, and Christ *has* them as His sheep, according to the ideal view of the future as an actuality so far as it is certainly fixed in the counsel of God, Rom. xi. 28." "To be a child of God and an adherent of Christ pre-supposes regeneration. For this they are destined by the divine election of grace, and fitted and prepared by the prevenient divine drawing."

"Not of this fold." This clause some interpret as showing that these sheep are not in an *αἰλή*. Nothing is said about another "fold," but He has other sheep, and these are scattered abroad in the world. DeWette, putting the accent on "this," holds these sheep to be also *in a fold*. The heathen have also been under divine guidance, Acts xiv. 17; xvii. 27. Others put the emphasis on *αἰλή*, and hold the characteristic feature of heathenism to be the diaspora, vii. 35; xi. 52; "whilst the thought of a divine leading of the heathen does not correspond to the figure of the *αἰλή*, of which the conception of theocratic fellowship constitutes an essential feature, cf. the olive tree," Rom. xi. 17; Eph. ii. 12. The Jews lived in a "fold," walled in by the law of Moses. Such an enclosure was not given to the heathen, yet a superintending Providence ruled over them. Meyer renders: "which are not *out* of this fold, not derived from it." Salvation proceeds from the Jews to the heathen.

"Them also I must lead." These sheep among the heathen belonging to Him, He recognizes His obligation to lead. Though in no sheltering enclosure, divine love constrains Him to be their shepherd. During His personal ministry He acted as shepherd for them only in one instance, Matt. xv. 21 ff.

Δε, in obedience to the divine decree. God has made Christ

the Saviour of all, and will have all men to be saved. Hence not of His own accord, but by the determinate counsel of God it devolves on Him to shepherd also heathen souls. This divine purpose was revealed to the prophets and published by them. The meaning of *ἀγαγεῖν* is simply to lead. It is frequently applied to shepherds in the sense of feeding, pasturing. The shepherd goes before His sheep, and they follow Him to the green pastures, v. 4; Ps. xxiii. No change of place or country is required, "since the shepherd who leads also the heathen is the exalted Christ, Lord of all," Acts x. 36.

"My voice." Not His personal agency but His word is the instrument for the conversion of the heathen. The gospel is the voice of the Good Shepherd, and as men among all nations receive this word into their hearts, thereby recognizing the voice of the Shepherd, the great end of the Lord's mission will be realized: one flock under the one Shepherd. All are feeding on the one pasturage, the green fields of His revealed truth, in the midst of which spring the still waters of eternal life. All who hear His voice are true sheep, sheep of the same flock, recognizing one and the same chief Shepherd, though not in the same "aule." No one exclusive enclosure of an outward Church is spoken of, but one flock, all knowing the one Shepherd and known of Him. In His leading alike Jews and heathen, there follows of necessity that they become one flock. This is the happy issue of there being one Shepherd over all. By the asyndetic collocation all the conception of unity is made to appear with more marked prominence, 1 Cor. x. 17; Eph. iv. 5.

This is not to be taken as teaching the conversion of the whole world. Luther: "We must ever bear the cross that those are in the majority who persecute Christians; so the gospel must be preached, that we keep inducing some to become Christians. . . The meaning of one Shepherd and one flock is that God will accept all who believe in Christ as His children, be they Jews or heathen, for this is the one true religion, to follow this Shepherd and His voice." Nebe: "We have here nothing concerning a universal restoration, and nothing concerning the termination of all denominational differences in doctrine and worship."

Note the force of *γενήσεται*: will become. It indicates a progressive work. Bengel: "Christ is *de jure* always the one Shepherd, *de jure* and *de facto* He will become the one." So the flock is virtually a unit from the beginning, but this unity is progressively realized and manifested in the world. To the question whether this unity was already realized in the conversion and fold-

ing of the heathen into the Church of Christ, or whether its realization will be found in the disappearance of all denominational differences before the Church's unity of faith and love, we give Meyer's answer: "The fulfillment of His declaration, which began with the conversion of the heathen by the Apostles, is still advancing, and will be first completed with the realization of what is spoken of in Rom. xi. 25 f." The true unity of the flock consists in the oneness of a subjective possession of the gifts of grace and the unifying fellowship of love. Note yet the sublime confidence of Jesus in the success of the gospel.

The Pericope is specially adapted for practical treatment. Attention ought to be; above all, directed to the goodness of the Good Shepherd, as also to blessedness of the sheep under the Good Shepherd.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD,

1. Gives His life for the sheep.
2. Knows them and is known of them.
3. And will effect that there be one flock and one shepherd.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

1. His faithfulness.
2. His wisdom.
3. His work.
4. His reward.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD'S LOVE IS REVEALED:

1. In offering up His life for the purchase of the flock.
2. In manifesting Himself to them so that they know Him.
3. In exercising His all-embracing grace to bring men to His fold.

THE LOVE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

1. Its proof, the giving up of His life.
2. Its ground, His life-communion with the Father.
3. Its end, the gathering of one flock.

THE MARKS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD:

1. Readiness to give up life for the flock.
2. Heart-fellowship with the flock.
3. Constant endeavor to bring about one flock.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE SHEEP.

1. They cannot be torn from His hand.
2. Nor separated from His love.
3. New additions are led to their fellowship by His word.
4. They are ever becoming more a unit among themselves and under Him.

MISSIONS.

1. Their ground.
2. Their means.
3. Their end.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (JUBILATE).

John xvi. 16-23.

THE last Lesson carried our view back to the suffering and dying Christ, and at the same time opened up for us a vista into the remotest future. The present Lesson has a strikingly similar Janus-face. It looks back into the night of Good Friday, but it also leads us out of the shadow of death to the great day when the Psalmist's word shall have its ultimate fulfillment; "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Alt: "As the Gospel of the previous Sunday was chosen to re-echo the Easter triumph in the pastoral fidelity of the Lord, so also was the Gospel for this day, in which the Lord announces to the disciples that for a little while they shall not see Him, and again a little while and they shall see Him; for a time they are to have sorrow, but soon they will have a greater, an abiding joy."

The two Lessons run parallel. They are, however, also essentially distinguished. In the former Pericope Jesus stands in the centre. Twice he draws attention to Himself, to His person and to His work, by the words, "I am the Good Shepherd." This Pericope directs the attention of the disciples to themselves, the condition of their souls, their bent of mind. "The Lord did not alone enter with Easter into a new phase of life; something new is to take place also with His own. Out of the night comes the day; in the hour of anguish the new man is born into the world."

16. "A little while, and ye no longer behold me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me."

In xiv. 18 f., in the same connection with the descent of the Holy Spirit, the same comfort is given to the disciples. After His removal from their midst and His resumption of glory, He will dispense unto them further and higher blessings through the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling will bring them into even closer fellowship with Him than that now enjoyed.

Luther: "The Lord divides this Gospel into three parts: 1. The words a 'little while,' etc. 2. The meaning and interpretation of these words, namely, that they shall weep and lament, etc. 3. The illustration of a woman in travail, where the anguish is brief

but the resultant joy lasting." He holds that the singular expressions, *μικρόν*, etc., were purposely chosen that they might make a deeper and more lasting impression on their hearts.

The oldest interpretation is that the "not seeing" and then "seeing again" refer to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Others: while the "not seeing" points to His death, the "seeing again" refers to His second coming at the end of the world. Both these renderings imply a personal, face to face vision of the Lord. But more correctly, a number of moderns hold the reference to be neither to the resurrection nor to the parousia, but to the spiritual vision of Christ in the indwelling activity of the Paraklete. Cf. v. 23; Acts i. 5, 6.

The first *μικρόν* is a very brief interval, not many hours; the second can hardly cover a very long period, utterly disproportionate to the former. One might say, not many days, *i. e.*, at Pentecost. Then there was vouchsafed unto them such a manifestation of Christ through the agency of the Paraklete, as they had never enjoyed while He was with them in the flesh, xiv. 18 f. Cf. also vv. 23, 25, 26 of our Lesson. The day of the Spirit was the time of a new and higher vision, a spiritual vision and fellowship.

Θεωρεῖτε. The immediate future is in the Present. *Ὁψεσθε*. The remote future is in the Future tense, the latter verb including more than the mere act of seeing. It implies the actual observation of the object, fixing the eye or the attention on something, beholding, perceiving, keeping in sight.

What makes this sight possible? The fact that He is going to the Father. As in xiv. 18 f., His going to the Father is in the deepest sense His coming to them, His manifestation of Himself to them, His taking up His abode with them, xiv. 21-23. The true spiritual vision of Christ by believers is conditioned upon His departure to the Father.

This clause, if genuine, determines the application of the "seeing again" to the Pentecostal epiphany. In John's Gospel Jesus never refers to His ascension in the popular historical sense. It contains no prediction of His historical resurrection, but His assumption into heaven is represented as identical with His death. Death in His case was the transition not to Hades but to a higher sphere, to a participation in the power, majesty and glory of God, whence He can manifest Himself more vividly to His disciples than while moving visibly in their midst.

17, 18. "Thereupon some of his disciples . . . What is this that he saith unto us? . . . What is this that he saith, A little while? We know not what he is saying."

The strange expression has something mystic or enigmatical for

the disciples. The sense of the words is simple enough, but the *intelligentia rerum* is too much for them. In a discussion among themselves some pronounce the whole matter incomprehensible. Especially does the repeated "a little while" stagger them. What can He mean by that? It surprises us, on the other hand, that they should fail to understand these simple words, but did they not fail to understand His clearest and most unambiguous utterances concerning His death and departure from this world? They were still carnal. Reason was their only guide. If they should not see Him, the question was, whither was He going? And if He was going away, how could they see Him? xiv. 4-6. They could not understand that He was about to be seized, crucified and buried, much less that after His sufferings and death He should come forth from the grave and show Himself alive. A redeeming feature in their perplexity is that they do not attempt to wrest His words, a proof that these words have taken hold of their hearts. They are prepared to become pupils. They acknowledge their ignorance. They confer with one another to find among themselves a key to the enigmatical phraseology, they keep repeating the constituent parts of the strange discourse.

Jesus perceives their perplexity, and without waiting for their request for an explanation, proceeds with the elucidation of the enigmatical sentence, once more repeating the identical words, excepting "because I go to the Father." The disciples had included the phrase, v. 17. If it is not genuine in v. 16, they must have taken it from v. 10.

19. "Jesus perceived that they were desirous to ask him. . . . Do you inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while," . . .

The repetition strengthens the thought, and must at first have only deepened the mystery, and excited the more intense eagerness to comprehend the mystic language.

20. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and wail, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

After all, He gives no direct explanation of the sense of His words, but depicts the interchange of sorrow and of joy, which the "not-seeing" and the "seeing-again" will bring with them. The answer is of such a character as to stimulate further reflection, and to awaken an intense, confident expectation of a near and glorious future. Although He did not give His explanation in the ordinary prosaic and mechanical fashion, the eyes of their understanding were opened, and in v. 29 they gratefully acknowledge themselves satisfied.

Note the contrasts, "you" and "the world," "sorrow" and "joy," and the reversal of these which the future will bring forth. Their faith would sustain a terrible shock. The grief which shall overwhelm them is the more tragic through the contrast with the joy of the world over the catastrophe which called it forth. Their deepest sorrow correlates the world's greatest joy. What a hint this gives them of their glorious distinction from the world!

Θρήνος is the lament over a dead one, 2 Sam. i. 17 in LXX; the wailing and crying where death has invaded a home. Cf. Matt. xi. 17; Luke vii. 32; xxiii. 27, which, taken literally, would give the disciples to understand that they would very soon have a sad bereavement, over which, however, the world would exult. Their loss would be the world's gain, their defeat the world's triumph. The world rejoices when its own Deliverer is supposed to have perished. All this was fulfilled, the disciples weeping and fleeing in terror, the high-priest, the rulers and the soldiers mocking and deriding Him.

"You shall be grieved" is repeated, that a new contrast may be introduced. Your own hearts will experience an ineffable contrast, sorrow followed by joy, as the woman's anguish gives birth to a child, and pain is swallowed up by maternal joy. There is more than an exchange of emotion, the grief itself is converted into joy. The grief becomes joy. The joy is born of the grief. The cross becomes the object of their glory, the wounds by which the Lord was pierced, produce in them unspeakable comfort. The death of Jesus is the church's never-ending song of praise. In so far as the Lord may refer to the resurrection, the fulfillment of this is recorded in John xx. 20, where the disciples "were glad when they saw the Lord," which Nebe thinks John recorded in memory of this promise.

21. "The wife when she is in travail hath sorrow, . . . but when she hath given birth to the child, she no longer remembereth the anguish, for the joy that a man is born" . . .

The Old Testament often illustrates a great sorrow by the figure of a woman in travail, Is. xxvi. 17 ff.; xiii. 8; xxi. 3; Mic. iv. 9 f.; Jer. iv. 31; Hos. xiii. 13, etc. But the prophets in their use of the illustration did not go beyond the anguish, whilst our Lord shows that from this very anguish joy is born. Nowhere is the gospel of the cross more tenderly and more forcibly proclaimed. The church's periods of greatest tribulation have given birth to her sweetest songs of triumph. The hour of anguish proves to be the hour of a new birth. It is ever the rule, from brief heavy sorrow springs great and abiding joy. The Old Testament does, in fact, compare the regeneration of Israel with the birth-travail of

a woman. Is. xxvi. 17; lxvi. 7 ff.; Hos. xiii. 13. Hence the FF.: The woman in travail represents the Lord Himself, who through His death brings forth a new humanity, a new "man;" not simply a child, a new race springs from this death-agony. John xii. 24. But Jesus does not in a single syllable allude here to His own mighty sorrow. It is the sorrow of the disciples, with which He is now solely occupied. The woman is the symbol of the disciples passing through bitter sorrow to exultant joy.

Some discover also an allusion to the final trials of the church, which shall immediately precede and usher in the glorious advent of the Lord. The hour of extreme struggle will be the signal of her transfiguration, the swallowing-up of all her sorrows in a sea of glory. Rev. xxi. 4. But the immediate reference is to the entrance of Christ into their hearts, His being formed in them the hope of glory through the work of the Holy Spirit, which His death procured in their behalf. What they passed through in those awful days, turned to their everlasting joy in the forgiveness of sins, and in the possession of Christ mediated by the Holy Spirit.

"Her hour:" the time ordained, the destined crisis. *Ἀνθρώπος*: a human being. The application of the illustration follows.

22. "And you, accordingly, now have sorrow: but I shall see you again . . . and your joy no one taketh away from you."

"Accordingly," in accordance with the figure. The hour of travail is at hand. The Present is used. Sorrow has already possessed the hearts of the disciples. Cf. v. 26. They are even now absorbed in grief. But just as in the case of the mother's travail, this poignant grief shall soon turn to joy. Grief is productive. It will yield a blessed joy.

How will this conversion of pain into bliss be effected? "I will see you." Not, you will see me, as above three times. The initiative is from Him. "They can only see Him because He first sees them; they do not come to Him, He first comes to them; not they seek Him to see Him, but He seeks them that He may see them."

Salvation proceeds from Him, as its first and sole cause. He will come to them and see them and thereby bring about this promised joy. By the Holy Ghost He will return to them, and then by His nearness, revealed in the Holy Ghost, by His appearing to them, fixing His eyes anew upon them, they will come to a new vision of Him, and thus attain unto a joy which shall be perennial. There will be a new intercommunication between Him and them, a purely spiritual fellowship, but all the more real and joyful.

This joy is so rich, so transcendent, that it requires two clauses to describe it: "Your heart will rejoice," and "your joy no one takes away." Thus is revealed at once its intensive and extensive character. Its seat will be in their hearts, at the spring of existence. From the innermost depths of the soul will issue forth the living streams of joy. So deep will be this joy, so incessant its flow from an inseparable fellowship with their Lord, that it will be inexhaustible, imperishable.

"No one takes it away"—the certain future as present. This implies more than its perennial nature. They have foes. The disciples are still in the world, and the world would fain rob them of their joy, but they are secure in the possession of it. The Lord will protect them in it. His enemies must lie at His feet. No stranger can intermeddle with the believers' joy in their Lord. No calamity can deprive them of their Saviour's presence. For

"Prisons will palaces prove
If Jesus shall dwell with me there."

This is the climax. It will be impossible for this joy to be taken from them.

23. "And in that day ye shall ask me no question . . . If ye shall ask the Father anything, he will give it to you in my name."

"In that day"—which cannot refer to His post-resurrection sojourn on earth, when they asked Him some foolish and improper questions—they will have no perplexities such as the problem which had just now so staggered them. A better relation to their Lord, a fuller experience of His saving grace, will so improve their spiritual understanding, that instead of acting as children asking questions about every little matter, finding insoluble problems everywhere, they will be in the condition of mature men, Heb. v. 14. His seeing them again is identical with their direct illumination by the Spirit, who will lead them into all truth, rendering it unnecessary for them to come to Him with perplexing questions. They will all be taught of God, 1 Thess. iv. 9. These words form therefore a very appropriate conclusion to the whole Lesson.

Some have made *ἐρωτᾶν* the same as *αἰτεῖν* placing emphasis on "me," and putting antithesis between the Son and the Father, but this introduces something entirely new into the discourse, and it conflicts with v. 19, cf. v. 30. The reference is to perplexities which they would have Him solve. And "asking me" has an entirely different sense from "asking the Father." The difference is that between "interrogation" and "rogation (supplication)."

The first closes one blessing: their illumination by the Spirit will render needless further inquiry. The second begins a new blessing: whatever they shall ask from the Father He will give it to them in the Son's name. Questions will cease, but not petitions. *Αἰτέω* is the more submissive and suppliant term, the uniform word for the action of an inferior to a superior, a beggar, a child, etc. Jesus never uses it in His petitions. They are requests to the Father from His co-equal Son, xi. 22. *Ἐρωτάω* is to interrogate, to inquire, implying rather the relation of equality between the one asking and the One asked, or at least familiarity. It is never used in the New Testament to express the prayer of man to God. 1 John v. 16.

They will on the one hand be so enlightened as to have no need of asking for the solution of enigmas, and again, in consequence of this illumination, He can assure them that whatever blessing, gift, aid, they may seek from the Father, will be given them in His name. It is only after that they shall have received that illumination, that the disciples are enabled to pray in the name of Jesus, *i. e.*, in conformity with His mind, xiv. 13, the Spirit of Christ within making intercessions for them, Rom. viii. 26. Consequently, as this alone is acceptable and effectual prayer, the answer in Jesus' name is conditioned likewise upon the work of the indwelling Spirit.

Nebe cautions us to beware in the practical treatment against falling into the general idea of the exchange between sorrow and joy. "The Lord does not mean to set before His disciples a general human truth and experience, but to commit to them a specific Christian truth and experience."

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

WHAT IS THIS, A LITTLE WHILE?

1. A word of perplexity for most disciples.
2. A word of thunder for the wicked world.
3. A word of promise for mourning believers.

Or,

1. A word of admonition, a little while and ye will not see me.
2. A word of comfort, a little while and ye will see me.

JUBILATE.

1. Joy in sorrow. 2. Joy after sorrow. 3. Joy out of sorrow.

FROM SORROW TO JOY.

1. This was the way of the apostles.
2. This is the way of all believers.
3. This will be the way for the entire church.

TRUE CHRISTIAN JOY:

1. A joy in the Lord.
2. A joy after great sorrow.
3. A joy with steady growth.
4. A joy in perfect knowledge.

CHRISTIAN JOY.

1. Its nature.
2. Its origin.
3. Its continuance.

WHY JESUS GOES TO THE FATHER.

1. To bring His disciples into a godly sorrow.
2. To create in them through this godly sorrow the new man.

C. THE PENTECOST CYCLE.

Nebe: "JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God, as King, is the subject of this Festival Period. He who has ascended to His throne at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, and has invested His followers with power from on high that they might go into all the world and convert all nations unto obedience to the faith, is to be portrayed before our eyes in this Pentecostal Season. All the Pericopes, without exception, represent the truth of this assertion. They speak with decided partiality of the Holy Ghost, but they do not speak of Him as the third person of the Trinity, as a self-existent being; they represent the Holy Spirit in His dependence on the Lord, they show continually that the Son will send Him, that He proceedeth in His name from the Father, to represent the Lord, to continue and to complete the work of the Lord in this world, to punish the enemies of the Lord, but to lead His disciples into all truth and thus to glorify their Lord."

I. THE PRELUDE.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (CANTATE.)

John xvi. 5-15.

Like the preceding Lesson, this Gospel treats of Christ's departure to the Father, and the consequent sorrow of the disciples. But while the former contrasts with that sorrow the joy of "seeing again" after a brief separation, this presents the Holy Ghost in His comforting agency with believers, and His punitive agency with unbelievers. This Lesson is in fact already a preparation for Whitsuntide, and the Introit, "Sing unto the Lord a new song," etc., is very fitting, for the church, while grieving over the departure of her Lord, has a new song to sing over a new miracle of grace. The Lord withdraws in order to send His Holy Spirit.

Jesus confines His discourse to the work and office which the Holy Ghost is to fill in relation to the world and to believers.

5. "But now I go unto him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?"

"Now" is contrasted with "from the beginning," v. 4. While I was with you there was no need of telling you. You were not doomed to suffer, for I was with you, and the world's hatred was directed chiefly against me. Now that I am going away, I must tell you what is to happen to you in my absence. But while you have hitherto asked me so many questions, you are now all dumb with sorrow, so absorbed with my departure itself, as to give no thought to its sublime and saving object, so crushed by the prospect of your loss, as to have no sense of the unspeakable gain, the living strength and comfort which you are to derive from my departure.

They had in a manner asked, xiii. 36; xiv. 5, but there was no eager, deliberate inquiry. Their sorrow at losing their all had paralyzed their understanding. And although they may have asked trifling questions of an outward intent, they had no anticipation of the possible blessings to result from the separation, no sense for the inestimable comfort which was soon to drown all their sorrow; they could not enter at all into His mind on the matter. Hence they did not ask the question they should have asked.

Luther: "He would especially comfort His dear disciples regarding His departure, which would leave them all in peril and distress, amid foes, persecution and death for His sake, telling them how those who would kill them, would console themselves that they had rendered God service. The grief over their loss was heightened by the tribulation and the sufferings in which His departure involved them. Hence the need of that comfort which in three consecutive chapters He pours into their troubled hearts, the sum of which is that in exchange for their loss by His departure He promises to send unto them the Holy Ghost, who should both comfort and strengthen their hearts and establish and extend Christ's kingdom throughout the world. And He tells them plainly what His kingdom is, how it is administered and what it accomplishes, and what the Holy Ghost will accomplish through them in this world."

The emphasis rests on "whither?" The sense, says Luther, is in these words, "whither" etc., as if He said, you are so crushed by these words that it does not enter into your hearts to ask whither, indeed, I am going, *i. e.*, not what way, but to what

place, and why and for what advantage to you? For if you understood this, you would not be sad and frightened, for my departure is not for my sake but for yours. They ought to be inquiring what His departure signified, that they might derive from it comfort instead of sadness of heart.

Meyer: "Jesus censures simply the degree of distress which they had now reached, in which none among them fixed his eye on the goal of the departing One and could come to a question for more definite information respecting it." If they had any apprehension of the nature and meaning of His departure, they would be eager to know the advantages they would derive from it. Beyond the fact of His going, which filled them with sorrow, they showed no interest. The place to which He was going (*quo vadis?*), and the purpose for which, seemed a matter of indifference. He puts into their lips the question they should have asked. Their thoughts should rise to the goal of His departure, His exaltation, His session at the right hand of divine majesty.

But He will not longer suffer them to sink beneath the waves of sorrow. An awful hour is about to break upon them. And as the cross is about to fall on them, He will also give them a glimpse of the crown, to which the cross alone will lead.

6. "But because I have spoken these things . . . grief has filled your hearts."

Just the opposite of what should have been the result of His announcement was taking place. The mounting of His throne should have filled them with exulting joy. It filled them with a paralyzing sorrow.

Ἀλλὰ is emphatic and suggestive. How differently, in their weak and carnal condition, they were affected from what they should have experienced. They were clinging to His bodily presence; with its disappearance they imagined He would be wholly lost to them. "They behold henceforth a chasm between Him and them; He will be yonder in an inaccessible realm, while they must endure in a forlorn state here all manner of affliction." Hence their hearts are so filled with sorrow as not to leave room for any other thought, or disposition any longer even to make inquiry.

7. "But I am telling you the truth; it is to your advantage. . . for if I go not away, the Paraclete will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you."

"My Saviour, can it ever be
That I should gain by losing Thee?"

To be deprived of my bodily, visible presence, will not redound

to your loss, but to your unspeakable gain. As their own death, Phil. i. 21, will be gain to them, so the death of their Lord will even now be their gain. Thus far, sight and sense have possessed and ruled the disciples. There is a higher stage of life, and the Lord has something better for them than His manifestation in the flesh. He therefore withdraws from sight so as to bring faith into action. No longer the object of physical vision, He becomes the object of spiritual apprehension. He passes beyond the reach of a lower faculty so as to be grasped by the higher, the power of faith. They must not remain children, to be fed with milk, but become subjects of the aliment and power of the Holy Ghost. They must rise from bodily contact into a fellowship of life, a communion of spirit—from a relation of externality to an inward participation and vital union.

As in their sadness it is hard for them to grasp this thought, Jesus takes pains to impress it deeply on their hearts, beginning with a most solemn affirmation. Luther: "He adds an oath to it, as God lives and I." Astounding as was the announcement that the loss of Him was a gain, they dared not henceforth have a doubt of it. That *ἐγώ* carries with it an incalculable power. Nebe: "As God swears by Himself because He can swear by no greater, so the Lord appeals to His *ego*, to His own personality, to seal His word as a word of truth. Not the word makes the man, but the man makes the word; the whole person of Jesus Christ serves as the foundation on which His announcement rests. I, the Jesus whom you so well know, in whose mouth was never found deceit, whom no one can convict of any sin, who came from the Father to testify as King of truth, to testify of the saving truth in this world, and who goes again to the Father, I am telling you the truth," although, as Bengel adds, you do not apprehend the truth of this.

And a most comforting, precious truth it is, which He now addresses to them. We are reminded also of a truth learned in the last Pericope, that the new man is born only amid pain and anguish, and that perennial joy is immediately preceded by the deepest suffering. "From the bitter root, that Christ is going away, matures a sweet fruit for the disciples; they gain while they lose, yea, while they seem to lose everything." "If I go not away," He assures them, "the Paraclete will not come unto you."

The Paraclete will be the substitute for Jesus, the gain which the disciples will reap from their loss of His visible presence. And His coming is contingent on Christ's going away, for if He goes away to the Father He will send the Spirit. The sending of the

Spirit is the immediate purport and purpose of His going to the Father. His death on the cross was the purchase of the Spirit, and now He goes to bestow His purchased gift upon His Church.

Ὁ Παράκλητος. Jesus does not here define the Paraclete, having done this xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26, where He says explicitly that it is the Holy Ghost whom He thus designates. While the Old Testament speaks often of the Holy Ghost, and under various titles, it never calls Him by this name. The term was coined or adopted by the Lord "in order to characterize Himself and the Holy Ghost after the function which both exercise." This specific New Testament term is found only in John, besides the above references, 1 John ii. 1. "As the word meets us only in the *usus loquendi* of John, and as he in xiv. 26 calls both the Son and the Spirit "Paracletos," we must accept one and the same sense in all the passages."

This noun is derived from παρακαλεῖν, or more properly from the Perfect passive form, meaning literally "one called to our aid," a helper. In classic Greek: a legal adviser; Latin: *advocatus*, attorney, counsellor, teacher, substitute, advocate, pleader, intercessor—one who comes forward in favor of and as the representative of another, Rom. viii. 26. In John xiv. 16 Christ said, "the Father will give you another Paracletos," and immediately after, v. 18, "I will not leave you orphans." Hitherto He had been their "Paraclete," now they are about to receive another. They will have a present helper, the Holy Ghost will abide with them forever. Sometimes the literal sense may be pressed, for He pleads with man for God and also, Rom. viii. 26, with God for man. He takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us, He testifies of Him, thus truly pleading Christ's cause with us, revealing Him to the heart, making Him immanent in the believer. Then, again, He inspires and gives utterance to *our* prayers. In our prayers, God hears His own Spirit's pleading. In several passages the word may be rendered "Comforter" in the sense of succorer, one who helps us to peace, one who imparts strength, in the etymological sense of comforter. It is by the aid and action of the Spirit that Christ and His work realize themselves within us and become effectual in the church, Acts ix. 31; iv. 31; Heb. xiii. 22. Sometimes, as here, the Spirit is presented as distinct from Christ, sometimes as one with Him. Cf. xiv. 18: "I will not leave you, I am coming to you." In the Paraclete Christ communicates Himself to the heart. What the Son has procured the Spirit applies. And while the Spirit is the gift of the Son, He in turn gives us Christ, brings Him within us, Christ in you the hope of glory.

This was now to be the blessed and most advantageous exchange. The personal παράλησις (succor) of the Lord will be supplied by another Παράλητος. For Christ's outward presence shall be substituted the inward teaching and power of the Holy Ghost, which will yield a richer experience, yea a fuller revelation of Christ, and a more intimate communion with Him than could possibly be derived from a continuance of His personal intercourse with them. But the coming of the Holy Ghost cannot take place as long as Christ is with them. His departure is the *sine qua non* for the advent of the Spirit. The gift of the Holy Ghost flows from the exalted Christ.

Luther: "The sense is this: If I do not depart, if I do not die and pass out of this life, nothing will be accomplished. You will remain as you are now, and everything will remain in the old condition as it was and still is: The Jews under the law of Moses, the heathen in their blindness, all under sin and death, no one can be delivered or saved, and the Evil Spirit will maintain his power." Nebe: "The Holy Ghost can come to the disciples only after the departure of the Lord, because this departure will bring them into such a state as to enable them to become vessels of the Holy Ghost. The withdrawal of Christ's sensuous presence, by which alone the disciples had heretofore been held and controlled, was indispensable to the attainment of that independence, which was the aim of the Spirit's impartation. Their hold on the one must be severed before they could properly receive the other and come under His *paraclesis*."

Again, before the departure of the Lord the disciples knew Him more after the flesh than after the spirit. Hence they built on Him their carnal hopes. These phantoms and illusions must pass away, if the Spirit of truth is to take possession of them. The death of Christ shattered the idol, and extinguished the last hope of a worldly kingdom and of carnal glory. The Holy Spirit cannot unite with an unholy cause. As Hengstenberg suggests, the Holy Ghost can be imparted only to those who are reconciled through the blood of the Son of God. And it was in fact not in the power of Christ to bestow the Holy Ghost, until by His atonement for sin He had mediated and procured this boon. Only in His state of glory, a state attained through His humiliation and death, was Jesus prepared and authorized to impart the Holy Spirit. Cf. vii. 39. Of course there was a measure of the Holy Ghost granted even under the Old Testament, and John saw the Spirit descending upon Jesus, i. 34. There was always possible a measure of spiritual action upon men's minds—the life of the Logos was the light of

men, i. 4—but the fullness of the Spirit was fitly and necessarily reserved as the gift of the glorified Redeemer. The crucified and glorified Mediator became the Dispenser of the Spirit. Kahnis: “While He was on earth the Spirit was present only in Him, hence He must die, that the Holy Ghost, the life-principle, freed from His personality to which it had been bound, may unfold its powers”—in them. Von Hofmann: “To impart to His followers His own life-spirit, He must leave the world and go to the Father, exchange the limitation of His intramundane life for the fellowship of the supermundane life of the Father; the outpouring of the Spirit was the proof of His entrance into the supermundane state.”

He enjoyed in His earthly life the fullness of the Spirit, “without measure,” but as long as the state of humiliation lasted, the Spirit could not properly be imparted by Him. For this it was necessary that He pass first from His humiliation to the state of glory. “When He ascended on high He gave gifts unto men.” He rules the church from His mediatorial throne, and his first sovereign act was the gift of the Holy Ghost. Eph. iv. 8 ff.

8. “And he . . . will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”

The subject here is the action of the Holy Ghost on the world, not His action on the disciples. In anticipation of their trials He furnishes them with resources of support and comfort. The advantage for them lies in the coming of the Holy Ghost, whose presence and activity will be all that they shall need. The commission for the world which He has given them, the Holy Ghost will enable them to carry out. They shall be witnesses for Him, and their witness shall be attended with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. The Holy Ghost who testifies in them and through whom they testify, xv. 26, “will convict the world,” etc. Every word of this promise is weighty. Nebe: “The Holy Ghost, whose organ the disciples are to be, will not only teach the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment, He shall overcome the world with His teaching, with irresistible power press the truth upon its attention, so demonstrate it that the world will be fully persuaded of it. This conviction, inasmuch as it holds up for the world its sin to the light, is at the same time a judgment, a punishment, which the Holy Ghost executes, a judgment of righteousness which is realized in the sinner’s conscience. The Holy Ghost will bring the world to the consciousness of its enmity to God.”

The convicted κόσμος, “world,” is limited by some to the Jews. But Luther says: “not only Annas, Caiaphas, high priests, Phari-

sees, Sadducees, scribes, elders, princes, and kings at Jerusalem; but everything that is in the world, in Jerusalem and in all places of the world, Jews and heathen, all the wise, prudent, learned, holy, mighty, emperors, kings, princes, noble and ignoble, peasant, citizens, high, low, young, old." The world which will wage a bitter war against them shall be subjected to the powerful action of the Spirit, who will win a complete victory over it.

It is a question, however, whether "world" is to be taken here in its specific sense, or only as the totality of mankind. The *ἐλέγχειν*, "convict of sin or error," indicates simply that the world is guilty of sin, but not that it will persist in sin. It means, to charge with, convince, convict, rebuke.

Is now this action of the Spirit to be viewed as punitive, or as corrective and saving? Conviction even in worldly courts differs from sentence, as the latter again differs from execution. Pardon is possible after conviction. The Spirit convinces men so as to constrain them either to change their course, or to continue in it with the consciousness of guilt. The effect of this conviction will be either beneficial: to bring the sinner to repentance, to beget in him faith in Jesus, to effect his deliverance from judgment—or judicial: it may redound to his eternal self-condemnation. The work of the Spirit will bring about the conversion of the enemies of the cross, or else so enlighten them that they must acquiesce in their own condemnation.

Meyer: "This conviction (namely, by the Spirit's testimony through the word, xv. 26) is the activity which convinces the person concerned, which reveals to him his unrighteousness and puts him to shame, (iii. 20; viii. 9, 46; 1 Cor. xiv. 24; Tit. i. 9; Matt. xviii. 15; Luke iii. 19, etc.), and the consequence of which may be in the different subjects either conversion, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, or hardening and condemnation, Acts xxiv. 25; Rom. xi. 7 ff." The *κρίσις*, "judgment," v. 11, Meyer holds, is intended, not of the "world," as many of the ancients held, but of the devil, "and stands opposed to the Johannean view of the deliverance of the world through Christ; the unbelieving world is to be convicted, v. 9, of the sin of unbelief; and this, to him who is not hardened, is the way to faith (cf. xvii. 20 f.), and therewith to separation from the world." So Godet: "The threefold *ἐλέγξει* is the moral victory of the Spirit through the preaching of the apostles"—the first example of which is Acts ii.

Luther: "All flesh and blood must be brought under conviction either unto salvation, or unto condemnation." Bengel: "He who is convicted in respect of sin comes thenceforth to the

righteousness of Christ, or falls with Satan under judgment." Nebe reminds us that the judgment over the Prince of the world must at the same time be a judgment of His kingdom, the world, *i. e.*, those who are yet of it when its ruler is judged. Here, however, the subject is not judgment, but conviction, the conviction wrought in wicked men by the evidence or testimony produced by the Holy Ghost, whose work, like that of Christ, is not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him may be saved. He will effect the moral overthrow of the world as world, which does not imply its destruction, much less the destruction of individuals. By a process of irresistible conviction He will demonstrate to the moral consciousness the wickedness of the human heart so that the sinner feels pricked, smitten in the conscience, condemned, undeniably and inexcusably guilty. This may not irresistibly lead him to embrace mercy, he may harden himself against the better conviction, stifle it and make his own damnation sure. Conviction does not uniformly result in conversion, though this was its design. Just as the gospel is a savor of life or of death, so the Spirit's application positively results in godly repentance, a saving change, or negatively in reproof, self-condemnation, and inexorable judgment. Lange suggests that the tables are turned. Instead of the world hunting down the disciples, heaping charges and condemnation upon them, the world itself will be brought under charges by the Holy Spirit, accusing, reproving, convicting it and bringing it to judgment.

This, in conjunction with the preaching of the word, is the work of the Spirit upon the world. The light falls upon the sin of unbelief, the unrighteousness of men is revealed to their own gaze, and their guilt is so set forth that none are permitted to escape. The whole world is condemned as being neither just nor good before God. By this continual *ελεγχος* the world approaches its end, either, in part, falling in with the Gospel through the Spirit's agency, or else proving incorrigible and reprobate, ripening for irremediable destruction.

The court which the Holy Spirit holds in the conscience, and from which the world cannot escape, effects conviction especially on three subjects: sin, righteousness and judgment. These He now proceeds to elucidate.

9-11. "Of sin, because they believe not . . . of righteousness, because I go to the Father . . . of judgment, because the prince of this world" . . .

The intimate relation of the three subjects is obvious. Cf. p. 453. Sin of course comes first. The object of the conviction is salvation, and salvation is wrought out on the basis of sin. The law,

by which is the knowledge of sin, comes before the gospel. The inner relation may be stated thus: The convicted sinner stands between the righteousness of Christ and the judgment of Satan. Conviction is produced concerning sin as it is in men, concerning righteousness as it is in Christ, concerning judgment as it is in Satan, or is executed upon him in the moral victory of Christ's Kingdom.

Notice the three-fold repetition of *ὅτι*, "inasmuch as," because. The absence of the articles gives these nouns their widest sense.

"In respect of sin." Men have ordinarily a consciousness of sin, wrought naturally through the conscience. But the Holy Ghost revealing the inwardness and spiritual demands of the law and bearing witness to Christ's atonement for sin, effects heart conviction. The ground on which He does this is, "because they believe not on me." This is not to be taken as though the Spirit convicted them that their unbelief is sin, a view held by some, holding that unbelief is the only sin. Unbelief is not the subject. But their unbelief is, through the preaching of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost, brought to light as the clear, convincing evidence, which proves them guilty of sin. That bears overwhelming testimony to man's sinfulness. His very unbelief will be made the means of his conviction with regard to sin. Christ having come to take away sin, to deliver man from its guilt and bondage, to recover God's children to their Father, all excuse for continuance in sin has vanished, and men not believing in Him, not embracing Him as their Saviour from sin, this is made the damning proof of their sin, through the convicting power of the Holy Ghost. Unbelief is sinning against the only remedy for sin, it is spurning divine mercy. Not accepting Christ proves that we are wedded to sin, as our delight, our treasure, from which we are unwilling to be separated. Its bondage is preferred to the deliverance offered by Christ, v. 40. By the influence of the Holy Ghost it is not only made to appear that they have sin, for which Christ is provided as a remedy, but their rejection of the remedy will be fastened upon them as the sin of sins, the full measure of sin. Where men believe, they have no sin, their sin is taken away; but not believing, their sin remains, they are condemned already, they shall die in their sins, iii. 18 ff. They defy and defeat the drawings of infinite love. Sin, as enmity to God, has them under its control. The thought that God's wrath rests upon the world because of its unbelief is certainly true, but that falls properly under the third head, conviction as to judgment. Meyer thinks, if that were the thought here, Christ would have said "of sin, because unbelief is sin."

"In respect of righteousness." Not content with piercing the heart with a two-edged sword, and casting a firebrand into the conscience, the Holy Ghost further convinces the world as to righteousness. He forces conviction respecting a subject the very opposite of sin. Two views obtain concerning the import of "righteousness" here. Augustine, and of course Luther, take it in the Pauline sense of justification, the righteousness of Christ imputed to the sinner. But the connection does not warrant that interpretation, and John does not use *δικαιοσύνη* in the Pauline sense. The subject of *δικαιοσύνη*, "righteousness," is not the "world," but Christ, just as the subject of *κρίσις* is Satan, and the subject of sin, *ἁμαρτία*, is man. A three-fold contrast is presented. The absolute holiness of Christ is the only proper antithesis to the sin of the world. Hence righteousness is here moral purity, a positive right-doing, life free from sin. The world will be convinced of the absolute righteousness, spotless innocence, perfect sinlessness, of Him whom they have rejected and persecuted as a sinner. "Which of you," said Jesus, viii. 46, "convinceth me of sin?" The Jews viewed Christ as an evil-doer, an impostor and a blasphemer, and they crucified Him as such. The world has had this estimate of its Redeemer. It has regarded Him as a subverter of law, as the enemy of man, as an arch-deceiver. That such a one should be proclaimed as the world's deliverer, was foolishness to the Greeks, as it was a stumbling-block to the Jews.

But the world's convictions on this point will be changed. Under the "elenchus" of the Spirit men will learn what righteousness is and who has it, who it is that is perfectly approved of God. And the ground on which the Spirit will effect this conviction, is Christ's departure to the Father. The conviction of righteousness in the world is wrought by means of the righteousness of Christ, who is no sinner, but who is taken up to the Father, removed in fact from the sinful world and elevated to the right hand of God. His going to the Father, which includes of course His resurrection, is the ultimate proof of His own righteousness, and therefore of righteousness *per se*. How notably this promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost! "Being by the right hand of God exalted," said Peter, "that same Jesus whom ye have crucified (as a malefactor) God hath made both Lord and Christ," Acts ii. 33, 36. "When they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said, what shall we do?" Jesus, whom we slew is the Holy One of God. He was no sinner. He could not be holden of death. Thus by the Paraclete was Jesus vindicated as the Righteous One *par excellence*. "Jesus Christ, the righteous," is a favorite expression of John, 1 John ii. 1, 29; iii. 7; Acts iii. 14; Luke xxiii. 47.

"Ye behold me no more," some think is added as an outflow of Christ's sympathy for them in their pain over separation. Some: He enters forever into the innermost relation with the Father. This clause hints also at the power of the Holy Ghost who effects this conviction in the absence of Christ, a matter of faith and not of sight. A conviction wholly of faith wrought by the Spirit is the most powerful of all convictions. It may be taken as the negative statement of His invisible reign, when, receiving of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, Acts ii. 23, He will by the ineffable power of the Spirit, in the testimony of the truth, persuade and convince the world of righteousness. The clause is more than a needless repetition, it is a factor in the world's conviction. His righteousness is without question the source of all righteousness, and consequently His justifying righteousness cannot be overlooked here, but that is not the subject proper. This is, the fact that, under the Spirit's power, the ascension of Christ to the Father and His eternal union with Him, will force upon the world the conviction of righteousness. Only a righteous one can do this. And only one who is in the bosom of God can effect the moral renovation of mankind, which the world is compelled more and more to ascribe to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"In respect of judgment." If there be a conviction of sin and of righteousness, there follows inevitably a conviction of judgment. Such is the antagonism between sin and righteousness, that sin must be condemned and punished, which has, proleptically, taken place in the judgment of the prince of this world. The relation of the three convictions forms an interesting study. They are three parts of a whole. Nebe: "The Paraclete who brings the world to a knowledge of its sin because it does not believe, convinceth it also that it has no ground for its unbelief, for Christ is the righteous one, and that it will perish through its unbelief."

Righteousness is to be in accord with God's will. Sin is opposition to His will. This opposition must be overthrown and punished. And of this judgment the world will be convicted. Boasting of its power and triumphing in outward and temporary success, the world will, through the Spirit, be made to feel its insecurity, the instability of its every hope, and the awfulness of passing from these ephemeral and empty interests to the bar of the eternal Judge. As Dr. Johnson said, on observing the luxury and grandeur of a palace through whose chambers he was passing, these are the things which make death-beds terrible.

The *elenchus* presses to the root of the enmity to God. The ultimate ground of unbelief is the rule of Satan, and as long as

this rule is unbroken "in the world and in human consciousness, the Messianic kingdom is hindered and antagonized." It needs, then, that Satan's power be broken, and that the world be convinced of this. In the supreme conflict which culminated in the death and resurrection of Christ, Satan was worsted. He suffered irretrievable defeat. Christ can exclaim "I am He that was dead and am alive, and have the keys of hell and of death." When Christ's work was accomplished Satan's citadel was taken. His cause is a lost cause. He can no longer lord it over the ransomed. His reign is doomed. The Perfect is used. Jesus anticipates the end of his work.

The judgment that has thus fallen on the prince of the world, serves the Spirit as proof for convicting the world with respect to judgment. When the chief of a rebellion is overthrown, those who are under him are involved in the same doom. The judgment which has fallen on Satan is the signal for passing judgment upon everything that is of the world and properly a part of his domain. The triumphant progress of the gospel is a proof that the world is being snatched from its chief, that he has received his sentence, that inexorable justice awaits all men. Nothing is able to arrest the march of Christianity. The kingdoms of this world are becoming the kingdoms of our Lord, nation after nation is bowing its knee to Jesus. The blood of the martyrs is made the seed of the church, their ashes flung to the heedless winds become germs of life in every land. All of which testifies to the world of a coming judgment, from which there is no escape. All power is in the hands of the mighty One who has bound the strong one armed, and who has taken from him his goods.

12. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

Having touched on the three great facts involved in the future triumph of His kingdom, having thus opened their eyes to a vast, sublime and spiritual prospect, the Master suddenly breaks off, and gives the reason for the abrupt close: They are not prepared to receive more. A vast amount of truth remains yet to be taught them, but under existing circumstances, with their present capacity and attainments, it is too much for them. With their present faculty of comprehension they cannot sustain the weight of the sum total of Christian truth. In their present stage of spiritual understanding, they are too infantile, too feeble, to grasp the whole truth.

Note the vastness of truth, its successive unfoldings as men are able to comprehend it, the limitations of the human mind, and the

law of adaptation followed by the great Teacher, who refrained from imparting truths which at the time lay altogether beyond the capacity of His hearers! How suggestive His example to preachers of the word! How absurd to teach certain aspects of doctrine to hearers of very limited attainments!

Some deny that Jesus interrupts the discourse. "He has reached the *conclusion* of His thought. But the Spirit shall assist them to their own development of the truth, the introduction to which thought is furnished by v. 12." Πολλά. Luther adds, respecting these three subjects. I have many things to explain, but you are still deep in the crude and carnal understanding, so that you can not receive it. You need beforehand the Spirit's illumination. Others disconnect from the foregoing. Bengel: many things concerning the passion, death, resurrection of the Lord. Some: the abrogation of the Mosaic ritual, the relation of the law to the gospel, the question of unfulfilled prophecies, the salvation of the Gentiles, the Apostolic decrees, the Trinity. Probably, not individual doctrines, but the whole truth, v. 13, the totality of what is yet wanting to them for a correct and complete knowledge of the truth, in brief, all those things which are developed for the church in the Epistles and the Apocalypse. In accordance with the law of development these are in advance of the Gospels, unfoldings of their germinal truths. Of many things Christ gave them only a germ, only glimpses, which the Holy Ghost would recall, illumine and develop in their minds. At present their hearts were too obtuse, their vision too dim, their thoughts too carnal, their faith too weak, to apprehend the deeper spiritual aspects of the gospel.

βαστάζειν, not *intelligere*. Meyer: "That which is too heavy, for the spiritual strength, for understanding, temper, strength of will, to be borne." Cf. 2 Cor. iii. 2. Truth is a burden which may crush the mind if given too suddenly or in excessive measure. We must first have the elementary doctrines, then advance to the deeper ones; first milk, then solid food. Alas! how this is overlooked, and what harm comes from the neglect!

Man is so constituted that even the greatest blessing, divine truth, he can receive only in portions, and by degrees. Therefore, to the Jews Paul was as a Jew, to the Gentiles as a Gentile, dealing out truth in such measure as he found capacity for its reception.

Rome has perverted this passage into the idea of the church supplementing the truth given by Christ, but its traditions, instead of being inspired by the Spirit, can least be borne by those who have the Spirit.

13. "Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth; . . . what things soever he shall hear, *these* will he speak, and the future (things) will he announce to you."

The Holy Ghost has as the Spirit of the truth, xiv. 17; xv. 26, a specific office with the disciples, as well as with the world. By Him they are to be led into the full truth, *i. e.*, not the whole realm of physical, metaphysical, mathematical truth, but the whole compass of spiritual and moral truth. He will help them to the possession of the truth and enable them to bear it. Here, again, Rome has falsely proceeded to the length of claiming for the church the authority under the Holy Ghost to teach new doctrines, such as were wholly unknown or unbroached in the time of the apostles, for instance, the Immaculate Conception, Transubstantiation and Papal Infallibility. Thus the church is made a source of truth coördinate with the Scriptures. Her teaching of new and unheard of doctrines is to be accepted as possessing the same authority as the words of Christ.

"As the love of God is concentrated in the Son, so is the knowledge of God concentrated in the Spirit. Truth is the Spirit's possession." But in the first instance, the Spirit taught the apostles by His inspiration, just as Christ had done. He took with them the place of Christ as instructor. The immediate fulfillment of this was realized on the day of Pentecost, though even after that the apostles made progress in the knowledge of the truth. In the second place, Jesus tells them explicitly that the Spirit will not teach independently of His teachings, but in the line of what has already been taught, what the Spirit (who is one with the Father and the Son) has heard from the Father and the Son, vv. 14, 15. "He will bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you," xiv. 26, *i. e.*, teach nothing new.

Ὁὐ γὰρ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ: not from Himself, apart from me, or the revelation I have made. There is a complete unity of the Spirit's teaching with that of Christ. His teaching will be the unfolding of the revelation Christ has given them, so that they will come into possession of the truth in its entirety. With improved faculties and the added light of the Spirit, the germs He had given them will attain their full expansion. 'Ὁδηγεῖ shows that the goal is reached gradually, after a journey. And, in particular, will He make them acquainted with the future, of which the Lord had left them almost wholly ignorant. Coming events He will announce, eschatological subjects, 1 Cor. xv. 51; Rom. xi. 25; 1 Thess. iv. 15. To the knowledge of the whole truth belongs, of course, the future.

Luther aptly says, if by the whole truth Christ had meant such

things as Rome teaches on many (things), then, the apostles never had a fulfillment of the promise. For they never knew anything of monasticism, celibacy, etc., etc. While rejecting the errors which Rome has deduced from this passage, we must not cast away its doctrine, that the Holy Spirit abides and rules in the Church, and that by His grace we enter ever more deeply into the height and breadth of truth. Nor is the view tenable that all the truth taught the apostles was placed on record in their Epistles. But nothing which the Church puts forward as truth dare conflict with the teaching of the Lord or the word of the apostles. Christ's revelation fixed a certain goal or measure for the Spirit Himself, furnishing a certain mark of truth and a touchstone to test false spirits, and alleged revelations.

14. "He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, . . ."

So far from carrying forward an independent interest, the Holy Ghost takes up the work of Christ, enlarging and developing His revelation and thus glorifying Him. He begets faith in Christ, impressing the truth upon men's hearts, He inspires devotion to Him, He transforms men into his image, He makes them ambassadors for Him so that His Gospel is preached everywhere, He advances the honor of Christ, and this not only by His personal illumination and influence in behalf of Christ, but the truth which is given by the inspiration of the Spirit, as also the grace and assistance which He dispenses, He receives from Christ. Not of His own does He give us, but He takes the things of Christ and announces them to us. All that the Spirit ministers unto men is taken from the illimitable treasures, the unsearchable riches of Christ. He completes the glorious work of Christ, by drawing continually upon the inexhaustible resources of Him who is Head of the Church and Lord of all. And the result of the Spirit's activity is to make men realize that Christ is the Lord of glory. "The more they recognize the saving truth, the greater will appear the glory of Christ." For He is the Truth as well as the Way and the Life. From the Fountain of saving truth, from the true and faithful Witness, the Spirit draws what He announces to us, leading us to an understanding of Christ's word, into greater depths, into larger views of His gospel.

15. "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall announce it unto you."

The Father and the Son are one. Whatsoever is the Father's, accordingly, must also be the Son's. Besides, the Father has given all things into the hands of the Son for the work of redemption;

not only all truth, Col. ii. 3—which may be meant in connection with the immediate context—but all power in heaven and on earth is committed unto Him, so that He is the Heir, the Possessor and Disposer of all things, and therefore the sum total of divine revelation, i. 18. Whatsoever then is communicated to the church by the Holy Ghost is taken directly from the glorified Christ. He is the Lord of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 17. The fullness of the Godhead is in Him. The Present is used, indicating a constant relation, an incessant outflow of truth and grace from Christ.

So also “*is mine*,” not “*shall be mine*.” He was at that moment, and is ever, in the full possession and full enjoyment of all that belongs to the Father. He ever lives and moves in the Father. “*This*,” says Luther, “is the circle, drawn together and closed, all three, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in one divine essence. For from the same ‘*mine*,’ which is my Father’s, He says, namely, that I am one God with Him. Of *this* the Holy Ghost takes, what He is and has, so that He (the Holy Ghost) has and is that, which I and the Father are and have.” All is one perfect and inseparable essence. “The Holy Ghost is Himself true God without any difference except that He is and has what He is and has both from the Father and the Son. Accordingly He will announce nothing but what He hears in the eternal Godhead with Christ and the Father.”

Nebe: “The Pericope gives occasion for the treatment of the nature or of the work of the Holy Ghost, also for comfort relative to the prospective departure of the Lord,”

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE HOLY GHOST A TRUE COMFORTER.

1. He comforts the sad disciples by coming to them.
2. He comforts the anxious disciples by convicting the world.
3. He comforts the ignorant disciples by leading them into the full truth.

THE HOLY GHOST THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

1. He proceeds from the King of truth.
2. He convicts the world in respect to the truth.
3. He conducts believers into the whole truth.

THE HOLY GHOST THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD.

1. He comes from the Lord.
2. He testifies of the Lord.
3. He leads to the Lord.
4. He glorifies the Lord.

THE HOLY GHOST GLORIFIES THE LORD:

1. By His coming from on high.
2. By His progress through the world.
3. By His entrance into the heart.

THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

1. To convict the world.
2. To comfort believers.

Or,

1. To glorify Christ before the unbelieving world.
2. To glorify Him in His followers.

Or,

1. To convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.
2. To guide believers into the full truth.
3. To glorify the Lord.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE LORD EFFECTS

1. The coming of the Spirit.
2. The judgment of the world.
3. The guidance into the full truth.
4. The glorification of Christ.

CHRIST'S DEPARTURE MAKES

1. Him truly the Lord.
2. Us truly His servants.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (ROGATE.)

John xvi. 23-30.

THIS Sunday receives its title from the contents of its Pericope. It is the Prayer Sunday. Nebe: "Such a Prayer Sunday is quite in place here. 1. The time between Easter and Pentecost is a time of waiting. Although on the evening of Easter our Lord already imparted of the Holy Ghost to the disciples, this was only the earnest of a greater and fuller outpouring of the Spirit. The church waits for the Holy Ghost, expecting the ineffable gift from the gracious hand of its great God and Saviour. But God's gifts are received only through prayer. Only the outstretched arms and hands of prayer will be filled. 2. The Holy Spirit is Himself the Spirit of prayer; He witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God, and He Himself cries within us, Abba, Father. If we, therefore, learn in our Gospel what promises are made to prayer in the name of the Lord, if we realize how greatly we need the hearing of our prayers, then the longing after the Holy Spirit, the Spirit and the power of prayer, must ever increase more and more in our hearts. Rogate Sunday is, therefore, truly a preparation day for Whitsunday." "Next to preaching," says Luther, "prayer is the highest service of Christians." And the Lord encourages here His disciples to offer their prayers undismayed and with confidence. "He who does not pray is no Christian and belongs not to the kingdom of God." "Without prayer," says Arndt, "we can receive from God no true or substantial good for body or soul, since the Holy Ghost with His eternal light and gifts does not come to us unless we pray for Him." Matt. vii. 11.

23. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name."

With a two-fold Amen ("verily") He confirms and seals the promise. Nebe finds a two-fold idea hinted: He promises something very great and important, and it is hard for man to believe it with his whole heart. Prayer, again, is a ladder. One Amen fixes the ladder on earth, the other in heaven. Men need all possible encouragement to prayer. The obstacles to it are most formidable. At the same time that they become so enlightened as to have no

longer occasion for the asking of questions, and in consequence of this illumination, they may be assured that whatsoever gift or blessing they may seek from the Father in prayer, will most certainly be vouchsafed to them.

It is only after they shall receive the illumination guaranteed in His early return to them through the Spirit, that the disciples will be enabled to pray in the name of Jesus, *i. e.*, in conformity with His mind, xiv. 13, the Spirit of Christ making intercessions for them, Rom, viii. 26. Consequently as this alone is acceptable and effectual prayer, the answer of it in Jesus' name follows as a matter of inevitable certainty.

We follow the text recognized by the standard MSS. and critics, although vv. 24 and 26 seem to warrant the *textus receptus*.

Nebe says: "The Lord gives to His disciples with this two-fold seal the *Charta Magna* of His kingdom. It is obvious," he adds, "that giving in the name of Jesus presupposes praying in the name of Jesus." Spenser says, the *charta magna* is a *charta blanca*, for the promise *ἂν τι*, "anything," is general. We are not confined to sharply defined limits. Prayer is an outpouring of the heart, and it may pour itself out unhindered in every direction. Some limit the *τι* to the Apostolic vocation. But even an earthly parent a child may address on every subject that concerns his heart or his well-being. Surely to the Heavenly Father His children may come with every trial and with every burden. Our every care we are bidden again and again to spread before Him, Matt. xviii. 19; xxi. 22; Mk. xi. 24; John xiv. 13 f.; cf. 1 John iii. 22; v. 15. God is indeed the highest good, and we pray for nothing higher or better than for God Himself, yet prayer is not to be restricted to this. The Lord's prayer begins with: Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, but it also includes a petition for our daily bread. It is an exaggerated spirituality, an unhealthy piety, which seeks to limit prayer to spiritual gifts. All our wants we are to carry to "the Father."

No pronoun is given. Nebe thinks "my" and not "your" is to be supplied, for "Father is in these last discourses used in the Trinitarian sense, in relation to the Son."

In xiv. 13, Jesus admonished them to direct their prayers to Him, here He points them to His Father on the assumption that they pray in His name. Meyer, on xiv. 13, the key to the passages which treat of this subject, says: "The prayerful request to God is made in the name of Jesus, if this name, Jesus Christ, as the full substance of the saving faith and confession of Him who prays, is in his consciousness the element in which the prayerful

activity lives and moves, so that thus that Name, embracing the whole revelation of redemption, is that which specifically measures and defines the disposition, feeling, objects and contents of prayer. The express use of the name of Jesus therein is no specific token; the question is of the spirit and mind of him who prays. The Apostolic mode of expression is analogous; to be, have, say, do, anything, etc., *ἐν χριστῷ*, *ἐν κυρίῳ*, Col. iii. 17."

Lücke: "He prays in the name of Christ, who when he prays is in Christ, and prays as one in Christ." There is a three-fold idea in such prayer: appealing to Christ in reliance on His glorious name and merits; in communion with His person; and with His mind. The middle idea is the chief moment. Faith identifies the disciple with Christ, makes us one with Him, so that His mind is also in us. By virtue of this gracious relation we personate Christ in our prayer, we represent Him, pray as He prays, so that our prayers come before God as if they were offered by Christ. Christ is in every way united with our petitions. He is their impulse, subject and assurance. "The Christian praying as one who is in Christ to the Father of Christ, the prayer is a prayer in Christ, the contents of the prayer is not the petitioner's own cause, but Christ's." Von Hofmann: "To pray in His name and as a Christian is one and the same. Nothing less is meant than that he who prays is availing himself of his relation to God which is mediated in and through Christ." That which Christ is to him he avails himself of in his prayer. The content, aim and joyfulness of the prayer are determined by that. He prays as a Christian, and it is to the Father of Christ that he prays. John puts the name for the personality of God in xii. 28; xvii. 4, 6, 11, 12. The FF. laid stress on the idea that "in His name" determined the contents of the prayer. The Reformers: on the petitioner's consciousness of having in it a warrant. Luther: "It is simply that we come before God with faith in Christ and comfort ourselves with the assurance that He is our Mediator, through whom all things are given to us, without whom we deserve nothing but wrath, etc., Rom. v. 2. For His sake we shall be accepted and heard. This is the ground on which prayer must rest, this alone makes it acceptable and powerful with God." Our entire ego sinks itself into the Son. Otherwise we cannot properly pray. "Prayer which is not offered through Christ is not only unable to take away sins, but itself becomes sin."

Prayer offered in Jesus' name is not offered in vain. The Father who is thus approached will most assuredly give you "in my name" what you ask. No other condition is annexed. The name

of Jesus, as we have defined it, covers every condition, and guarantees the answer. Of course whoever prays in Jesus' name, prays always, with Jesus, "not my will but thine be done."

In xiv. 13, Christ promises to answer Himself prayer offered in His name, here He promises that the Father will do it. He will do it "in my name," "by virtue of my name, because ye have prayed in my name." Nebe: "We pray out of a life-communion with Christ to the Father, and the Father hears us out of His life-communion with the same Christ." Praying in His name to God, we pray as those who no longer have life in themselves, but who live in the only-begotten Son of God; we pray as the Christ, who has assumed a form in us, and this Christ says: "All that the Father has is mine, and I and the Father are one," xvi. 15; x. 30.

24. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled."

"Like the new command He gave them, the Lord gives them now a new prayer." They have been praying heretofore, they even asked Him for a form of prayer, Luke xi. 1, but they have not prayed "in His name." Luther sees here the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. "The patriarchs and prophets prayed in the right spirit and in faith, but only in view of the coming Christ, but now they are to pray in the name of Him who has come, who has fulfilled the Scriptures and now reigns with power." Proleptically His death and ascension are assumed: "Such prayer shall be offered, He would say, when my Gospel shall be proclaimed in all the world, that I have come and accomplished all things, overcome sin, death and hell, and opened heaven, and now through this new preaching I also institute a new worship, in which everything is to be concentrated on me, so that henceforth there shall be no other prayer or worship than what takes place through faith in me, or what is offered and done in my name."

Weiss: "Prayer in Christ's name has been omitted because He was with them and asked for them everything they needed." Von Hofmann: "He does not reprove them for the omission, neither had they failed to pray thus because they were lacking the energy of faith, nor because they were wanting in zeal for His cause, nor because they were lacking the higher illumination of the Spirit, which rendered them incapable of praying in the name of Jesus; but it was because He was not yet—and therefore not yet to them—what He was to be. As long as His mediation in its relation was still in the process of becoming, so long was also their prayer yet only on the way of becoming an exercise of their relation to

God which is mediated through Christ." This in the end coincides with Luther's exposition.

Christ was not yet glorified *per se*, nor in them. He had not yet become their all and in all, they had not yet with Him died unto themselves and risen again to a new life in the Spirit, their life had not yet been hid with Christ in God. The full significance of the name of Jesus was not recognized till after finished redemption. If they would now be His they must pray, and that in His name. Prayer is the living breath of Him born of water and of the Spirit, "the pulse that never stops."

He bids them "ask"; Bengel supplies "in my name." This is a categorical imperative which graciously meets the yearnings of the heart. "If the Lord did not say it, permit it, command it, the heart would take this liberty (though not in the name of Jesus); even the pagan heart must pray." Homer: "All men have a craving for the divine."

The categorical imperative is immediately followed by the promise, "ye shall receive"—in addition to the double Amen. This apodictic promise still heightens that previous twofold assurance. There "He will give," here "you will receive." "The good with which God will fill the empty hand is viewed as already prepared, already on hand, only waiting for the fervent petitioner, the joyful receiver." The imperative and the additional promise are alike needed, for though God has heard our prayers never so often, we yet doubt again and again whether He will hear us. The heathen leaven which doubts the answer or prayer must be cast out, for he who doubts as to his prayer will not be heard, James i. 6 ff. The promise is most explicit "that your joy may be full," nothing wanting to it. Some make this the aim of prayer, the cause why He commands us to pray. Others: it is the result of asking in Jesus' name. It is the divinely ordained aim of the receiving. God will give what believers in Christ entreat in order to perfect their joy. Some understand this of the joy referred to v 21, "the consoling image of the woman having her joy at the end of her travail, is realized after the receptioun of the Spirit in answer to their prayer." Cf. vv. 22, 20.

They will have fullness of joy because they will be assured of their salvation in their continued blessed communion with Him. The hearing of their prayers seals their state of grace with God, bears witness that they are His children. What joy this blest assurance gives! Nebe: "Then, again, prayer in the name of Jesus relates chiefly to the highest gifts; these they receive, and their reception must fill the heart with joy. The very thought that it is

prayer in the name of Jesus which is thus honored, essentially heightens the joy of receiving. The Master whom they loved, they will realize continually, has all things in His power, and His holy name is the key which not only unlocks the portals of heaven, but also the treasure-chamber in the Father's house and the full love of the Father's heart."

25. "These things have I spoken to you in figures: the hour cometh when I shall speak no more in figures, but plainly of the Father."

How often He tells them that a new epoch is soon to begin. "Hitherto," v. 24, the old epoch continued, in which they were like children. Now by the power of the Holy Ghost they have reached their majority, their manhood.

The positive clause explains the negative—no longer in figurative, symbolic, enigmatic terms, under sensuous veils of thought, but directly, frankly, openly. In some respects all Christ's discourses were *παροιμιαί*, enigmas, veiled speech, proverbs, but this is especially true of what He said concerning His departure, their soon seeing Him again, and the joyful result. Had He told them plainly that, with a few brief exceptions after His resurrection, they were never more to see Him, they could not have endured it. Love forbade the discontinuance of His discourses on this final, sorrowful night. Luther says, He stops as though He were done, and then begins again, as is always the case with loving ones who are about to separate, but He restricts His disclosures to figurative terms which they at the time could not grasp. Lange: "Even the figureless saying remains a dark and simile-like conception to the unenlightened, while to the enlightened man the very concretest figure is illuminated by the idea of the Spirit." Olshausen remarks that all human speech is a *παροιμία*, only able to hint at, not to express fully the things of God; and that the Lord contrasts the use of this weak and insufficient medium with the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit, which is a real imparting of the divine nature and life. Some limit *ταῦτα* to what the disciples in vv. 17, 18, had asked, and what He Himself, v. 20, had more fully carried out. Others, to all that was previously said including chapter xv. Meyer quotes xvi. 1 as decisive against this. But xvi. 1 refers to the purpose, not to the form of His more recent discourses. The disciples recognized the dark and enigmatic character of much that was spoken by the Lord, xiv. 5, 8, 22; cf. xvi. 18 ff. and 29. This form of speech is now to cease. The coming "hour" is the period when the Holy Ghost will be imparted to them. Through Him He will speak to them openly, without disguise or veil, "straight out" instead of "by the way." All about

the Father will then become luminous, so that you will apprehend what the Father is and what my going to Him, *i. e.*, "how by suffering I ascend into the being and kingdom of my Father, sit at His right hand and represent you as your Mediator—that all this happens to me for your sakes, that you may come to the Father." All about the Father that pertains to the economy of redemption, His nature, will, grace, etc., will then be so clearly communicated to them by the Spirit that they will no longer ask questions, v. 23. All this was completely fulfilled after the day of Pentecost. What greater contrast could there be than that between Peter's discourse on that day and the childish questions they had been asking all along on these very points, His sufferings, death and glory!

Παρησία means first the confidence, persuasion, with which one speaks, John vii. 13, 26; then the openness, clearness, definiteness with which one speaks, Mark viii. 32; John vii. 4; x. 24; xi. 14, 54.

"Some refer the "hour" to His resurrection, others to the Pentecostal event, before which there was certainly no complete fulfillment of the promise. Then only did the disciples experience that quickening and spiritual enlightenment which transmuted the utterances of the Lord, which their fear, unbelief and sorrow had rendered so dark, into luminous, unmistakable truths.

26. "In that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not . . . that I shall make request of the Father for you;"

The change of "hour" to "day" has no significance, except that a continuous period is referred to. Under the illumination of the Spirit, it will be characteristic of them that they approach the Father in His name. The fuller their knowledge, the more prayer in the name of Jesus, and *vice versa*. The product of the full life-knowledge and life-communion wrought by the Spirit is the prayer-life in the name of Jesus. As they themselves offer their prayer in His name, pray as His representatives and with His mind, offering through the Spirit the very prayers which He Himself would address to God, His intercession for them becomes superfluous. Their prayers in His name are in effect the same as His intercession for them. According to 1 John ii. 1; Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25, Christ's intercession is continuous, unending. That, and this declaration are one truth—presented from two sides.

After His completed work and their participation in the Holy Ghost, they pray in His name and have the most intimate communion with God. There is no occasion for a continual repetition or renewal of Christ's mediation for them. That has been effected once for all. "He that is washed need not, etc.", xiii. 10.

Previous to the sinner's entrance into the enjoyment of redemption he stands in a different relation to God—this change is brought about by Christ's intercession, xvii. 9. So also our restoration, when by sin we have anew been alienated from God. Continuous sinning renders continuous intercession necessary.

In xiv. 16 the intercession of Christ secures the gift of the Spirit. Having thus mediated the Spirit for them, the richer their possession of the Spirit the less necessity for the continuance of that personal mediation. This truth is not to be taken as absolute, but as relative only. For as long as we sin, in so far as we are sinners, we need Christ's intercession. The intercessions of Christ for His own become needless, however, in so far as they experience the full power of the Holy Ghost, and while they pray in His name. Against the interpretation, "I will not mention at all," my intercession may be taken for granted as a matter of course, the next clause is decisive; the Father Himself loves you. Nor can the reference be to the second Advent of the Lord, for then in the full possession of unending glory the saints themselves will cease to pray. Prayer is the expression of conscious need.

Their prayer in Jesus' name is to begin very soon, in contrast with the statement that hitherto they had not prayed in His name. Throughout the whole history of the church believers offer their prayer in Jesus' name. He Himself prays through and in them. They have themselves the most direct and immediate access to the Father.

27. "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came" . . .

Intermediate pleading, intercessory prayer on his part, becomes unnecessary, in view of the relation they sustained to Christ, a relation of deepest love (*ὅτι ὑμεῖς ἐμὲ πεφίληκατε*), a relation wrought by the faith that the Father sent Him into the world. He does not withdraw from the mediatorial office, but it has in their case been so successful that further activity on His part is superfluous. Having Christ in our hearts, believing that He came from God to take away our sin and death, we can pray ourselves directly to the Father, in virtue of the name which stands between the Father and us. "Loving Him and believing in Him" is a further explanation of praying in His name. By faith and love they are in Him and He in them. And this faith brings us to the Father, this love draws upon us the Father's love, hence we have free, unrestricted access to the Father.

There is no merit in us. It is a Father's love that grants us this privilege. We have been brought to love the Son by His love

for us, and the final result is the realization of the Father's love, **xiv. 21, 23.** The Father sees Christ embodied in them, Christ in them and they in Him, and for Christ's sake loves them in a special sense, for it was His love that in the first place gave Christ to the world. This is the love of complacency, that the love of pity. They can thus appear before the Father just as the Son Himself, on the same terms, with the same freedom. No mediator need move the Father's pity. He holds us already on His heart. We, too, are sons, sharing the Father's love. Christ is not ashamed to own us as brethren, so the Father deigns to call us sons, and if sons, then heirs, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, **i. 12, 16; Rom. viii. 17.** A royal priesthood characterizes every believer. His union with Christ warrants him to open his mouth wide before the throne. Of course believers do not pray without Him, or exclusively of Him. Christ remains forever the living Medium and Mediator.

Love is put before faith, here, doubtless to correspond with the declaration "the Father Himself loves you." And with logical correctness, since faith unfolds itself in the exercise and experience of love. The Present tense of the Father's love, according to Meyer, "denotes that the future is represented as present." But Nebe: "The love of the Father rests even now on these elect." The hour is at hand for the new man to come into being in them. From now on the good pleasure of the Father rests upon them.

"Because ye have loved me" admits of a twofold exposition: (a) It may indicate the proof of the Father's love. Their love to the Lord and their faith in Him are the products of the Father's love to them, for no one cometh to the Son save he whom the Father draweth. (b) It may also give the ground of the Father's present good-pleasure. He loves them because they have loved the Son of His eternal love, and have believed on His name. There is much dispute about the Perfect. They have loved to the end, love to Him has now become the fixed inalienable possession of their hearts. The eleven were undoubtedly devoted to Christ with a passionate love; for Him they were ready to go into prison and into death. And so they have believed and continued to believe that He "came from the Father." The primary object of faith is His coming from the Father, **xvii. 8.** Nebe thinks that He does not restrict the church's confession of faith to this simple sentence, but that He adds another fundamental truth in the next verse, namely, that "He is going to the Father." If they did not at that moment believe this, they did as soon as the Spirit came upon them.

28. "I came forth from the Father . . . again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father."

This two-fold truth further elucidating v. 27, runs all through these farewell discourses: from the Father into the world, from the world unto the Father. A simple and grand summary of His entire personal life. The coming forth from the Father, v. 27, is not that of the eternal generation of the Son. This verse is decisive against that, for it speaks directly of His coming into the world, and the following clause states the reverse, that He is going out of the world, cf. xvii. 8.

Still the coming forth from the Father means much more than the historic coming into the world—and the leaving of the world more than His ascension from the earth. The intra-relations of the Godhead are included. He goes to the Father, above all heavens, into the Holy of Holies, to be again with the Father, as He was from the beginning, from eternity. For their believing this and for their love to Him, the disciples are well-pleasing to God.

29. "His disciples say, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb (figure)."

They think they have now understood Him. Augustine: "They understand Him so poorly that they do not even understand that they do not understand Him." This Meyer regards an exaggeration. His last declaration, v. 28, was so clear "that they now find the teachings contained vv. 20–28 so open to their understanding, and thereby the enigmatical character of vv. 16, 17, so solved that they judge even now, that in this instruction just communicated He speaks so openly and clearly, so entirely without allegorical disguise, that He is at the present time doing for them that, for the attainment of which He had in v. 25 pointed them to a future hour." What Jesus said would take place "on that day," they supposed, is even "now" occurring, His speech is devoid of figure or disguise, it is open, plain, obvious. They were, however, not yet in possession of the Spirit. Hence they even yet misapprehended His meaning in vv. 25 and 23. What He speaks of as future they imagine has already been realized. Luther thinks they answer Him as they do, after the manner of good children who answer from filial affection "Yes, yes, we understand it," in all simplicity without any hypocrisy, not knowing perchance what they are saying. All at once they imagine everything is clear as the sunlight; even the time that seemed afar off is already here.

30. "Now we know that thou knowest all things, . . . by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

"Now," in v. 29: what He promised He would hereafter do;

"now," in v. 30: what they should become aware of in the future. The fact of Jesus anticipating their questions, and reading their perplexed thoughts, impresses them so profoundly as to serve as corroborative proof that He came forth from God. His statement that on that day they would ask Him nothing, they understood as an assertion of His omniscience—they have even now a proof of this in His penetration of their thoughts. There is no need for our questions. Thou seest into our hearts. His conversations and discussions were generally directed to the subjects and questions which were agitating their hearts, and were in anticipation of their inquiries. There is no need for any one to ask questions. His omniscience furnishes them firm ground for believing on Him. For their faith in Him they have found a new and peculiar ground of certainty, cf. ii. 11. His omniscience was the basis of their faith in His union with the Father. Such an impetus to their faith clears up all. *Ἰνα*, same as infinitive structure; no need for any one to ask on a matter he desires to understand or learn, ii. 11. *Ἐν τούτοις*. *Ἐν* is here causal dependence. Meyer: "*propter hoc*. They had believed before, v. 27. Jesus attested their faith. Yet even now they do not profess the full measure of faith, but only 'that thou camest forth from God.'"

The Pericope theme of this Lesson is prayer.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

PRAY :

1. To the Father.
2. For all things.
3. In the name of Jesus.
4. Because He will give it to you.
5. That your joy may be full.

PRAYER IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

1. Through His mediation.
2. In fellowship with Him.
3. To His glory.

Or,

1. We have this privilege.
2. We shall attain the promise.
3. Let us not neglect the condition.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER

1. Is offered in Jesus' name.
2. Is heard by the Father.
3. Makes our joy complete.

PRAYER IN THE NAME OF JESUS

1. Attests our faith in His name.
2. Our union with Him.
3. That we have come to the Father through Him.

THE HOLY GHOST IS

1. A Spirit of Prayer.
2. A Spirit of Knowledge.
3. A Spirit of Grace.

II. THE CHIEF FESTIVAL.

THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION.

Mark xvi. 14-20.

THE Pericope does not contain a Gospel Lesson giving the particulars of the ascension, such as the close of Luke's Gospel. It represents the ascension in the light in which the Ancient Church viewed the wonderful occurrence. Nebe: "The whole period between Easter and Whitsuntide they kept as a festival season, the ascension having no significance to them *per se*. It was regarded only as the bridge between Easter and Whitsunday, a necessary link in the Festival series. Our Pericope corresponds perfectly to this idea. It connects in the first verses with Easter, and extends in the last verses to the day of Pentecost and even beyond. From the summit of this Festival the eye turns backward, for the ascension concludes the life of Jesus Christ upon earth, and at the same time forwards, for the ascension is the entrance of the Lord into His heavenly glory."

14. "And afterward he was manifested in another form unto the eleven . . . and he upbraided them . . . because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

Mark gives a climactic view of the epiphanies of the Lord: first He appeared to Mary Magdalene, v. 9; then to the two disciples journeying to Emmaus, v. 12; "afterward," *ὑστερον*, unto the Eleven themselves, *i. e.*, to the collective apostles. It is, however, not certain whether he means that these three epiphanies occurred on the same day. Meyer: *ὑστερον* does not mean "at last," although according to our text this appearance was the last, cf. Matt. xxi. 37, but "afterward," "subsequently," Matt. iv. 2; xxi. 29; John xiii, 36, which certainly is a very indefinite specification. Nebe renders "at last." "The evangelist means to represent by this the last and highest stage of the manifestations of Christ. As 'first,' v. 9, and 'after these things,' v. 12, fall on the same day, this third and greatest manifestation may also have transpired on the same day which had already witnessed the other two."

The context is decisive. Lange: "*ιστερον* marks here the later, the personal, revelation of Christ in the circle of the disciples."

It is an old problem "whether this Pericope reports one epiphany of the Risen One or a sum of epiphanies." Augustine concluded that all here reported fell into one day and that the day of the ascension. Luther: "The evangelist comprehends in brief words every thing that Christ did after His resurrection up to the fortieth day, which, however, He did not speak at once or in the same hour. The two parts, therefore, which are here condensed as much as possible, namely the reproof of the disciples for their unbelief, and the command for what they are to preach, we have to divide and distinguish according to the other evangelists. The upbraiding of the disciples took place not long after the resurrection, from Easter till eight days after, when they all saw Him, and He directed them to meet Him on a mountain, whence He expected to take His departure and ascend into heaven." So Calvin, Gerhard, Bengel and most moderns. Some object to referring the whole passage to Ascension Day, that the Lord would hardly at so late a period reprove the apostles for their unbelief and hardness of heart. By His repeated epiphanies they had at last come to clear and full faith. But for the benefit they derived from these repeated manifestations, Jesus might have disappeared on the day of His resurrection. But Acts i. 6, 7, indicates that up to the very last the Eleven needed correction and reproof.

According to Nebe the first part of the Pericope takes us to Jerusalem to the circle of the disciples assembled on the evening of Easter. "The Eleven" does not mean all of the eleven, but the apostles generally, Luke xxiv. 23.

Ἀνακειμένους "sitting at meat." It is questioned whether this term is to be taken in its usual sense of reclining in the act of taking food. It is so used, Matt. ix. 10; xxii. 10, 11; xxvi. 7, 20; Mk. xiv. 18; Luke vii. 37; xxii. 27; John vi. 11; xiii. 23, 28. The *textus receptus*, Mk. v. 40, uses the word of the prostrate form of Jairus' daughter, and some hold that *per se* the word here means no more than their reclining together as a company, but as the Lord, Luke xxiv. 41, asks them for something to eat, "to furnish them proof that He is actually standing before them in bodily form," we naturally conclude that some food had been placed before them. The lateness of the hour for eating offers no difficulty.

To these the Lord was manifested. There was something peculiar, something marvellous, in this appearance. Luke and John give particulars: the doors were closed, of a sudden He stood in their midst, saluting them, etc. His appearance was, however,

not joyfully greeted by the assembled disciples, not apprehended by a lively, happy faith. Certainly, if by a decided faith they had now atoned for their previous little faith and their unfaith, Jesus would quietly have forgiven them the sin they had committed against Him and His Easter messengers; but since the unbelief which had been stricken down shows itself anew, when the Lord, in whom the most incredible thing has taken place, suddenly stands before them, and they should no longer have avowed their faith with words, but proved it in acts, cf. Luke xxiv. 37 ff., He upbraids "their unbelief and hardness of heart." The Eleven require the same upbraiding as the two pilgrims to whom He manifested Himself at Emmaus. "It is not a little weakness," says Luther, "of which they are guilty. They are not simply unbelieving, but stubborn, obstinate, callous. They oppose and resist the fact that they have seen and have heard that the Lord is risen. Unbelief is the greatest sin that can be named, and He further tells them the cause of their unbelief, namely, their hardened hearts." He had sent to them His witnesses, Mary Magdalene and the other blessed women, Matt. xxviii. 8 ff., and the two pilgrims. The Eleven did not wholly receive their testimony. "He will not suffer His witnesses to be despised and rejected; he who dishonors them, dishonors Him; the more truly they are His witnesses, the more truly are they the vehicles through which His word goes forth and His glory is revealed." He upbraids His elect witnesses. Judgment must always begin at the house of God; "but He does not reprove them as an almighty King, but as a merciful High-Priest with great gentleness and patience." The Eleven must believe in the Risen One, for they are to carry into all the world the gospel of Christ, who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification.

15. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation."

Mark comprehends everything in the greatest brevity at the close of his Gospel as at the beginning, and gives here only the most essential parts of what the Lord, according to Matt. xxviii. 16 ff., spoke upon the mountain in Galilee. So Nebe, who very unreasonably holds that the missionary command was given but once. The command as here reported is given in truly lapidary style. Every word is pregnant with meaning. "A new era in the kingdom of God is announced." He gives a mission to those whom He addresses. He sends them out. Such a command was never given under the Old Covenant, for that directed to Jonah was extraordinary, an exception to the rule. "Israel had no

command to carry the light which Jehovah had kindled in the house of Abraham into the darkness of the heathen world." Those of the heathen who came to the light were to be received into the company of Israel, they were to reside as strangers within the gates. "But now those to whom is committed the revelation of God in His only-begotten Son, are not to wait for the heathen to come and worship Him born King of the Jews; they shall go out like Abraham, the father of believers, away from their fatherland and their kindred, to bring salvation to those who are yet afar off."

"Into all the world." "Not a particular country, a single portion of the earth shall be visited and journeyed through by the messengers and witnesses of the Risen One, not Israel is to be the field of their activity; the whole wide, wide world, the possession of which the tempter upon another mountain once promised to Jesus, is now brought into view on this mountain of Galilee, in which region Judaism and heathenism came largely into contact with each other." The universality of divine grace, foreshadowed by the outstretched arms on the cross, is here most explicitly announced. "Jesus must deny Himself if His grace is not to be bestowed upon the whole world." "He, the Life which called into life every living thing; He, the Light, who from the beginning was the Light of the world, having now in the fullness of time appeared, must impart to the totality of the human race His life-giving and light-kindling power." If His gracious will does not compass the whole world, then the redeeming will of the Son must conflict with the creative will of the Father, which would posit an internal distinction between the essence of the Son and that of the Father. Thus from the immanent relation of the Son to the Father follows the universality of the grace of Jesus Christ.

Luther: "These are majestic words, to command these poor beggars to go about and make this new proclamation not to a city, or country, but to all the world. So mighty, so powerful a command was never uttered before in the world, for the command of every king or emperor is limited to his own land and people; but this command extends over all kings, princes, lands and peoples, great and small, young and old, learned, wise, holy." These words express the majesty of Him who can say in truth: "All power in heaven and in earth has been given unto me."

Their mission is stated in the brief words: "preach the gospel to the whole creation." They are not to go as emissaries who slyly and by intrigue get doors opened for them and carry on their work in secret, but as missionaries openly and honestly to

testify to every man, and to proclaim from the housetops what the Master gave them in the ear. Christ is the sworn enemy of the old serpent and of all the devices by which he works in secret. His enemies had to admit that He had spoken to them openly and above board, and that His miracles were not done in a corner, and now His apostles are to preach aloud His word in all the world, that the whole world may henceforth know what to expect from them. They are to go forward with the courage of heaven-born conviction. Not in a narrow chamber shall they bear witness to the truth. The Kingdom of God is not the nursing of little conventicles, it does not consist of ascetics who have fled from the world, but "like a man it treads firmly and freely, composedly and joyfully, the open market, and delivers its testimony with the clear tones of the trumpet." They come as heralds sounding and shouting their message before and into all the world.

Their message is τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. The law was not thus sent out; it was only preached in the Jewish schools. Now heralds of the word of God shall go into all the world; "their message must accordingly contain a different word of God from the word of the law." True, the law is not wholly excluded from their preaching, "the Old Testament remains always the divinely-ordained vestibule to the New Testament," It is a necessary element in the preaching of the gospel, for Christ came not to do away but to fulfill, but it must not be an independent subject of preaching.

God's word, then, is to be preached as the gospel; Christ's heralds are evangelists, they bring glad tidings. "Once for all the Lord has defined the contents of the proclamation of the Word." Romanism makes Christ a new law-giver. Rationalism here joins hands with Rome, for to it likewise Christ is the embodied categorical imperative. The sum of all preaching is the gospel, the message, that the Saviour, the Mediator, has been born, that living, suffering, dying, rising again, He has procured salvation for us.

Κρίσις is variously interpreted. Some include under it everything created. The gospel is to be brought not only to men, but also to the irrational creatures. St. Anthony preached to the fishes, St. Francis to the sparrows. Surely the gospel is to be preached only to such creatures as are susceptible of its teachings. Indirectly, as all animate and inanimate nature shares in man's fall and misery, it shall also be partaker in his redemption. Salvation in its results is commensurate with the results of sin; hence: "primarily to men, v. 16, secondarily to the other creatures." The blessing extends as far as the curse. A new earth and a new heaven are included in the scheme of redemption. But v. 16 shows this idea to be foreign to the subject here.

The gospel is to be published directly to the world. Hence many render *κτίσις* *homo*, *genus humanum*, arguing that man is the epitome of creation. Some claim that the corresponding Hebrew word is used outright by the Rabbins for man, not in an evil sense but in a sense including Israel, the created one. "Because man is the central creature in the kosmos, we are justified in calling him *par excellence* the "creation." Hence "all men," Col. i. 23; cf. Matt. xxviii. 19, as v. 16 f. speaks of all believers without distinction, cf. 20, "they preached everywhere"—referring to their entire missionary activity, not merely their preaching to the Gentiles. Meyer observes the "solemnity" in this designation of the universal scope of the apostolic destination.

Nebe thinks Matthew's "all nations" corresponds with Mark's "all the world," and that by this *κτίσις* the latter emphasizes a new moment, the relation of the "world" to this gospel. "It is a creature, it does not have the ground of its existence in itself, the roots of its life are found in another, in the Creator, hence the creature is not closed, inaccessible, but it is open and accessible. The gospel which the disciples are to carry into all the world, finds everywhere a creature turning toward it, sighing for it with unutterable groaning."

To the whole world the Gospel is to be preached. Nebe: "By the living word, by the warm breath of the mouth it is to be brought to the creature, not through a dead letter, written or printed, which is but the pitiful substitute for immediate intercourse. Bible societies are not properly missionary societies. The diffusion of the Scriptures in every language and tongue is by no means the preaching of the Gospel to every creature."

It was claimed by Origen that the apostles preached the gospel in all the world. If this were even so, it would not prove that they personally preached it to all nations. Luther: "Although the apostles did not personally go into all the world, nor yet see every corner of the earth, yet their preaching has come into all the world, Ps. xix. 4 f.; Rom. x. 8. Our fathers and ancestors heard the same word, we hear it now. The word is ever going forward through other and still other persons. The apostles began to preach it in all the world, their successors followed them to the last day. Whenever this preaching shall be preached and heard in all the world, then the message will be finished and in every way accomplished. Then, too, the judgment day will be at hand." Luther illustrates the cause of the Gospel by a stone thrown into the water, which makes successive waves, each pushing the other till they reach the shore.

16. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

To the glad tidings brought, the hearers take one of two positions. They believe or they disbelieve. The correlate of the gospel is faith—or unfaith. Good news is brought to the creature in his misery, which though great admits of relief. Nebe: "The fall into sin does not condemn absolutely but relatively; the judgment of condemnation is fully executed only when salvation is offered personally to the sinner, and the sinner in person makes a false decision in regards to his personal salvation. The heralds of Christ are accordingly in one person messengers of deliverance and of judgment. They make one and the same proclamation to every creature, to wit, the gospel; but one and the same gospel becomes to the one a savor of life unto life, to the other a savor of death unto death, effecting the most opposite results, salvation on the one hand, condemnation on the other. With the missionary activity of the apostles begins also the judgment upon mankind." "The gospel is preached as gospel, as message of salvation to every creature, but creatures take a different attitude toward this gospel, since saving grace treats the creature as personal creature and does not operate with irresistible force."

There is, however, but one alternative—either faith or unfaith, belief or disbelief, for the gospel or against the gospel. Indecision or suspension of decision is not possible. He that is not with me is against me, says Jesus, showing that every failure to decide is really a decision against Him.

Nebe: "Since Christ as the incarnate Son of God holds a central position in the world, and since everything in the world is but a creature, having no self-existence, but a life requiring support and influence, it falls upon every man to be either "saved" or "condemned." That salvation is mentioned *first* is another sure proof that the will of God and the aim of the gospel is in the first instance the salvation of man.

The Aorist participles show that the preparatory process in man culminates in a decision falling in a specific time, Rom. xiii. 11. There seems to be not the same stress laid on baptism as on faith, or we should have baptism connected also with the second member of the sentence. Nebe: "Baptism can only be a subordinate moment of faith." But Meyer forcibly reminds us that in the case of those not believing baptism had as a matter of course not occurred. It was only when a person believed that he was baptized. This was the profession and expression of his faith. Refusal of faith necessarily excluded baptism, since such persons despised the salvation offered in the preaching of faith. Faith is

essentially surrender to Christ and, therefore, keeps His commands. The ordinary necessity of baptism is here solemnly affirmed (cf. John iii. 5), "baptism, namely, regarded as a necessary divinely-ordained consequent of the having become believing, the consequent of true, living faith." Calvin pronounces it *dimidia salutis causa*. It is the objective necessity, as faith is the subjective. Nothing is offered here on the chronological relation of faith and baptism, though the enemies of infant baptism have used the passage in support of their view, just as the pedo-baptists have employed the order in Matt. xxviii. 19 in justification of their practice. "Infant baptism is not to be vindicated by exegetical exploits, but by general Christian principles developed from the deep and certain ground of Scriptures." All turns upon faith, salvation and condemnation. What Jesus said on another occasion, "thy faith hath saved thee," He here confirms, but we are nowhere warranted in disparaging a Sacrament which the Lord ordained, and to which He and His apostles attached precious promises. Faith and salvation are the two things indissolubly united.

As Luther says, "unbelief is too strong in us and our hearts are too narrow and too weak to grasp the high and estimable words; we follow our thoughts and feelings because sin torments us; the wrath of God terrifies, therefore we strive to deliver ourselves by means of our doing. For the grace and treasure are so great that the human heart must be astounded and terrified when it rightly considers that the high, eternal majesty so far opens His heaven and sheds forth such grace and mercy over all mine and the world's sin and misery, and that such a blessed treasure is given alone through and with the word." All human merit in the attainment of salvation is here excluded. "He who shall have become believing and have been baptized shall be saved." Nebe: "Faith is not the means by which man acquires and earns salvation, but solely and alone the empty, stretched-out hand which God fills with the fullness of grace upon grace. The believer is saved not on account of his faith—this would make faith a good work, a new kind of self-righteousness—but on account of Him in whom he believes, whom in faith he embraces as His Lord and His God."

Luther: "God has given along with His word an outward sign, which makes His word the stronger for us, that we may be strengthened in our hearts and not doubt nor waver regarding this word. In like manner He gave to Noah the bow in the cloud as a pledge, and to Abraham circumcision. Thus to His promise

He now adds the outward sign, baptism and the sacrament of bread and wine. . . . If baptism is denied to a man, he is not condemned if he believes the Gospel. For where the Gospel is there is baptism and everything a Christian man needs." According to Paul, Rom. vi. 4, baptism is a burial into the death of Christ in order to be made partaker with Him and in Him of the resurrection to a new life; it is accordingly "a real impartation of the powers of the world to come, an actual implanting into the Christ who has died for us and risen." But this incorporation with Christ is not effected as an *opus operatum*. He who by baptism is implanted in the Lord remains a dead twig if he have not faith. Hence the baptismal act does not save *per se*, but the baptismal act whose grace is appropriated by a living faith. The same holds of the Holy Supper. Its treasures are really offered and received, "but the blessing of the Sacrament cannot stream into our subjective, personal life, if the latter does not in faith open itself to it."

Salvation rests solely on faith. He who has become a disbeliever will accordingly be condemned. Anent Meyer's observation, that refusal of faith necessarily excluded baptism, Nebe reminds us of cases where the disbeliever may in earlier years have been a believer and been baptized. Also, that as God forces faith upon no one, so also the blessing of holy baptism does not of necessity remain with man, but depends upon his attitude toward God. He who at the close of his development is found to be an unbeliever, resisting the offer of grace to the last, will fall under judgment, even though he was baptised.

Nebe holds that the Futures show that salvation and damnation lie not at the beginning but at the end of the road, both coming to a definitive close by a gradual process, that the subject here is the final and not the transitional stadium. Why not limit their meaning to the results of the apostolic preaching: Faith having been kindled the soul will be saved, unbelief having been developed the soul will be damned? These divine results of their labors are thus held before the apostles to stimulate their zeal and fidelity. To the world there is at the same time given a signal that with their appearance, the times of ignorance at which God winked are passed, and that now the hour has come when men must either stand in faith or fall in unbelief

17, 18. "And these signs . . . them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; . . . they shall take up serpents, . . . it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Meyer: "Marvelous significant appearances for the divine confir-

mation of their faith." Some: The confirmation of the faith of the messengers, who do these miracles. Others: Those converted by them who see the miracles or in whom they are wrought, will be confirmed in the conviction that the word which they have believed is really the word of God. The concluding verse of the Pericope shows that these signs promised to believers, are "the divinely chosen means through which the witnesses of the faith seal their word on the hearts of the hearers." As Jesus preached by works as well as by words, so shall also those who are to bear His name into all the world, and therefore previously bear Him in their own hearts, attest the Gospel by word and work.

Σημεῖα coming first is emphatic: "As divine power shall the word of God come through believers." "Signs" will accompany them throughout the world—"such as indicate and reveal to the inward man a mystery."

"Them that believe:" the twelve? the seventy? the early Christians in general? cf. v. 16. Augustine maintains that miracles still occurred in his time. Luther condemns those who give a spiritual sense to these signs. "They do not bear such an explanation, and thereby one weakens and unsettles the Scriptures." It is not meant that every one of these signs shall come to pass in the case of every one, but in one case this, in another that one, cf. 1 Cor. xii. 4. Some: "the signs belong to believers as a body, the Christian church, so that one casts out devils, another heals the sick, etc. Hence such signs are a revelation of the Spirit, so that where the signs are there is the Christian church and *vice versa*." Luther thinks the promise is to individuals, so that if there be a Christian with faith he has power to do the following miracles (and not these alone), and they will attend him as Christ, John xiv. 12, cf. Matt. x. 8; Ps. xci. 13, says: "For a Christian has equal power with Christ, is a church and sits with Him as joint-lord. If I have faith I can do it and it is in my power, for faith gives it to me that there is nothing impossible to me, if it is necessary. Christ did not mean that they must always be doing these things, but that they would have the power to do them. The disciples did not exercise this power except to attest and confirm the word of God, v. 20. It is not necessary since the diffusion of the gospel to work miracles." "If necessity required it, if the gospel were in peril, we should have to go to work and perform miracles, rather than to suffer the gospel to be despised and suppressed." Nebe: "If the church is indeed the body of the Lord, and true believers are living members of the same, then must the body of the church also be filled with the

powers which sprang from the body of the Lord in the days of His flesh, and thus will the members of this body, endowed with the powers of the world to come, also be capable of doing these signs. Such miracles need not necessarily be always and everywhere wrought by them. The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Spiritual powers are exercised under the law of freedom. Jesus, too, did not everywhere work miracles, though always possessed of the power. And so it is with the church, with believers, in virtue of whose faith power dwells in them to remove mountains—superhuman, divine power; but it comes into exercise only when there is need for it.” The history of the church shows this. Luther’s restoration of Melancthon through prayer is an instance.

And apart from what are acknowledged miraculous interventions, the proclamation of the gospel to every nation in its own tongue and the care of the sick in Christian asylums, form in modern Christianity quite as illustrious “signs” of a power and a spirit more than human, as did the miracles of the apostolic church.

Five of these “signs” are here specified, not as exhausting the sum total of miracles, but as particularizing some of the principle operations of faith which shall be witnessed.

“In my name,” emphatic—not only for their encouragement, assuring them that as His representatives, confessing His name and by virtue of their union with Him and for the sake of His kingdom, these signs would follow, but as indicating that it belongs to each of the five clauses. Only in Jesus’ name will they be thus gloriously attended by superhuman energy. The apostles will have to wrestle not merely against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual rulers of darkness, those evil spirits which hold sway in men’s hearts, and darken or extinguish the light of the Spirit. Their contest will, however, not be in vain. They will loose many whom Satan has bound for many years. The apostles and the seventy had already done such miracles, Matt. x. 1; Mk. iii. 15; vi. 13; Luke x. 17. For their subsequent success in this line cf. Acts viii. 7; xvi. 18; xix. 12. “The Christian apologists, Justin, Irenaeus, Origen, love to point to these works of power, which were in many instances still accomplished in the name of Jesus in their time, as the surest pledge that Christ has destroyed the works of Satan.”

Their work shall be attended not only with signs which advance the kingdom of God outwardly, but with signs that will attest to every believer that a new living power within him is gratefully throbbing toward God.

"They shall speak with new tongues." This phenomenon appears Acts ii. 4; x. 46; xix. 6, and is treated with great particularity in 1 Cor. xii.-xiv. Meyer holds that there were two classes of those so endowed, the one speaking in languages different from the mother-tongue, the other speaking with tongues in rapturous phrases, our passage having reference to the former. For a full discussion of the vexed question of "Glossolalia" consult Schaff's Hist. Christ. Church, Vol. I., pp. 230-245, or any other work covering the history of the Apostolic Church.

The new life-power they will bear within them may be expected to express itself in new tongues, to them and to their hearers a pledge and a testimony that the gospel committed to them shall resound through all the world, Ps. xix.

The kingdom of evil does not remain passive before the aggressions of believers. It opposes to them all its power. But the Lord not only strengthens them for attack, He will defend them from the assaults of hostile powers. Two forms of protection are promised: against the poisoned bite of serpents, and against the poisoned cup. Luther translates: drive away serpents. They will lay hold of serpents and lift them up instead of being seized and bitten by them. Serpents are said to be powerless and harmless when lifted from the ground. But the art of the juggler in handling poisonous serpents is hardly meant. Nebe: "One lifting up a serpent does not lay it down elsewhere, but dashes it to the ground in order to slay it." Believers are exposed to assaults from physical powers, but these can harm them as little as wicked men. "Whether the poisoned cup be given them by deceit and cunning, or whether magistrates will sentence them to drink the fatal draught, Christ's protecting hand is over them; neither poison, nor sword, nor fire can hurt them." No instances of this kind are recorded in the Bible. Acts xxviii. 3 is not a case in point. That was not a voluntary seizing in the name of Jesus, nor have we any record of draughts of poison.

Not only can they overcome a deadly foe within themselves, but they shall even rescue others from the hand of death already laid upon them. Jesus had laid His hands upon the sick. The believers shall do the same—"not only praying hands are they to lift up over them, but healing hands shall they lay upon them." And as virtue went forth from Christ to heal, so the laying on of their hands shall also possess virtue and blessing.

"They shall recover," *i. e.*, the sick. There are recorded many cases of the miraculous healing of the sick by the apostles, Acts iii. 2 ff.; v. 15, etc.; cf. 1 Cor. xii. 9; Jas. v. 14. The Synoptists al-

ready report such healings on the part of the twelve and of the seventy, Matt. x. 1; Mk. iii. 15; vi. 13. No raising of the dead is mentioned. The Lord accomplished more than He promised. At least two cases occurred, Dorcas and Eutychus.

19. "So then the Lord Jesus . . . was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."

"Then," by which the report of the ascension is immediately connected with the foregoing, and "after He had spoken," are understood by some as if the ascension followed immediately after the command and the promises of our Pericope. V. 20 must then also record something which took place at once. This verse itself indicates that the various scenes sketched in this passage were separated in point of time. Some have even suggested repeated ascensions. Grev. held that the ascension proper took place not on the fortieth day after Easter but on Easter day. "I am ascending," John xx. 17, is cited in proof. "What happened at Easter without being seen by the disciples, was repeated on the fortieth day in sight of the chosen witnesses." All the manifestations of the Risen One, it is claimed, were descents from heaven in order to strengthen the faith of the disciples. When their faith had become sufficiently strong, all these manifestations of the Ascended One ceased.

Nebe explains the Present "I ascend," John xx. 17, as indicating the certainty of His ascension, necessarily connected with His resurrection, essentially involved in the then present event. We accept the church's interpretation of one ascension, which was held from the beginning. This extraordinary and glorious occurrence is stated in the briefest terms, cf. 1 Tim. iii. 16, no particulars of when, where, how, being given. But for Luke in his Gospel and the Acts, we could form no idea of the matchless, majestic scene.

Bengel calls attention to "the Lord:" "a magnificent and opportune appellation," giving a hint of the glorious character of the ascension. The ascension of Elijah was a prototype of it, but according to Ewald this is both more sublime and more simple, the most sublime being ever the most simple. No horses and chariots of fire are needed. Lifted up on Olivet before the eyes of the disciples, a cloud became His chariot and received Him out of their sight—and angels appear to the astonished disciples, charging them not to gaze idly into heaven, but composedly to await the return of the glorified One from the same heaven.

Clouds are often referred to as the chariots of Jehovah, upon which He is borne on the wings of the wind, in power and great glory. They are the symbols not only of the divine presence, in the

Old Testament, but of the *dwelling* and *throne* of the Most High, cf. Matt. xvii. 6, etc. "God's throne descends to the earth in order to take up Him who is to sit at the right hand of the Father forever. And this luminous throne Jesus ascends as the Lord." He as He was, His bodily form, His human nature, our flesh and blood, was taken up. "He had become Lord of His body, and by the power of His Spirit had permeated His corporeity, glorified it and swallowed it up in eternal life."

"Into heaven." Is this a definite locality—or rather a definite state? The Reformed theologians in opposition to Lutheran Christology and the Sacramental Presence hold that in ascending from the earth Christ proceeded to another definite place in heaven. The humanity remains always circumscribed, Christ as man is confined to definite space. This opinion Lutheran theology has always decidedly opposed. Heaven is here not a definite locality, but a supermundane state. Thomasius: "that not a departure to any local space is meant here, is clear already from this that Jesus Himself designated His ascension now as a going to the Father, now as a going to where He was before, John iii. 13; vi. 62; xx. 17, and that Peter, Acts ii. 32, 34, identifies it with being by the right hand of God. The heaven into which He returns is the same as that from which He came, and can not here any more than there be regarded as a locality. It is the supermundane state, the perfect unlimited communion with God, into which He returns, and that with the body recovered from death." The older dogmaticians interpret passages like Eph. i. 20, "in heavenly places," of the heavenly state. Elsewhere it is said not only that He passed through the heavens, but also that He is "far above all heavens," Heb. vii. 26; iv. 14; Eph. iv. 10. Harless: "the throne of the Lord is heaven, and yet also above all heavens, because not the visible place of the heavens but the glory of an exaltation transcending all things is the abode of His being." "Into heaven" as describing His withdrawal from visible earthly relations, must be completed by "far above all heavens," as denying henceforth all intra-worldly confinement, as removing all possible limitations in the communion between the person of Christ and the supermundane God. The only passage cited in opposition to this view, is Acts iii. 21, "Whom the heavens must receive until," etc., which again is not to be understood of a local inclusion but "in contrast with the visible glory, in which He shall appear again at the last day." So Sartorius, Kahnis, Philippi, etc.

The Lord has ascended beyond all localities, above all worlds, to the glory He had with the Father before the foundation of the

world. By virtue of His omnipotence He withdraws from the earth and its local habitations to the limitless abode of the omnipresent God. By His ascension, therefore, He has not removed Himself from us, into realms far distant from our world, but He has thereby come much nearer to us. Were He still confined to the earthly limitations of human nature, He could never be at more than one place at a time. His manifestation must be conditioned by time and space. Now that He has passed beyond these earthly bounds, He can be everywhere where we need Him, and fulfill His promise, Matt. xxviii. 20; xviii. 20. Luther says in his House-Postil: "His ascension must be viewed as an active and powerful thing, ever effectual, and one must not think that He has gone above and sits there, and lets us rule here, but He has ascended thither that He there might best work and rule. Had He remained visibly upon earth, He could not have wrought so much, for all the people could not have been with Him and heard Him. Hence He has taken such a course, that He may work with all and reign in all, that He might preach unto all, that they all might hear and that He might be with all. Imagine not, then, that He has now gone far from us, but just the reverse: when He was on earth He was too far from us; now He is very near. This reason cannot understand. It is, therefore, an article of faith, and we must hold fast, rest upon and believe. These are mighty words, giving the heart great comfort."

Connected with His being received into heaven is the clause, "and sat at the right hand," etc. This cannot be taken in a literal, local sense, "an object of sense-perception," an actual sitting down on the right of the throne, Eph. i. 20. If it be taken literally, "a local fact," then the right hand of God must also be viewed as occupying space, must be viewed locally and as a bodily form. Corporeity must be ascribed to God. This is contrary to the Scriptures. God is spirit. When organs or members of God are anthropomorphically attributed to God, they must be understood as representing certain attributes or activities as symbols. "The right of God is not a certain circumscribed locality in heaven, but it is the power with which God fills heaven and earth." The Lord sits henceforth, as a consequence of His entrance into glory, by the right of the Almighty, who fills and rules the universe.

Luther: "Where God is and what God's right hand is and is called, there is Christ, the Son of man." The same is meant where Christ again and again declares that everything is committed into His hands by the Father, that is, "as man, too, He is over all

things, has all things under Him and rules over them." On Ps. cx., "sit on my right hand," etc., Luther says: "That is, with one word, highly exalted and appointed a glorious King, not over the palace in Jerusalem, nor the empire at Babylon, Rome or Constantinople, or the whole earth, though this were indeed a great power; yea not even over the heavens, stars and everything that man can see with eyes, but far higher and wider, sit beside me on the lofty throne I occupy and be my equal. He is not to sit at His feet, but at His right, that is in the same majesty and power." Melancthon: "*Est regnare equali potentia. Dextra significat potentiam.*"

The Reformed do not differ from this. Von Hofmann, who at one time deviated from this consensus, says: "In so far as the enthronement of God is one and the same with His supermundane omnipresence, we must understand the sitting of Jesus at the right of God as a sharing of God's supermundane omnipresence, in contrast with all intramundane limitations." So Hengstenberg: "The right hand (Ps. cx.) never occurs as a title of honor, it always designates the participation in power and sovereignty." Nebe regards 1 Kings ii. 19 an exception, but he admits that in the New Testament the phrase has always the latter import, cf. Matt. xx. 21, where the request of Salome is understood by Jesus as asking that her sons might share in the rule of the kingdom, cf. v. 25.

As Ps. cx. is confessedly the original passage for this phrase so often applied to Christ, that is decisive for the question whether it signifies honor or power. The opening words of the psalmist, "the Lord said unto my Lord," are conclusive of what was in his mind. A lord must have that of which he is lord, *i. e.*, dominion. And the words of God following are equally conclusive: "Until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The enemies are not only to honor Him with the bowing of the knee, but they are to be under His feet, His absolute sway and power. Further, He is to be Priest after the order of Melchisedek, but the latter was king as well as priest. And the same thought rules the Psalm to its close. It celebrates the all-victorious power of Him whom the Lord has enthroned.

The New Testament recognizes in Him sitting at God's right, the Almighty, Rev. i. 8, who upholdeth all things by the word of His power, Heb. i. 3. The omnipotent mediatorial reign of Christ is meant, the sovereign rule of the God-man.

The best commentary on our passage is Acts ii. 32 ff, with its majestic peroration "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye

have crucified, both Lord and Christ." This clause emphasizes the relation of the Ascended Lord to the world. He shares the government of the world. His kingdom will suffer violent assaults. His cause will seem once and again to be lost, the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed, etc., but He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision, Ps. ii. Even in His humiliation He cast out devils by His finger, now that He has occupied His throne all powers in heaven and on earth are subject to His nod.

From His throne, without contest or labor, He overcomes all His enemies. "Our brother is also our ruler, and if we are brothers, His victory is even now our victory, we are seated with Him to the right of the Father, on the royal throne."

20. "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen."

Meyer: "With the ascension the evangelic history was at its end. The writer was only now concerned to add a conclusion in keeping with the commission given by Jesus in v. 15. He does this by means of a brief summary of the apostolic ministry, by which the injunction of Jesus had been fulfilled." Nebe notes *ἐν δέξτῳ* vs. [v. 19] *ἐν δέξιᾳ* as in Eph. i. 20, because instead of the rest of Christ at the right hand implied by *ἐν*, Mark would represent the activity, the effectual working of Christ upon the throne. He is a most active ruler, working back of and amid the activities of His people. "The Acts of the Apostles is the history of the exalted Christ, the work of the apostles is Christ's work through them."

"They went forth," the Eleven, v. 14. The Lord was taken up, they went forth; namely, from the place in which at the time of the ascension they sojourned. Nebe: "from Judea into all the world." Cf v. 15: "Go ye, etc."

"Everywhere," by way of hyperbole, according to Meyer. They did not go alone. The Lord, who they thought was taken from them, v. 19, accompanied them. His presence was manifested in a two-fold manner, coöperating with them, and granting them the signs which He had promised, vv. 17, 18, cf. Matt. xxviii. 20. We are not told in what way He coöperated. The whole apostolic ministry is so compendiously given as to exclude all particulars. Nebe suggests that He wrought in their hearts, that He especially strengthened the impulse already in them to proclaim the gospel to the whole world, opened for them fields of activity, prepared everything in advance for them. Of course the Ho^l y Spirit's outpouring and indwelling must be included.

The word which these messengers bore into all the world He confirmed, demonstrated it as the word and the power of God through the signs, "the signs" spoken of as accompanying those who had become believers. Their word was confirmed by the signs occurring in or by those whom they converted. So Meyer. But the Acts report not miracles wrought by the converts of the apostles, but miracles which the ambassadors of Christ wrought in His name. "The works prove the man, and God's signs attest the witnesses of Jesus."

The treatment of this Pericope should not be limited exclusively to the objective event, but should also enter upon "the following after" of the Christian man.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD IS

1. The only worthy keynote of His life on earth.
2. The only worthy foundation stone of His life in heaven.

CHRIST'S GLORY IN THE ASCENSION.

1. Taken up to heaven.
2. Seated at God's right hand.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLS ALL THINGS.

1. His disciples go into all the world.
2. He filleth the heavens.

THE ACTS CONNECTED WITH THE LORD'S DEPARTURE.

1. He upbraids their hard unbelief.
2. He gives them His last command.
3. He comforts them with great promises.
4. He continues with them by His word and signs.

THE WAY TO CHRIST IN HEAVEN PASSES

1. Through repentance.
2. Through faith.
3. Through labor and love.

WHY IS THE LORD'S ASCENSION A JOYFUL FEAST?

1. It is a pledge of the glory of Him in whom we believe.
2. It is a testimony for the truth that all are called into His kingdom.
3. It is a sure guarantee of the help we may expect from on high.

HEAVEN IN THE LIGHT OF THE ASCENSION:

1. High over all the world.
2. Open to this world.
3. Condescending to this world.

THE PROMISE OF THE ASCENDING LORD:

1. To every creature His saving Gospel.
2. To believers miraculous powers.

SUNDAY EXAUDI.

John xv. 26-xvi. 4.

NEBE: "The Ancient Church connected this Sunday very closely with the preceding Festival, calling it *Dominica infra octavum Ascensionis*. But it looks forward as well as backward. It is the day of Preparation for Pentecost. The Pericope corresponds strikingly with this position of the day. It, too, looks forward and backward. The Lord who ascended commanded His disciples to be witnesses unto Him unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Of this command our Lesson is one more reminder. It shows that the apostles can and must testify of Christ; a hostile world will oppose them, but it cannot deprive them of the joy of bearing testimony, and, in the long run, it cannot withstand their testimony. For there is a Holy Ghost who bears testimony. He is wanting as yet, but He will come, as promised by the Lord. 'Hear (*Exaudi*), oh Lord, when I cry with my voice,' Psalm xxvii. 7 f., is the Introit. This is the prayer of the whole church for the witness of the Holy Spirit, that she may fulfill her office as witness."

26. "But when the Paraclete is come, . . . even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me:"

Δέ connects this verse closely and adversatively with what precedes. Jesus has spoken of the hatred which they shall encounter from the world. He has explained that this hatred will burn against them because of His name, because of their identification with Him. They will suffer for Him in His stead. And this very hatred, again, will be a fulfillment of Scripture.

Against this hatred He now proceeds to arm them. He comforts them respecting the Holy Ghost, who will succor them, whose testimony will make their own effectual against the world. "Your sufferings will be great, but your success will be greater. For it will depend not on your speaking merely, but on the coöperation vouchsafed you through the power of the Holy Ghost." When the Paraclete shall have come, of whose coming to their help He had spoken, xiv. 16, 26, they will no longer be in distress. "Since the Holy Ghost comes to them as a friend in

need, as an attorney who conducts to victory their imperiled and apparently lost cause against all foes, He is called here not Holy Spirit, but the Paraclete, explanatory of the nature and work of the Spirit." As the Lord withdraws from them and as it is His name which draws upon them the hatred of the world, He will send them another Helper and Succorer from the Father, "the Spirit of the truth, which proceedeth from the Father." Significantly the Holy Ghost is here characterized is the Spirit of the truth. He is accordingly worthy of all confidence as a Paraclete.

Again, He that is to come as Paraclete to the hated disciples, who on account of the holiness wrought by Him in them are persecuted by the world, cannot do otherwise than testify of the truth, for He is the Spirit of truth, and the Lord is the truth.

This Spirit of truth "proceedeth from the Father." This may refer to the eternal (*ad intra*) procession of the Holy Ghost, or to the historic sending forth of the Spirit into the world. The FF. referred it to the eternal act within the relations of the Trinity. Calvin and others, to the gift of the Spirit in the economy of redemption, the Spirit going forth from the Father, when the Son at His right hand sends Him. Luthardt holds that the Scriptures speak both of the Son's going forth from the Father, and of the Spirit's procession, with reference to the divine purpose of grace; that with regard to the former we have nothing concerning His pre-existence beyond John i. 1, 2, "with God." So concerning the Spirit the Scriptures speak simply of His being in God, 1 Cor. ii. 10 f; and with God, Rev. i. 4; Rom. viii. 26, "nothing of His eternal genesis." But the eternal intra-relations we infer from the historic and economic. Others object that we dare not in such things depend on human inferences, and press the interpretations here of the eternal procession. They note the difference of tense in the relative clauses: "whom I will send," "who proceedeth." The procession is presented as an event realized in the present, the sending is an event to occur in the future, hence the Lord teaches the eternal, primordial, ante-temporal procession from the Father.

This conflicts apparently with the doctrine that the Spirit proceeds *a patre filioque*, regarding which Calvin observes that Jesus speaks in order to give the disciples the utmost comfort, and also as an expression of His own humility. Bengel: "As the Son is said to send the Spirit, the Father not being excluded, so the Spirit of truth is said to proceed from the Father, the Son not being excluded." But Nebe holds that the Scriptures nowhere contain the specific statement that the Holy Ghost proceeds also from the Son, and, conversely, we do not find a word which directly excludes

the Son from the procession of the Holy Ghost. This doctrine is really derived from the sum total of the Trinitarian dogma.

As the Holy Ghost will take from Christ, xvi. 14, that which He gives to them; and inasmuch as all is Christ's that belongs to the Father, and the Son and the Father indeed are one, the Holy Ghost must eternally proceed from the Father and the Son, even if Christ were not explicitly designated the Lord of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 17. The Spirit goeth forth from the Father, Christ sends Him, He procures the gift from the Father. Every act of the Father may be ascribed also to the Son, the Father working only through the Son. Olshausen speaks of the Spirit proceeding from God as a stream issues from a fountain, Ezek. xlvii. 1; Rev. xxii. 1. He must be essentially God, as He derives His nature from God.

"He shall bear testimony concerning me." "The Spirit of truth," whom Jesus introduces here so significantly, is to attend them as a witness. "He." To make the matter unmistakable and emphatic, *ἐκείνος* is added, which looks back to *Παράκλητος*. As was made clear, xiv. 26; xvi. 13, 14, the Holy Ghost is not a thing, an *it*, but a *self*, a person, a *he*, so also the verbs employed here, and especially *μαρτυρήσει*, "bear witness," decisively confirm the same truth. Luther: "It is sufficiently shown here that the Holy Ghost is another Person, distinct from the Father and the Son (as He says, the Comforter whom I will send, who proceeds from the Father) and yet the same, proper, true, one God."

Nebe: "That only can go forth which has life in itself, and the work of giving testimony requires the personality of the Holy Ghost. For that which is to bear testimony must itself possess the deepest conviction of the truth of that to which the testimony relates. For the Lord's sake His disciples will be hated by the world; against the Lord whom they confess with the mouth and bear in their hearts, their hatred is directed. If they are to be armed against this hatred, then the testimony of the Holy Ghost cannot relate to this or that, but must relate directly to the Lord. The more the world seeks to destroy the faith in the Lord and love to Him, the more must the Holy Ghost nourish and strengthen this faith and love." And this is what Jesus here promises. How cheering! Their trials will be great, but their succor also.

It is not stated to whom the Spirit will testify. Some make the world the subject to whom the Spirit's witness is addressed. But Jesus says "to you" I will send Him, which points to the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the apostles, and not to His activity in the minds of those to whom they preach the word. It will

be testimony, illumination, comfort, to their own hearts. Godet holds that if the testimony were for the benefit of those hearing the gospel we should have *ὑπὲρ* instead of *περὶ*. Peter on the day of Pentecost was an illustration of the Spirit's power in the heart of the apostles. The Holy Ghost witnesses for the Lord in that He inwardly reveals Himself to the Lord's chosen witnesses as the Paraclete and as the Spirit of truth. The world breathes out threatening and slaughter against the disciples, until they almost faint and despair, but the more the world oppresses them, the higher rises their courage, the Holy Ghost who dwells in them coming to their rescue and filling their hearts with marvellous joy." The effect of this divine testimony will be to enlarge and strengthen their faith, to work assurance, to infuse comfort.

The disciple is not above his Master. It is enough that he be as his Master; their sufferings are evidence that they are not of the world but belong to their Lord. And now "the Holy Ghost attests Himself to them as the Spirit of the Truth; till then they heard the truth from the mouth of their Lord, and the truth stood as yet in an external relation to them, in the person of Him who is the way and the truth and the life; now the Holy Ghost shall enter into their hearts as the principle of a new life." And they will experience that the word of God is the truth; the Holy Ghost will bring to assured conviction what they believe, that Jesus, the Light and Life of the world, is their Lord and their God.

"Shall bear testimony." This testimony is a future action, "for vessels that are to receive this Spirit of testimony are not yet ready and, besides, the Spirit who is to bear testimony concerning Jesus has not yet come, for Jesus was not yet glorified," John vii. 39. Luther: "Jesus emphasizes the word 'testimony.' He uses it to direct our attention especially to the word. It is true, the Holy Ghost works inwardly in the heart, but this working, ordinarily, takes place by means of the preached word, Rom. x. 14. As the Spirit bears His testimony through the mouth and word of the apostles, let no one who needs consolation suppose that the Holy Ghost will show him Christ personally, or speak to Him audibly from heaven. He bears His testimony publicly through the preaching of the word, which we hear with our ears. Through such preaching He moves the heart and testifies of Christ also inwardly. But this inward testimony is only the result of a preceding, public and outward preaching of Christ."

27. "And ye also are bearing witness, because ye are with me from the beginning."

This sounds as if the testimony of the Spirit and theirs related

to the same subject, that their external testimony would be a joint-work with the inner conviction wrought by the Holy Ghost, the latter testifying along with and through them, the former's testimony being illuminated by the latter. But while this is true, we prefer the interpretation which refers the witness of the Spirit here to the support He gives to the teachers (or witnesses) of the word in their own hearts.

The connection is, that, having this gracious testimony within they are competent to go forth with *their* testimony. That makes them effective witnesses. Some render *μαρτυρεῖτε* imperatively. But such a command would stand here abrupt and isolated. It is the indicative Present and is not to be used as future. Meyer says, "Jesus does not use the Future because they were already the witnesses which they were to be in the future," and Nebe adds, "because that which Jesus indicates in the justifying clause as the content of their special testimony (His personal career), they could then already attest, yea did attest. As the Present *ἐστὶ* implies "you are and were," so *μαρτυρεῖτε* expresses a present and permanent relation.

Note the antithesis or rather combination "He" and "you," cf. Acts v. 32; xv. 28. "The human and the superhuman capacity of the disciples are distinguished." Luthardt puts the testimony of the disciples alongside that of the Holy Spirit, just as the apostles, Acts v. 32, place themselves and the Holy Spirit alongside one another as witnesses, or, as in Rev. xxii. 17, the Spirit and the Bride are put together. Nebe: "The two testimonies concur, yet they form in fact a dual testimony. As Paul, Rom. vii. 13 ff., makes in the ethical sphere a distinction *in abstracto*, so the Lord presents here in the sphere of the intellectual life a similar abstraction. The apostles will testify of their Lord, their preaching of Christ will be one single testimony, but what they preach of Christ they know from two different sources; from the Holy Ghost in inward experience, from themselves by external observation. The Holy Ghost who is to be given unto them to testify in them, will find in them willing organs, for He testifies in them only that He may testify through them to the world. They might of themselves, *ex motu proprio*, testify of Christ; they are not only sent to testify of the Lord, the historic Christ, but they are also constrained to do this, as one who has seen and heard something great cannot refrain from speaking of it."

"They had seen what many prophets and kings had vainly desired to see, the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Had the Holy Ghost not testified with such power within

them that their testimony flowed like an irresistible stream out of their deepest hearts, the words which they heard from the mouth of Jesus, the works which they beheld Him perform, His whole person, that Miracle of miracles, would not have suffered them to keep silence," 1 John i. 1 ff.; Acts iv. 20. Herein lay the ground or incentive of their testimony. It gives the reason for their testimony. It discovers their capacity and obligation to serve as witnesses.

As those who were and are with Him from the beginning, and still witnessing the whole of His preaching, life and miracles, they are chosen as witness-bearers. They may not yet have fully understood the reason for being chosen, but they had an idea of it when they proceeded to fill the vacancy caused by the defection of Judas, Acts i. 21 f. Their clear apprehension appears when, full of the Holy Ghost, they stood forth to testify "the wonderful works of God," Acts ii. 11.

From this it is evident that the Spirit was to bring them no new revelation, no additional truth, but the things that they had received from Jesus He would call to their remembrance, unfold, illumine, deepen. Only he could be an apostle who had been a witness of the acts and utterances of Jesus "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us."

Nebe: "The mere testimony of the Holy Ghost is of itself not sufficient testimony, neither does historic knowledge of Jesus resting on firm ground, alone suffice for life-awakening testimony. The gospel is not a system of doctrine, nor a summary of all doctrines, it is the glad tidings of Jesus Christ. He as a historic person is the centre of the gospel. The evangelist, the apostle, has no higher calling than to portray the Lord Jesus Christ before men's eyes, Gal. iii. 1." "Grant that the witness of the Holy Spirit *per se* answers as a faith-producing testimony, and you throw the gates wide open to the fanatics, and in the end, as a consistent result, an objective redemptive work with a historic personal redeemer, becomes superfluous. If on the other hand human testimony alone suffices, human nature must be exalted to a higher sphere not recognized by the Scriptures, and the human heart must be in itself disposed to submit itself believingly and obediently to the gospel. Both belong together according to divine appointment; what God hath joined, let no man put asunder. The witness of the Spirit may indeed work in us the joyful assurance that Jesus is the Christ, but it cannot make known to us how Jesus became the Christ, how He procured our salvation. The witness of history on the ground of what was seen and heard, may show in Christ the flower of

humanity, the innocent, the perfect One, but it cannot demonstrate Him with power to be the Son of God. As the divine and human nature are united in one person in the Lord, so are the divine and the human in every way united in His true witnesses, to wit: a knowledge of the Lord from the Spirit's indwelling, and a knowledge of the Lord from history, an inner and an outer knowing of Christ. They testify at the same time as honest, conscientious men, who can lay claim to a *fides humana*, and as bearers of the Holy Ghost, so that he that heareth not them, but the Holy Ghost who speaks through them, and he who despiseth them despiseth not them, but the Holy Ghost who bears witness in them." Paul's case is admittedly exceptional. The historic facts were given him by revelation.

xvi. 1. "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be made to stumble (fall away, be scandalized)."

Frequently in these last discourses Jesus makes a pause, or a paragraph, to render His discourse more impressive. Nothing which He has spoken to them is superfluous, but all is intended to prepare and fortify them for the conflict. The Logos never speaks to no purpose, Nebe makes the phrase "these things," etc., equivalent to the "Amen, Amen, I say to you," with which Jesus often begins a proposition.

Taira refers to xv. 18-27, as in these discourses it always refers to what precedes. So Bengel, Lücke, Meyer, etc. What follows here, however, continues and expands the thought.

He would fortify them, not outwardly but inwardly, against the hatred of the world; that enemy is in danger of overturning their faith. The case of John the Baptist in prison is an illustration. So also Peter, who had made a joyous confession of the Lord, and had stood firm when others fell away, vi. 68 f., vowing that it was impossible for him to deny his Lord, stumbled and fell when the foes of his Lord were triumphant. It is not so easy to withstand this hatred of the world. Remember the night of the betrayal.

The recollection of His warnings and comforts as He forecasts their trials, would save them from lapsing into error concerning Him, convince them of His Messiahship, and preserve them from deserting His banner in the encounter with an exultant foe.

They shall be hated not only by all the world, but especially by those who claim to be the people of God and the true church, and this terrific experience, as Luther explains, "will tempt them to doubt whether they have the right faith and doctrine, or, to become impatient and vexed, and to think 'I'll believe and live

like the rest, then I shall have peace.'” Church history abounds with melancholy examples of the friends of the Lord stumbling at the world’s enmity and its hatred of Christ. Jesus held this danger to be so great that He repeatedly warns against it, Matt. xiii. 21; xxiv. 19; xxvi. 31.

2. “They will have you expelled from the synagogues: . . . whosoever killeth you shall think that he is offering worship unto God.”

The fierce hatred of the world will soon manifest itself in a way that they will feel it. It will appear in two forms:

First. They will be outcasts from the synagogue, subjected to religious and social ostracism. It is reported in ix. 2, that the Jews had already agreed to put the adherents of Christ out of the synagogue. This does not seem to have been a formal decree, but only an intention; for if this exclusion had been enacted in an authoritative decree Jesus would not have spoken of it here as something future. From xii. 42 it appears that the Pharisees had made a motion to this effect in the Sanhedrim, but had not carried it through. At least it is said that “among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.”

There was a three-fold expulsion: 1. The subject was placed under severe restrictions for thirty days. 2. If at the expiration of this period he continued recusant, he was laid under a heavy curse, excluded from all assemblies, and from all intercourse with others. 3. The last was an utter and perpetual exclusion from all civil and religious privileges. However, this third ban Nebe pronounces an invention of the Jewish grammarian Elias Levita, dating from 1525.

Excommunication was usually the penalty for blasphemy and heresy. It is hard for us to realize the tenor of such an infliction on the disciples, and the occasion it brought for stumbling, for apostasy from Christ. They were Jews, and this expulsion not only attached a reproach to them, but they were absolutely cut off from all that was sacred and dear to a Jew. No other nation of antiquity cherished the spirit of nationality as did the Jews. With them the most ardent patriotism was intensified by the religious sentiment. Nebe: “Israel was a theocracy; Jerusalem, the metropolis of the whole nation, was holy as the residence of the Most High. He who was excluded from the synagogue was shut out from communion with the God of his fathers and from the house of his fathers. He could no longer go up with the tribes to the well-built city and the lovely tabernacles of the Lord of hosts, for which every Israelite heart yearned from childhood.

Excommunication makes him a stranger, puts him under the curse of his nation, crushes his heart. The disciples, therefore, have in prospect not the contempt of their nation, but their exclusion from the great treasures committed to the people of God, the curse of the rulers and of their own kindred." Luther, a loyal son of the church, cleaving with most touching piety to the Catholic church, felt that it was no trifle to be cut off like an unfruitful branch from the vine and to be put under the ban. It was to him a terrible experience "to be severed from the people of God, cut off and thrown away as an unfit and condemned member, excluded from God and all that is God's, and to have the sentence pronounced upon you that you have no part nor lot in God's people, that you are deprived of God and salvation, and have no share in the prayer and community of gifts that are in Christ, in brief, finally, that you are damned to the devil and cast out into hell. This is a hard, terrible sentence, before which every pious heart must quail."

Nebe: "Of course the religious association which excommunicates believers thereby shows itself to be a communion which has long since apostatized from the faith. This is the end; the synagogue, which anew in His disciples rejected the Lord who had proclaimed in it the acceptable year of the Lord which opened with his appearance, is converted into a synagogue of Satan," Rev. ii. 9. The same writer suggests that the Lord hereby also intimates that they are not to shake the dust of the synagogue from their feet as a testimony against it and go forth at their own instance, but to wait till the synagogue excludes them, continue in their calling, and bear and endure what it may impose upon them on account of their faith.

Secondly: The hatred of the world will bring on them yet more dreadful afflictions. Men will slay them, and consider that a most acceptable act of worship to God. They are to be offered up as victims of expiation. 'Αλλ', "'nay, further,' introduces the antithesis of a yet far heavier, a bloody fate," 2 Cor. i. 9; vii. 11. The faithful, innocent disciples of Christ are to be executed as capital offenders—such will be the infatuation of the world, such the darkness which the Prince of darkness will bring about. The true children of God will be led like lambs to the slaughter by those who erroneously imagine themselves to be the children of God, and their slayers will think that thereby they are offering sacrificial worship to God.

Every one spilling the blood of the ungodly is equal to him who brings sacrifice to God, was a Jewish maxim. The edge of this

bitterness is, their murder will be viewed as an act of worship, a sweet-smelling offering to God.

Λατρεία has the general sense of divine worship, "a good, divinely-acceptable act." It includes sacrifice as its principal part—hence *προσφέρειν* the specific word for the presentation of an offering, Matt. v. 24; viii. 4; Acts vii. 42; Heb. v. 1, cf. Exod. xxxii. 29; specially of sacrificial divine service, Rom. xiii. 1; Heb. ix. 16.

Luther: "This will be the very worst, that it will be made to appear as if God were against you, and they will sing their *Te Deums* over it, as if they had fulfilled God's will and good pleasure." "Death is at all times terrible, revolting to nature, but here its bitterness is sharpened by the fact that men whose flaming zeal for the honor of God cannot be denied, decree and execute the same to vindicate the honor of God."

It has been questioned whether Jesus had in mind only the hatred of the Jews, or also the persecution of the heathen, and later of the Papists. The first trial can of course come only from the synagogue, but the second may come equally from the heathen. It is best to refer the first exclusively to the Jews, and to include in the second, which makes no mention of any particular class, all the enemies of the cross in all ages. Philip II. in devout thanksgiving for deliverance from a fearful storm at sea, made a solemn vow to exterminate the heretics as a grateful service to God. All the machinations and infernal plots of the Jesuits are carried on "for the greater glory of God."

Ἦν, some paraphrase for the infinitive, an hour is coming for this object. Some: purpose—that which will take place in the hour is conceived as the object of its coming. Luther: "This enmity must ever go on in the world, and it remains an eternal enmity, an eternal conflict. Hence, He prepares them that they be bold and remember that God stands at their side." He adds accordingly:

3. "And these things will they do, because they know not the Father, nor indeed me."

A tone of mildness seems to characterize the ground for the fierce opposition to Christianity. The enmity arises from ignorance, cf. Acts iii. 17, ignorance of the Father and of the Son. But this ignorance is not guiltless, justifiable, xv. 21, 22. A true knowledge of the Father, *i. e.*, a proper relation of child-like faith and docility must have led them to recognize the voice of His Son.

Luthardt: "the side of ignorance, not that of guilt, is brought forward." They are deceived. They think, imagine, Acts xxvi. 9; Gal. i. 13, 14. This new sin, like the first, proceeds from the

deceitfulness of sin, Heb. iii. 13. Meyer: "Jesus once more recalls with profound sadness this tragic source of such conduct, the inexcusableness of which, however, He had already decisively brought to light, xv. 22 ff.," cf. Luke xxiii. 34, Christ's prayer, with Peter's sermon, Acts iii. 17.

Your sufferings, He adds for their comfort, will befall you in view of your relation to God, and because they who inflict them are without the true knowledge of Him, although it is from their self-deceived zeal for God that they make their murderous onslaught. The thought that they were suffering for the sake of God not only upheld the persecuted disciples, but made their sufferings a matter of pride and joy. Acts v. 41; xxi. 13; Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 23 ff; xii. 10, 11; 1 Peter iv. 12; Gal. vi. 17; Phil. ii. 17, 18; cf. Matt. x. 22; xxiv. 9, 11. It is obvious that sincerity is no test of the righteousness of conduct.

Tauta, "these things," is probably limited to the afflictions specially depicted in v. 2. "The exclusion from the synagogue to preserve God's institutions, and the slaying of the witnesses of Jesus, are brought about by pious zeal involved in ignorance."

Jesus' words are therefore to be taken literally. The sin of their enemies is not that of malice, but of ignorance. "Not sadness which extenuates the guilt or overlooks it, but truth speaks from Jesus' words." Luther: "He Himself admits the cause, and how it happens, that such excellent persons, the best, wisest and holiest among God's people, who sincerely mean to advance the honor and service of God, persecute Christ and Christians so bitterly and so cruelly. It is because you proclaim me, whom they do not know. They are smitten with absolute blindness so that they are not able to know me, and therefore, also they do not know my Father, 1 Cor. ii. 8; 2 Cor. iv. 4."

Paul is a practical truth and commentary of this. He inflicted upon the Christians what Jesus had foretold. Acts viii. 3. He breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples, Acts ix. 1. But he did all from zeal for the traditions of the law, Gal. i. 14, and therefore could make the confession "I . . . obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief," 1 Tim. i. 13.

4. "But these things have I spoken . . . that when the hour is come, ye may remember . . . But from the beginning I did not tell you these things, because . . ."

Ἀλλὰ. Some: I do not wish to affright you, I have simply told you, etc. Some: Although it is not to be expected otherwise, I have, etc. Meyer: "It breaks off the enumeration. Jesus will not go further into details, and recurs to the thought in v. 1."

He has said enough to afford them in the hour of sore trial

strength of faith and sufficient comfort, so that they shall not stumble nor fall (σκανδαλισθήτε, v. 1). In the critical hour let them remember that He foretold them what was said, vv. 2 and 3.

Εγὼ, weighty emphasis, "I, the person with whom your faith is concerned." The force of an anticipated shock is ordinarily broken. Still more are we prepared for the severity of persecution by the remembrance that Jesus Himself foretold it all. This shows, too, that these afflictions happen according to the counsel of God, that God has purposes of peace in them, and that with the trial He has also provided a way of escape and a glorious issue. xiii. 19; xiv. 29.

Not only are great sufferings calculated to arouse the intellect, but the obloquy and persecutions encountered by Christians in their mission become also the means of confirming their faith in the divinity of Him who so accurately and so kindly portrayed these things to them in advance.

"From the beginning" of our being together, xv. 27, I did not tell you. It is extremely difficult to reconcile this declaration with the announcements, found in the Synoptics—even from the time of the Sermon on the Mount—of predestined sufferings, Matt. v. 10 ff.; Luke vi. 22 ff.; Matt. x. 16 ff.; Luke xii. 4 ff.; Matt. xxi. 12 ff.; xxiv. 9. Some: Here more frightful sufferings are depicted. But cf. Matt. x. 16–18, 28. Some: At an earlier period He spoke less openly and more sparingly. Some: Formerly in much more general terms, but now He more expressly sets forth in its principles the character of the world's attitude towards the disciples. Some: He now more definitely states the cause of the hatred. Some: He utters this here as a parting word; previously He alluded to it while He was with them, but as the disciples did not take it in, it was "for them as good as not said," but now Himself deeply moved, He gives utterance of it to the deeply moved disciples. The Bridegroom being with them, they could not fast, nor realize the import of prospective sufferings. But now under the shadow of the cross, these form the chief theme of one part of the farewell discourse, and appear in a strictly new light.

But *ταῦτα* refers to the content of what was said, and not to the manner of its being said. "Such sufferings He had not before announced." Meyer and Godet: "The difference lies clearly before us, and is simply to be recognized, to be explained, however, from the fact that in the Synoptics the more *general and less definite* allusions belonging to the earlier time appear in the more definite form and stamp of later expressions. The living recollection of John must here also preponderate as against the Synoptics, so that his relation to theirs here is that of a corrector."

Nebe regards this unnecessary, and agrees with Baumgarten-Crusius: "Even though the other evangelists report from an earlier period such announcements, Matt. v. 10, 16 ff.; Luke xii. 11, yet there, too, the most significant, the most explicit are found likewise in the last days of Jesus, Matt. xxiv. 9; Luke xxi. 12, 16 f., and we are certainly to understand in John merely that the strong express announcements were not made earlier." The reason why He reserved these for the last moment, He now tells them, was because of His personal presence with them, not because He personally consoled them amid their persecutions, for as yet they had suffered no persecutions. Meyer: "It would have been unnecessary in the time of my personal association with you, since it is not till after my departure that your persecution is to commence." Up to that time the world spent its hatred on Him. "Because you have me with you, they cannot well but leave you in peace, and can do nothing to you; they must have done it to me previously, but now it will begin," etc.

Nebe: "As a hen in time of danger spreads her wings over her brood, exposing herself alone to danger, so up to this hour Jesus had extended the wings of His grace over His disciples, and protected them against all suffering. Now He passes from them, and can no longer visibly protect them; nor do they need such defense; they have become so strong that they have the truth and can look into the face of the enemy; and, besides, they have the promise of another Paraclete, that they may be clothed with power from on high."

Homiletically we have to do with the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of testimony. We see its operation and recognize its necessity.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE SPIRIT OF TESTIMONY

1. Testifies in us of the Lord.
2. And through us in the world.

WHAT QUALIFIED THE APOSTLES AS WITNESSES OF THE LORD?

1. The Spirit of the Lord.
2. Conversance with the Lord.
3. Their hope in the Lord.

THE TESTIMONY OF FAITH IS:

1. Through the Holy Ghost.
2. Respecting the Lord.
3. To a wicked world.
4. In all patience.

THE RIGHT SPIRIT OF TESTIMONY.

1. The Spirit of humility.
2. The Spirit of truth.
3. The Spirit of courage.
4. The Spirit of love.

BEHOLD THE WITNESSES OF CHRIST:

1. Their spirit of testimony.
2. Treasurers of testimony.
3. Reward of testimony.
4. The comfort of testimony.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST IN BELIEVERS.

- 1 He witnesses in us of Christ.
- 2 He anoints us to be witnesses of Christ.
- 3 He comforts us in all tribulations on account of our witness.

GLORIOUS IS THE WITNESS OF THE APOSTLES.

1. The witness of their lips.
2. The witness of their lives.
3. The witness of their death.

PROOFS THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST:

- 1 The indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts.
- 2 The readiness to sacrifice for the Gospel.
3. The mercy felt towards persecutors.

THE URGENT NEED OF RECEIVING THE SPIRIT.

- 1 That we may have His witness in our hearts.
- 2 That we may with joy bear witness in the world.
3. That we may have courage against opposition.
4. That we may endure to the end.

WHITSUNDAY.

John xiv. 23-31.

Nebe: "As the Ancient Church did not determine the content of the three great Festivals according to the Holy Trinity, but in the strictest sense of the word celebrated the first half of the Church Year as *Semestre Domini*, she had no occasion at all to derive the text for this day from the Acts. She must look to the Gospels, and John alone could furnish texts regarding the Holy Ghost; for he alone records detailed discourses of the Lord concerning it. The text here given treats of the essence of the Pentecost Spirit, and especially of His work in believers."

23. "Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me . . . my Father will love him, and we . . . will make our home with him."

An impressive repetition and elucidation of v. 21, with love now in the immediate foreground. There Jesus gave the great promise that those who love Him should experience His love and His manifestation of Himself. Judas Lebbæus thought it strange that He should speak only of a revelation and appearance to believers, and saw no reason why the world should be excluded from His manifestation of Himself. It is evident that Judas did not understand this appearance as that of the last day, when appearing with great power and glory all eyes shall behold the Son of man, but of an appearance to take place in the meanwhile. Jesus now repeats the same declaration in a way not readily misunderstood. Not the children of this world will see Him, but those who love Him and keep His doctrine—the pure in heart, Matt. v. 8. On them the love of the Father will be poured out, and there will ensue the most intimate fellowship of life and love between Him and the Father on the one side, and them on the other. The subject is, therefore, not the Parousia of the Lord at the judgment, but His Parousia in the Holy Ghost, and this fully explains the Church's choice of this text for the day. "The seeing or the not-seeing of the Lord depends solely upon whether you love or do not love Him." The coming is spiritual, invisible, yet most real, an indwelling of the Father and the Son by means of the Spirit in the

soul's inner temple. God now takes up His abode with believers. In the Parousia of glory they ascend to Him.

"If a man love me." Does this mean that everything with us is to begin with love, that love is the indispensable condition for becoming a Christian? Luther: "Why does He not say as He is wont, 'believe on me?'" Is love more efficacious than faith? We answer: The sense is the same; man cannot truly love Christ unless he believes in Him and is comforted in Him. The word love is in this case plainer and more forcible, because it indicates so nicely how our hearts should turn from everything else in heaven and on earth, and should cling alone to this man Jesus Christ. For we know how love, according to its very nature, concentrates all its energies upon the object of its devotion, and remains attached to it, regardless of aught else in the wide world."

Nebe: "As God's love consists of a love of pity and of a love of complacency, so we may speak of a human love that precedes faith and one that follows faith." He holds also that the etymology of the word belief (*Glaube*) shows that a certain kind of love must precede faith. Cf. Kahnis, Luth. Dogmatik, i. 140 f. Apart from this, the essence of faith in both Old Testament and New Testament is *fiducia*, trust. Christian faith is not assent to a definite array of doctrines, but it has for its object purely and alone the person of Jesus Christ, the God-man. A personal relation between the object of faith and the subject of faith is therefore presupposed. This must be guarded against Romish perversion. Certainly we cannot conclude from this that our love precedes God's. While we were yet enemies He reconciled us, Rom. v. 10. He first loved us, 1 John iv. 10. But love is the condition for Christ's self-revelation to us, or for the internal perception of His love. Only love can realize the grace of Christ.

Let us further bear in mind that Jesus speaks to those who are believers, who have received His word. He who has laid hold of Christ in faith and loves Him must show his love by keeping His word, the immediate primordial proof of love. Such a one offers an open door for the incoming of his Lord. Such a heart is capable of seeing Him, of entering into a life union with Him.

"Word" is not to be taken—commandments. "My word" implies Christ's teachings in general. The singular is not without design: "Half faith and unfaith sees in His individual words only *disjecta membra* and no unity. It tears apart what is an invisible whole." Cf. v. 24, *λογoi*.

He that loves the Lord will keep, *τηρεῖν*, His word, which is more than holding it in memory, for the word is a seed falling into soil

and yielding fruit. Augustine explains *ῥηέν*: *qui habet in memoria et servat in vita, qui habet in sermonibus et servat in moribus, qui habet audiendo et servat faciendo, aut qui habet faciendo et servat perseverando.*

Nebe: "One who loves Jesus must keep the word of Jesus, for the word has an eternal value not only in this, that it is a word of Him whom we ought to love more than ourselves, but also in this, that He whom we love has come to us only through the word, and only through the word remains present with us, for even the Sacrament is nothing else than the word of God veiled in an earthly element. Christ the eternal word is present and lives in the word, and only this, His living and moving in the word, makes the word a power of God."

He who proves his love in truth and in deed—*probatio dilectionis exhibitio est operis*—will receive a great blessing: The Father's love. His heart will offer the favorable condition for the Father's love of complacency. The Holy Spirit showing Himself in full possession will shed abroad the love of God in the heart. "Since the Father and the Son are one, it could not be otherwise than that the Father would draw near with His whole heart to one who has turned with His whole heart to His beloved Son."

The subject is the revelation, manifestation, of the Father's love, a more perceptible and precious disclosure of it, taking up His abode, dwelling with them as in a chosen palace or temple. Luther sees in this assurance great comfort. If they remain constant in this love against the rage and persecution of Christ and His church, they will experience that He holds Himself faithful and firm in His love, and in the conflict will help them to victory, Rom. v. 8; viii. 37, 39. "The feeling, not the commencement, of the love, is the subject." God takes the initiative and draws me into a state of grace, but I am not at once sensible of His gracious work. Now, however, He draws sensibly near, and so kindles the heart that it feels His love, and then loves Him in turn.

Jesus emphasizes the Father's love that He may direct us from Himself into the Father's heart, and assures us that the Father is most gracious, a matter needful for poor distressed consciences. "First, Christ means to say, begin with my love, then you will come to the Father." It is a peculiarity of St. John to direct people first to Christ, and then through Him to the Father.

Nebe: "Where love is there is a yearning for personal communion, for an abiding eternal union; this, too, shall be satisfied. He who loves the Lord shall no longer cry after the living God, as a heart panting for the waterbrooks. His thirst shall be

quenched, he shall be a partaker of God, and, his desire satisfied; he shall exclaim, Abba, dear Father."

The promise is, "we will come unto Him." The plural refers naturally to God and Christ. The Father and the Son will not vanish again, leaving the poor heart to languish again. He who drinks of the water Christ gives shall nevermore thirst. He to whom the Father and Son come has the Father and the Son abidingly with him. He is their *μονή*, their mansion, their abode or abiding place. "We will make for ourselves a *μονή*, take up our residence with him." Men fondly sojourn with those they love. They yearn to be near them. They find their delight in communion with them.

Meyer: "The *unio mystica* into which God and Christ enter with man by means of the Paraclete, is presented in the sensuous form of the taking up an abode with Him, vv. 17, 25, i. e., in His dwelling, i. 40; Acts xxi. 8, etc., under His roof." As God in merciful condescension had formerly His tabernacle among men, the Shekinah being located in the most holy place, and as He "dwelt among us" in the incarnation when the word became flesh, so now every believer becomes His dwelling-place, the temple of the Holy Ghost, in which Father and Son delight to dwell. Zech. ii. 10 ff. Note the progressive character of God's dwelling among men.

Παρ' αὐτοῦ has been rendered by some, in distinction from *ἐν αὐτῷ*, as referring to the nearness of Jesus, but it is explained of the making of a residence. Not only shall His own dwell with Him hereafter (v. 2), but even now He comes to dwell with them, or rather, to make Himself a home with them, so that they are "His daily guests, yea house and table companions." This is heaven on earth. Luther: "Heaven itself has not this privilege which the Christian has. God does not say that He will dwell in it, but calls it His throne and the earth His footstool." He continues: "This will be a genuine, glorious, new Pentecost, a striking demonstration and power of the Holy Ghost, a heavenly gathering or council. What glory and grace falls here to men, who are deemed worthy to be such a glorious dwelling, palace and hall, yea paradise and heaven in which God dwells upon earth! Those so favored being distressed, timorous hearts and consciences, who are conscious of nothing but sin and death, and tremble at God's wrath, and imagine that God is farthest from them and Satan nearest." Is. lxvi. 1 f.; 2 Peter i. 4. "Let every heart prepare a throne." The Christian is not simply an object of love, but the enjoyment of that love is vouchsafed to him. Luther

adds: "The Christian receives two things, grace and a gift, Rom. v. 15; grace forgives sin, brings comfort and peace to the conscience, and transfers a man into the kingdom of divine mercy, Ps. cxvii. 2. The gift consists in the Holy Ghost working in man new thoughts, new mind, heart, comfort, strength and life." This he considers to be the meaning of "we will take up our abode with him."

While there are Old Testament references to God's dwelling with man, Exod. xxv. 8; xxix. 45 f.; Lev. xxvi. 11 f.; Ezek. xxxvii. 26, the truth here set forth surpasses all those promises. They speak only of a presence of God with His people, not of an indwelling. The Shekinah was exterior to the human subject. But every one who loves the Lord becomes a living tabernacle. He need no longer go to seek God, but shall have God within himself. Rev. xxi. 3. In the gospel we find life and full satisfaction. "The heart is disquieted until it rests in thee."

24. "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words: and the word . . . is not mine, but the Father's . . ."

"My words," we should expect "my word," v. 23. "The λόγοι are the individual parts of the collective λόγος, and the ἐντολαί, v. 21, are the preceptive parts of the same." Believers, again, keep the word as a whole, as a unit, not content with a half service, keeping a word here, one there. Unbelievers with no love for the whole, all-comprehensive, word of the Lord, divide and mutilate it. They fancy that some words please them, but they in reality love none. Instead of solving the difficulty which Judas had found in v. 22, our Lord simply repeats the statement with emphasis. He gives no direct answer to the question. He only indicates a solution. The condition of the ungodly renders them incapable of receiving Him. His word is the medium of His self-manifestation. Only when the Holy Ghost has by that medium kindled the love of God in the soul, only then can it receive Him and rejoice in Him. "The natural heart is enmity against God." God's dwelling among His Old Testament people was conditioned on their keeping the law. Obedience lies at the basis of all piety. A rejection of the words of the Lord renders therefore communion with God impossible, and debars alike the manifestation of the Father and of the Son. Obedience and love are the work of faith in the heart wrought by the Holy Ghost, and these offer the living condition for the revelation of the Father and of the Son. Their love like their faith was still defective.

Here, says Luther, the heroic champion of justification by faith, is the sharp, blunt judgment, "he must love who would be a

Christian. He must gladly keep the word of Christ. He must either love Christ or have no part in Him." "He who would seek his own with Christ, and would not rather for His sake renounce his own honor, fame, righteousness and everything, is of no account in His kingdom." What Jesus said, xiii. 35, "hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples because ye love one another," is here repeated in the higher form, that brotherly love has its root in the love to the Lord; and this love for Christ is the mark of the true Christian. "The distinguishing mark of the world is that it does not love Christ." "He who loves Christ keeps of course Christ's word. He who loves Him not, does naturally not keep it, for love is the soul of the Christian life, it is the sole principle of ethics."

It was not necessary to carry out the parallel with the sentence, "My Father and I will not come," etc. The disciples can now understand why He does not reveal Himself to the world. The abrupt closing, "he that loves me not," etc., is very suggestive—a fit close to what He has been saying. "It is self-evident that he who does not keep His word, certainly does not believe on Him, and he dare not presume upon God's love, he is already cut off, and remains under eternal wrath and judgment," iii. 36. The reception or rejection of Christ's word is decisive for eternity, for this word is not Christ's, but the Father's who sent Christ.

In v. 23 Jesus called the word "my word," in 24 He says "my words," and suddenly He calls it no longer His word, but the word of the Father, and recurs again to the singular, "word." Luther: "The word does not proceed from me, I have not originated it, but it is what the Father commanded me." Christ's words are sovereign because they are the Father's. There is no higher authority, for His words are the same as God's. The Son was not only in the beginning in the bosom of the Father, so united to Him that He who sees the Son sees the Father, but what He does in the flesh He does by His Father's command, and what He speaks He has heard from the Father, viii. 26.

"He, therefore, who receives the word of Christ, he receives the Father; and he that despiseth His word, despiseth the Father; hence it can only be proper for God to unite Himself with those who keep His word and to withdraw Himself from those who do not keep His word." Calvin: "The world will suffer the just punishment of its own ingratitude, when it perishes in its own blindness, Lev. xxvi. 3, 11 f.; Deut. vii. 12 f.; xxviii. 1, 15. "The world excommunicates itself."

25. "These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you."

In a sense He has been making His home with them. The words are the same as in 23, except that the noun is exchanged for the participle; but He is about to withdraw this external residence that through the Spirit He may with the Father make an internal home with them, exchange the bodily mode of presence for a spiritual residence within them. According to Nebe, He sets before the disciples, in the most definite form, the prospect of His abiding with them. In v. 18 He told them that He would not leave them orphans, that instead of separation from them He was actually coming to them. In v. 20 this coming to them is represented as a coming to be and to abide in them. "These things" accordingly refer to what immediately precedes as in xv. 11; xvi. 1. Nebe: "The discourse has reached its summit—Jesus has given them the most definite promise that though for a while He would separate from them, He and His Father would come to them to abide with them. A communion is promised to which the communion they have hitherto enjoyed with Him is only a shadow. They shall become God's dwelling place. And the *ταῦτα κ.τ.λ.* is intended to impress this promise firmly upon their hearts. He is uttering words of farewell, but not as one departing from them but as one through departure rightly coming to them, in order to remain in them. He knows that they stand pondering the great promise, wondering if they understand it; they can only guess its depth and grandeur."

26. "But the Paraclete, . . . whom the Father will send in my name, he will instruct you concerning all things, and recall to your minds all that I said" . . .

He comforts them relative to the divine assistance toward understanding, which will be given them in the Paraclete, to whom He had pointed them, v. 16; cf. xv. 26; xvi. 7, the Spirit of the truth. To Him He leaves what is yet wanting and the explanation of what He has told them. He is probably called Paraclete here to show the personal identity of the Helper in both cases. He is the same as He of whom I spoke before in connection with the conflict the world will wage against you. Here, too, He will be "attorney" for the disciples, not simply comforter, teacher, but one who conducts their cause to victory. "What they are unable to attain to because of their infirmity, that the Holy Ghost will accomplish for them—He will lead them into the truth."

The Paraclete is here not called the Spirit of truth, but the Holy Spirit, which is explained by Nebe on the ground that He does not work in this case as the Spirit of truth, but as the Spirit of sanctification. But the work of sanctification is effected through

the truth. The indwelling of the Father and the Son will be realized by love to Christ and by the keeping of His word. This takes place in the ethical sphere, "hence, as the Holy Ghost discloses to the disciples the content of this word, He shows Himself as the ethical potency."

"In my name." Some: at my intercession. v. 16, in recognition of me as Messiah, with regard to my cause. Some: if you ask for Him in my name. Some: instead of me, as my representative, because the Holy Ghost takes the place of Christ as another Comforter. Nebe objects to this as passing over the sending, to the person of the sent one. Hengstenberg: He sends the Spirit on the basis of the historic personality of Christ, *i. e.*, His atoning sufferings and death. Some: the name of Jesus God has in mind when He sends the Spirit; therefore, the Spirit serves the revelation and glory of Christ. Meyer: "Whatever is comprised in that name forms the sphere in which the divine purpose and counsel and will lives and is active in the sending."

The next clause, "He shall teach you all things, etc., which I told you," showing the work of the Holy Ghost, seems decisive for Meyer's view. Jesus describes the Spirit's office, which is the glorification of Christ, xvi. 14. Luther: "This shows that henceforth among Christians there is to be no other teaching through the Holy Ghost than what the apostles heard from Christ, but did not understand; through the Holy Ghost they were instructed and reminded concerning this. It remains, therefore, the voice of Christ, and the Holy Ghost is He that teaches and reminds."

There are two forms of activity, for *διδάξει* and *ὑπομνήσει* are not the same, though it has been sought to identify their meaning in the attempt to counteract the papists and fanatics, who ground on this passage their assumption of a continuous revelation either through the church or by the medium of individuals. The former is the impartation of a truth which up to the time was unknown. The latter conveys nothing new, but keeps us from forgetting what has been heard or received, or recalls it from oblivion. The Holy Ghost is like the householder, Matt. xiii. 52, "who brings forth out of His treasure things new and old." Neither Rome, nor fanaticism, nor pantheism, has any warrant here for its claims. The declaration must be interpreted from the context, and this very clearly limits and determines its meaning.

"You" shall He teach thus. This cannot be extended to all the rulers of the church, Pontiffs, Holy Fathers of the General Councils, etc. For the second *ὑμᾶς* must refer to the same circle as the first. The conjunction unites them as clauses referring to the

same object. The second *ἰνᾱς* does not go beyond the apostolic circle, neither can the first. The same persons who are to be reminded by the Holy Ghost of that which Jesus told them, are also to be instructed by Him. Hence Nebe: "The eye and ear witnesses of the Son of man in the flesh." Luther thinks "the nonsense" of the papists that Christ did not teach the full truth, is sufficiently refuted by the text, which says He will bring to their remembrance "what I told" them, "my word," v. 23; xvi. 14; xv. 26. "He does not say He will give power to the church, the Councils, arbitrarily to form and fix conclusions regarding God's word, but my word alone, my ordinance, my institution shall He administer and implant in you. What the Councils (except the first ones) have dealt with was pure human ordinance and tradition, which required no promise nor gift of the Holy Ghost. His work concerns things which transcend the Councils of men, how to escape the wrath of God, to overcome sin and death, to trample Satan under foot, of which Christ alone teaches. The papists by their inventions tear away hearts from the word of Christ, for when we hold that Christ did not teach everything, soon eyes and ears stand open gaping for something else."

Nebe: "The apostles are the pillars of the church, and God's house rests upon its proper base when it is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief Corner-stone. The whole sum of Christian doctrine is embraced in the preaching of those men who heard what Christ said. Christ and not the Holy Ghost is the Logos of the Father; in these last days He has spoken unto us by His Son, Heb. i. 2. The Evangelical church is the true apostolic church, since she declares the word of God and not tradition, coördinate with it, or above it, to be the source and norm of the Christian faith."

Neither grammar nor history, however, warrants the restriction of the teaching to the idea of reminding, so as to make the two terms cover each other. "The contents of the apostolic Epistles and of the Apocalypse cannot be traced back simply to the discourses which Jesus delivered during His earthly life, although their germs and bases are everywhere individually contained therein."

Anything absolutely new the Holy Ghost could, indeed, not reveal to the apostles, not to mention the impossibility of His revealing anything which could in the slightest degree contradict what Jesus had spoken. The last is excluded already by the designation Paraclete, by which Jesus recalls His having just before, v. 16, spoken of the Holy Ghost as "another Paraclete,"

His *alter ego*, and here further designates Him as "the One whom the Father will send in my name." The fullest accord and identity of teaching must therefore be expected if the Holy Ghost is to be sent in the name of Jesus.

A number of texts show "that the word of the Lord and His entire person, for He is "the word," are not to be obscured by the Holy Ghost, but to be illumined, hence "He takes the things of mine" and will convey them to you. He will conduct them into the truth uttered by Christ. xvi. 13 ff.

It can be demonstrated that it is impossible for the Holy Ghost to reveal anything absolutely new. For, says Nebe, "the Father sends Him, the Holy Ghost can only speak that which He has searched in the deep things of God. His word is not His own, but the Father's. As this holds also of the Son, His word being not His own but the Father's, the word of the Lord and that of the Spirit must be one and the same." And the error of Rome is not so much the novelties of its teaching, as novelties not in harmony with the Gospel.

The opposite error, which makes the Spirit only reproduce the teachings of Christ, or give them another form, must also be avoided. The Lord explicitly guards against this error. Bengel reminds us that the clause "which I said unto you," is not added after "He shall teach you all things." "For that Paraclete taught other things also, xvi. 12, 13." He adds: "Nor, however, even subsequently, were the whole of the dogmas of Christian truth infused into the apostles in one condensed mass, but as often as they needed them, and as the occasion suggested, the Paraclete instructed them."

The Holy Ghost gives instruction relative to things which the disciples when Christ was with them could not yet bear—and He announces coming events, yet is the teaching of the Holy Ghost not something absolutely new. What He teaches bears to the "words" of Christ the same relation as the blade does to the seed, the stalk to the root. It is a development of the kernel, an unfolding of the principle already given in Christ. A prophet takes up the thread of an idea where another dropped it, one develops what another has in veiled terms only intimated. So the apostles bring out more sharply and clearly what the words of Jesus yield only in dim outline, the doctrines which He did not state in detail. They draw the inferences and conclusions of the statements which He uttered. See Lecture on Cantate Sunday, John xvi. 12 f.

The Holy Ghost contributes to the truth doubtless in the same manner as He contributes to salvation. He makes alive, He

enlightens, He gives a grasp of the whole truth which has been revealed. He works within. His action is subjective. He transcribes the teachings of Christ upon the heart. His chief work is to cause men to understand what Jesus taught, to make them susceptible of His word, to cause them to be moved and kindled thereby.

And this He does with regard to everything, *πάντα*. Some refer this term in both clauses to *ταῦτα*, v.25, cf. xvi. 13, "into the whole truth." Whatever our Lord spoke, the Holy Ghost will preserve from being forgotten.

Whatever is necessary to believers for salvation forms the theme of the Holy Spirit's "teaching." The other activity of the Spirit is that of "reminding." Here again His work is more than merely calling up in their memories—a task some one else might discharge. The need of such reminding is suggestive. While there are things not easily forgotten, the truth, to which the natural heart is indifferent, must be impressed upon us, the heart must be charged with it by an inner process, a heart of stone must be changed into a heart of flesh, and on this are engraved indelibly the words of Christ. An invigorating, vivifying influence must be exerted, in virtue of which what they had previously heard now presents itself with a spiritual sense, with freshness and new force, awakening intellect, heart and conscience, cf. ii. 22; xii. 16. The word is no longer a dead letter, but throbs and moves within us a living, spiritual power.

The peculiar import of the promise is emphasized when we think of the number and sweep of our Lord's discourses. What treasures of truth it devolved on the Holy Ghost to bring back to the quickened memory of the apostles! Notice the significance of this especially for Matthew and John. Again, the teaching of the apostles was under the immediate tuition of the Holy Ghost.

27. "Peace I leave with you; my own peace . . . not as the world giveth do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, . . ."

He is on the point of taking leave. This fact is in the air, it is on their hearts, see vv. 1-6. His impending departure is the occasion and the subject of all these utterances. They are parting words, as of one saying good night, or imparting a blessing. Luther: "This is my Valeté (farewell), I part from you now and have nothing to leave you in the world. But my testament and my legacy is peace." Evidently the allusion is to the oriental salutation (*shalom*) at parting. Grace and peace became the favorite form of salutation among Christians.

Luther says: Peace in Hebrew means to give and leave every-

thing good, prosperity. Some: peace of mind, rest for the soul, the well-being of a mind in communion with God. Some: redemption, the whole legacy of redemption: the word, His intercession, the Spirit mediating to them the presence of the Father and the Son—all is comprehended in it and made over to them. The Hebrew original is equivalent to safe, unhurt, describing the condition of one who is uninjured by the hostile powers, with which human life is encompassed, sin, weakness, want and death. Hence peace, according to the Scriptures, is not an experience, nor a condition of well-being in general, but a condition opposite to that of affliction, a condition of one whom foes cannot injure. God is the mighty fortress who protects the godly against all the persecutions of their enemies. It is the condition which results from taking refuge in God, from being united to God.

Peace is significantly repeated, for “peace” and “my own peace,” are one and the same, showing the richness and completeness of the gift. So far from my departure inflicting loss, you shall have a rich indemnity, the best you can desire, namely, “that you have a gracious God, who regards you with Fatherly love, and a faithful Saviour, who will grant you every good and forsake you in no distress, protect you against the devil and all evil, and, besides, give you the Holy Spirit who shall rule your hearts that you may have true comfort, peace and joy in Him. How much richer comfort and peace than if He bequeathed to them cities and castles, silver and gold. Instead of these, He gives them that peace which is the richest treasure in heaven and earth, peace in the heart, for that is the highest peace when the heart has peace.”

The repetition of “peace” is climactic—the first without the article, the usual farewell; the second, a precise definition to the farewell. It is a peace which He actually bestows upon them, “a peace which is alone and exclusively the property of the Lord and which He alone can impart.” It is His peace which He leaves to them while He personally departs and seemingly leaves them to their enemies, the peace which has its source and home in Him. This is “the inward peace, which so triumphs over all temptation, opposition, distress, dishonor, misery, as to make one joyous and patient in the most terrific commotions. Such it showed itself in the case of the Lord. Throughout His whole troubled career it never left His heart. And so it must dwell in the hearts of all who love Him and keep His word, for He comes to them in order to abide in them.”

That He imparted this peace at the moment He spoke, is not in

conflict, Nebe claims, with the facts that on that very night they were scattered like sheep, and that on the Easter evening they assembled with closed doors for fear of the Jews, since there is a difference between giving and receiving. And He argues that if they were soon overwhelmed with sorrow, this was needed in order that the peace He had just imparted to them should sink into the deepest recesses of their hearts—as we thoroughly shake a vessel to fill it with choice fruit.

“Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” The contrast is ever between Christ and the world. Friends ordinarily impart good wishes, at best invoke the divine favor. Jesus leaves the gift itself with them. He gives them, in the best and highest sense, the true peace, the inheritance which accrues to them from His departure by death, the peace that is in every way His own and proceeds from Him.

It is unnecessary to supply “peace.” “My giving is of quite another kind than that of the world. *Its* giving bestows treasure, pleasure, honor, and the like, is therefore unsatisfying, bringing no permanent good, no genuine prosperity.” Luther: “The world has a peace, which I do not bestow. It has this peace: when it does what the devil wills he allows it peace and rest, peace with the devil, but no peace with God,” whereas Christ leaves them a true gift. Nebe finds the contrast between Christ’s giving and the world’s not in the difference of the objects given, but in the different manner of giving, though of course, Christ’s gift and the world’s are essentially different. The world’s peace is an empty formula, a salutation often meaningless. Christ’s is an actual benediction, an effectual benefaction. Along with the salutation on His lips flows forth actual peace to their hearts, hence He may well say, “let not your heart be troubled,” “concluding the discourse exactly as He began it,” and adding the clause, “neither let it be fearful,” showing at the beginning the theme of His discourse, and here once more the purpose of its delivery.

And He grows more emphatic. There is no ground for fear, or for being troubled. Of Jesus Himself it is said that He was troubled, xii. 27; xiii. 21. While this frame of mind had now left Him, quaking and dismay had seized hold of them. He, through obedience to the Father’s will, had mastered the powerful commotion of His mind, but His disciples had not the strength to come forth triumphant from their distress. They were faint and despairing. Bengel distinguishes between the two verbs, *ταράσσω* and *δειλιάω*, referring the first to what is intrinsic, the second to what is extrinsic. Both terms are found combined, Is. xiii. 7, 8, where they denote panic, terror.

Jesus does not aim at stoical apathy in His disciples, nor ask them to be indifferent to His departure, but seeks to save them from being overpowered with anxiety, and to lead them to self-mastery. When one is distracted, everything begins to turn and whirl. This must not be. Though pain like a sword should pierce the soul, the head must remain erect, the eye clear. Sorrow must not sap our courage.

They ought to view His departure with joy.

28. "Ye heard . . . I go away, and I come unto you. If ye loved me ye would have rejoiced, . . . for the Father is greater than I."

Having made this announcement previously, the thought that joy is in place now instead of sorrow, is introduced by this sentence. Lest ye should not have heard it rightly, hear it again and hold it fast. I go and I come. This is a riddle. He withdraws in order to come to them. He separates from them that He may remain with them, in them, forever. He told them, v. 2, that His departure was a going to the Father, resumption of the state of glory. But so far from this making orphans of them, v. 18, it was really a nearer approach to them, a coming to them. Cf. vv. 21, 23.

"These words, 'I go away, and I come,' are the star which is to dissipate the darkness and the shadow of death in which the disciples sat, and certainly would dissipate them, if they gazed after the parting Lord with the eyes of love." For love seeketh not her own, but that of another's, of the loved one. Jesus can but rejoice over His departure, His believing ones must share His rejoicing. If they loved Him His going would make them happy. Forgetting the distress in which it involved them, they, if they loved Him truly, would only the more rejoice. Certainly, says Luther, "the more persecution one has outwardly, the more joy he has in his heart, and the more peace he has, for he loves Christ." He touches them at a tender point: because they love Him their hearts are filled with sadness! But the love which so distresses them shall convert their sorrow into joy.

They loved Him ardently, but not with that love which the Holy Ghost would kindle in them by shedding abroad His love in their hearts. True, complete, love will surrender itself absolutely to His will, subordinating every other consideration to Him, welcoming every privation, hardship, persecution, that would further His glory. As pure love is concerned supremely for the blessedness of its object even at one's own disadvantage, so did they love Him as they ought, they would realize great joy at His departure, for it meant His return to the bliss and glory of His

Father. Heretofore He has spoken exclusively of the gain to them from His departure to the Father, now of His own gain, xvii. 5. "Because I am going to the Father," should have for them an alleviating solace stilling all pain. This clause includes the other two "I go away, and I come to you," the former referring to His withdrawal from temporal relations, the latter to His return to them, without indicating whether His return would be in the old form and manner. The apparent contradiction finds the higher unity in the declaration, "I am going to the Father." To go to the Father He must depart, for the Father is in heaven; but this also implies that He will come to them, "for as the heaven spans the earth, so the Father compasses the whole world." In Him we live and move and have our being. He comes to them by the way of the Father, in union with the Father. V. 23.

The ground He assigns for the joy over His departure is that "the Father is greater than I." Arians and Socinians have used this as a proof for their fundamental error, and if the passage stood disconnected it might be so used, but the context makes the sense so obvious as to leave the exposition without formidable difficulty.

Three interpretations have been proposed:

1. That of the Greek FF.: The superiority is one of order. The Son is begotten: the Father is unbegotten. The Son is from the Father, not the converse. The Father is the originating cause or ground of the Son, but the Son is not that of the Father.

2. In respect to His incarnation the Son is inferior. The Son humbled Himself, not the Father. Of the human nature alone can it be said that it goes to the Father. Athanasian Creed: Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. But we have no warrant in the Scriptures for such a separation of the two natures.

3. In respect to the state of His humiliation. That state left Christ inferior to the state of exaltation, in which He shares the glory He had with the Father before the world was. The inferiority consists in something that will terminate with His ascension. The limitations of His lowly estate will cease. He will be exalted to a joint-participation in the dominion, majesty, glory, and power of the Father. The Father in glory is greater than the Son in humiliation. The subject is not the divine nature or essence, but the mode or state of existence on which He is about to enter in contrast with that in which He now is. There is nothing here affecting the Homousia, but a truth clearly illustrated by Phil. ii. 5-8—his passage from poverty, suffering, vicarious ignominy, to

the right hand of God, possessed of all power in heaven and earth, and sharing the Father's bliss and glory.

Luther: "It is better that I pass from the earthly condition of meanness and infirmity into the power and dominion in which the Father is." Calvin: "Christ does not here compare the Godhead of His Father with His own, nor His human nature with the divine essence, but His present condition with that heavenly glory to which He was soon to be raised"—His prospective deliverance, and His exaltation to where He was from eternity. He speaks of His own position with the Father. He does not contrast Himself in essence or majesty with the Father. If there existed really such a contrast it would hold always and everywhere, would be unchangeable. Nor does it appear how the mere fact of His Father's essential superiority should be a matter of extraordinary joy to them. Not the Father's superiority to Him should be their spring of joy, but what He gained in going to Him, the resumption of divine equality with the Father, should stir their deepest souls with rejoicing. It is just as if He had said, I will be greater there than here, as much as heaven is greater than earth; I will share the Father's superiority. "Before, He was a poor, miserable, suffering Christ, now with the Father He is a great, glorious, living, almighty Ruler of all creatures."

This preëminent greatness is not to be conceived as an intrinsic superiority. "It is something that strikes the eye, an external advantage, an apparent property." Some: "The supereminent glory," but this would have required a different word. "That which would accrue to the Lord from His ascension, is an accretion of power and glory. The only-begotten of the Father dwelling in the flesh did not take toward the world the position which accords with His eternal essence. It was His ascension which glorified Him in respect to the world." He will now as their Lord mount the throne of the world's sovereignty. Thus it was really also to the interest of His disciples that He departed. How it must enhance their own protection and ultimate triumph! Still, "if you love me," fixes the point of view exclusively on the interest of their Lord, though certainly in celebrating His victory they must be anticipating their own. Their interests are pooled with His. They are so united to Him that His cause and theirs go hand in hand, no longer to be distinguished. Quesnel: "The interests of Jesus ought to be dearer to us than our own; but we cannot seek His without at the same time finding ours." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," etc.

Notice yet the tender consideration of our Lord. Like a merci-

ful high priest He sympathizes with their infirmity. He foretells and explains the crisis that overhangs them, and offers them a point of view which puts everything into a different light. He directs their eyes to what is above and unseen.

29. "And now I have told you . . . that when it is come to pass, ye may believe."

While some limit the reference to v. 26, or v. 28, or to the matter of the departure only, most expositors include in it the whole chapter. "As Jesus is about to conclude this first discourse, the conclusion must refer to the whole." He knows that they do not comprehend His sayings, though they may draw a little comfort from them. He often speaks what will only in the future accomplish that whereunto it was sent. All that He has spoken to them here is not for their immediate encouragement, but in order that when these things shall transpire they may believe. xiii. 19. In this citation the object of their faith is given, but not in the text. Their faith in general is to be confirmed by the consummation of what He has told them in advance. Faith is everything, hence He has provided that their faith shall derive its vigor and victory from His ascension after death. The revelation of the power of Christ in His glory is the strongest testimony to His dignity and His deity. Note here finally the evidential value of prophecy.

For the strengthening of their poor, weak, faith it was important that they now believingly receive what Jesus says, and treasure it as a comforting deposit of truth. For He adds:

30. "I will no more speak much . . . for the chief of the world cometh: and in me he has nothing whatever;"

There is no time for further discourse. The hour is at hand. The prince of the world is marching on Him even now. How distinctly Jesus knew what was going on, this very moment, what the world was concocting against Him! How Judas in whom this world's ruler was incarnate had already started for the betrayal! Let them attend carefully to the few words yet to fall from His lips, they are parting words, His last will and testament.

"The archon (chief) of the world." Cf. xii. 31; Matt. iv. 8, 9. The Rabbins held that the heathen world formed the domain of the evil spirit—in contrast with the theocracy. Jesus extends the domain of God's enemy to the *kosmos*, 2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12. This is not a title *de jure* but *de facto*. The world has fallen under his power and is content with his sway. "He that is in Christ's kingdom is free from the prince of this world, for Christ's kingdom is not of this world."

Whether there is imminent a personal onslaught of Satan against the Lord, or whether what his agents do is ascribed to him, on this expositors are divided. Eph. ii. 2. Hengstenberg: "Before His spiritual penetration, Judas disappears and the Roman soldiers and the servants of the high priest and Pharisees. Only one remains, whom as poor, unconscious instruments all obey, the prince of this world, who sets in motion their thoughts and their arms." The words of Jesus, however, require a conflict between one person and another. This is required also by the doctrine that in every conflict Christ was the personal victor of Satan. The latter withdrew only for a season after the temptation, Luke iv. 13. This implies subsequent personal encounters. It is fitting, too, that the close as well as the entrance of Christ's public career was marked by a personal conflict between Him and the arch-foe. The desert and Gethsemane were two battlefields. In each angels appeared on the scene to strengthen their sorely-tried Lord, and to celebrate His victory, Luke xxii. 43. The first temptation was aimed at the lust of power. This one against the natural horror of suffering and death. Christ must show Himself proof against both. He must without quailing drain the cup of suffering, taste the bitterness of death.

While the two combatants look into each other's eyes, the enemy is called neither tempter nor devil, but "chief of the world," which is significant of his power. Luther: "He has slain and murdered so many, that he expects to be lord and prince also over you, and he will also undertake to destroy me." He is on the march as lord of all the powers which the world places in his hands for the execution of his plans.

Kai is adversative: And yet he has nothing in me. The world he possesses, but not me. Nothing in me pertains to his dominion. There is no need of supplying "part," "sin," "claim," "cause of death," etc. *Ἐν ἐμοὶ* denotes the sphere of the *ἐχέν*, the sphere over which he has power. Nothing in me can he call his own. The two negatives strengthen each other.

Christ is absolutely free from the power of Satan. The latter, though ruling the *kosmos*, has no power whatever over Him. This is the simple statement, without giving any cause or explanation, such as for instance His sinlessness; or because He has overcome the world and is already glorified, xvi. 33; xii. 31. When therefore Christ submits to death, it is not from necessity. It is voluntary. So far from succumbing to irresistible power in the surrender of His life, this is an act of His will. No man taketh His life, of Himself He lays it down, x. 18. In the fullest exercise of moral freedom He subjects Himself to death.

He acts thus in obedience to the Father, and to give the world a proof of His love to the Father.

31. "But I do thus, that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment. Arise . . ."

My love to the Father, and not the power of Satan, is the secret of my submission to death. This is the Father's will, and my supreme prayer is, "if this cup may not pass from me, let Thy will be done." Some connect the command, "arise," etc., very closely with this sentence, as if it pointed, in the form of a summons, to what was about to happen: "that the world may know that, etc., arise, let us go," *i. e.*, I will go forth with you in order to sustain the attack of the prince of this world. The structure is confessedly difficult, yet the sense seems to be clear. The cup of death is not forced into my hand by Satan, but love to my Father, and obedience to His will place it there.

Although the chief of the world is apparently enacting this drama, it shall itself be the means of convincing the world of Christ's love to the Father, and of His absolute obedience to Him, and thus the eyes of the world will be opened to the Father's pity for sinners, and His concern for its salvation. What is about to happen, so far from being an achievement of Satan's, will be the means of rescuing the world from his grasp. Behold, what was in the Saviour's mind at this supreme moment! Though it pierced Him with its sins, the world by this piercing escapes from its bondage. There is a world which longs to be free from the iron rule of its prince, vi. 44; xii. 32. It is on that side that the world comes here under review.

The gift of the Holy Ghost is brought into its proper light by the Pericope; it is the highest good.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE GIFT HAS BEEN

1. Most richly promised.
2. Is most necessary.
3. Is most certain.

THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE HIGHEST GOOD.

1. He seals to us the communion with God.
2. Teaches us the word of God.
3. Gives us the peace of God.
4. Keeps us in obedience to God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE FULFILLMENT OF ALL PROMISES. HE EFFECTS

1. That we love the Lord and keep His word.
2. That the Father loves us and comes with the Son to dwell in us.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,

1. Is received by those keeping Christ's word.
2. From the crucified Lord, and
3. Conveys peace and joy.

THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE TRUE COMFORTER.

1. Regarding the Lord's departure.
2. In view of our ignorance.
3. Against the enmity of the world.
4. Against the attacks of Satan.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SPIRIT

1. Of love.
2. Of knowledge.
3. Of peace.
4. Of joy.
5. Of obedience.

HOW BLESSED THE PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIAN: HE IS

1. One with his God.
2. Fixed in God's word.
3. Fearless before the world.
4. Victorious over the prince of the world.

GOD WILL DWELL IN HUMAN HEARTS.

1. Prepare Him an abode.
2. Become His abode.
3. Show yourself His abode.

III. THE POSTLUDE.

THE FEAST OF THE TRINITY.

John iii. 1-15.

THE great deeds of God are now completed. Redemption grounded in Christ Jesus has been presented from its first beginnings to its glorious close. Now the church must live itself into it, every one must be inwardly born again and renewed. This Gospel makes the requirement and treats the work of renewal. It is an excellent selection for this Festival. The Festival might easily mislead us to speculate on the unfathomable depths of the Godhead, but this Gospel keeps us from it. "It points us away from heaven to earth, from the deep thoughts of God's hidden being to the saving thoughts of God's mysterious, blessed work of grace in human hearts." Not theoretically, but practically, are we to know the Holy Trinity. Not the essential immanent Trinity, but the economic Trinity of revelation, is for the church, and nowhere is the economic Trinity so clearly revealed as in the process of regeneration.

The Lesson presents in a beautiful and appropriate manner the distinction of the three Persons in the work of salvation. The Father loves the world and gives to it His only-begotten Son. The Son suffers Himself to be lifted up on the cross that whosoever believeth in Him might have everlasting life. To these two Persons comes afterwards the Holy Ghost, who through the water of holy baptism enkindles faith in the heart and thereby regenerates us. What comfort for our hearts, says Luther, "that all three Persons, the whole Godhead, is engaged in delivering us poor, miserable human beings from sin, death, and the devil, unto righteousness, eternal life and the kingdom of God. Had He desired to condemn us on account of our sins, the Father would not have given His only-begotten Son, and the Father and the Son would not have invited us to the washing of regeneration by the Holy Ghost."

1. "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, . . ."

Δέ connects this narrative closely with the foregoing, but still the inner connection is not easily seen. We have a minute description of Nicodemus, "a man of the Pharisees." The latter are referred to, though not mentioned, in the closing words of chapter ii. There must be some ground for saying not a Pharisee, but "a man of the Pharisees," and the emphasis rests properly on "man (person)." Some: He was a select one among them. Some: Referring to the higher knowledge of Jesus, ii. 25, the "man" here under the Pharisee. A man of this description was yet a Pharisee, an exception to their general attitude toward him. But Meyer makes "man" simply equivalent to *τις*, and holds it quite independent of ii. 25, introducing a new narrative.

Hengstenberg: "That Nicodemus belonged to the Pharisees has great significance. For it was characteristic of Pharisaism that it knew nothing of regeneration, but only of holiness appropriated by piecemeal, man himself contributing the first part, God mainly looking on and rewarding it." Thus we have not only the occasion for the subject, but also for the objections and questions of Nicodemus. As one having eminence, the man is named Nicodemus. This Greek name is a testimony to the degeneracy of the chosen people. "As long as the law of God was before their eyes no Israelite bore a name derived from heathenism." We meet with this eminent Pharisee again, vii. 50 f., where he protests against the snap judgment of his associates in the Council, and xix. 39, where he joins Joseph of Arimathea in the expensive burial of Jesus. The Talmud speaks of a Nakdimon Bunai, who survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and is expressly designated as a disciple of Jesus. The two may be identical. "Archon of the Jews," *i. e.*, a member of the Sanhedrim, vii. 50.

2. "The same came . . . and said . . . Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs . . . except God be with him."

"ὁυτος, indicating that something of moment is about to be related. Luther: "Nicodemus is greatly praised by John; in the government he is foremost, in art he is the wisest, in life he is the holiest, for he is a Pharisee. Over and above this, he has a desire to come to Christ, which is much more than the other three. Other rulers and Pharisees persecuted Christ, and were so set against Him as to threaten with expulsion any one who dared to believe on Him. Yet he is so brave and devout, loves Christ, and secretly visits Him, that he may speak with Him and declare His love to Him."

His coming at night was doubtless due to fear. He was intimi-

dated by the attitude of the Sanhedrim. As a ruler, a man of high rank, who had much to lose, he shrank from public disgrace. When the evangelist later refers to him as the one who came to Jesus by night, he doubtless means to indicate that he had undergone a great change, his conduct now being courageous, manly, and hazardous. Some: Night offered the best opportunity for an uninterrupted and confidential interview between the great Teacher and the teacher of Israel. Some judge his fear of man mildly. It may have been simply the result of a lower stage of faith. Hesitation would then be quite in order. If he was afraid of the people, his going to the Nazarene was itself a great victory. "He has already conquered himself; he has trodden the Pharisee and the ruler under his feet."

"Rabbi," that, or "*κύριε*" was the title by which Jesus was usually addressed. The latter occurs more frequently than the former, which is the Hebrew equivalent for teacher. Jesus accepts both, He approves both, John xiii. 13, yea, He asserts the title Rabbi exclusively for Himself, Matt. xxiii. 8. These designations express essential permanent relations of Christ. He ever remains alike the Teacher and the Lord of His people. Addressing Him as Rabbi, Nicodemus comes as a learner, and though hardly showing proper docility, he certainly desires to learn from one who knows, "having come from God, a teacher."

While he comes to gain knowledge, he professes to have already some knowledge. "We know," he begins, betraying the Pharisee in this emphatic assertion. This plural is doubtless an allusion to others who had reached the same conclusion; or he may have come in the name of several who wished to know the real aim and office of this worker of miracles. It may, also, imply the true conviction respecting Jesus of that class, the archons, xii. 42, to which Nicodemus belonged. They recognized the power of God in those miracles, and, sharing the general and lively expectation of the imminence of the Messiah, they were eager to ascertain the significance of "these signs." Lightfoot's interpretation of it as the Hebrew plural of majesty, the energetic expression of one's own conviction, is refuted by our Lord's reply being directed to Nicodemus in the plural, indicating that the answer is meant for a class, cf. vii. 11, 12. It is not a private opinion Nicodemus conveys to Him, it is a view shared by his associates.

This is the first public appearance of Jesus in Jerusalem, yet His name is already on every tongue, and the rulers have been obliged to form a definite judgment in regard to Him. Nicodemus represents, probably, a predisposition to hail Him as the Messiah.

The Pharisees among the rulers deemed the hour of deliverance at hand; "these signs" were unmistakable credentials attesting the divine character and mission of Jesus, and they were prepared to proclaim Him as the heaven-sent King, had He fallen in with their expectations and their schemes. Their subsequent hatred and persecution of Him arose in great measure from their exasperation at His failure to rescue the Jewish state, and to restore the ancient splendor of the nation, when it was so manifestly in His power to do this. His chosen course in unobtrusively teaching a few followers, confining Himself almost wholly to the humbler class, and expending His supernatural power in works of kindness and personal relief, when He might have lifted the standard of revolt, and by proclaiming Himself the looked-for King of the Jews, rallied the whole nation to His support, so enraged the rulers that they resolved upon the destruction of Him whom they were at first prepared to hail as the Messiah. Nicodemus' visit may have had reference to state interests, to the political situation, but he was suddenly surprised by the revelation which went to his heart, that man needs not so much an outward deliverance as an inward regeneration.

There is here, too, a lesson always needed, namely, that men do not enter Christ's kingdom by the knowledge of the head, but by the renewal of the heart, though, of course, the former is the condition of the latter. Divine revelation is not the communication of a certain sum of doctrines. God reveals Himself to a world dead in sin as the living God, and by this revelation imparts His own life to them that believe.

"Thou hast come from God, a teacher." That much of faith had been reached by those for whom Nicodemus spoke, and this was grounded on His miracles. All the errorists who claim the Christian name confess about as much. Even vulgar Rationalists do not teach that Jesus was an ordinary man. Like the prophets, like John, the forerunner, i. 6, He came from God. Nicodemus does not acknowledge Him to be the Messiah. Nor is He recognized by this Pharisee as an ordinary Rabbi, one who had sat at the feet of Jewish masters, but as a Rabbi distinct from his contemporaries, one anointed by the Spirit, and sent by God to bring light to Israel. He has come from God in the capacity of teacher, authenticated by miracles. To Nicodemus He is an authority, a master, whose teaching is normative and binding. This much is clear and certain, although the answers and objections he subsequently raises seem inconsistent with this confession. Some have thought that the words "hast come from God" are equivalent to

the "one that is to come," which was the technical current term for the Messiah, but the title "teacher"—unless, as some hold, it be an attempt to *recall* what was implied in the previous clause—goes no further than the idea of a prophet, who has a message from God for His people.

The miracles had opened the eyes of Nicodemus and his friends. They were clear testimonials of Jesus' divine commission. The great prophets of the Old Testament had similar testimonials. The testimony of their lips, as in the case of the apostles, was accompanied by signs and wonders. John the Baptist formed an exception, "that Christ with His miracles might stand unmistakable in a unique exaltation before the eyes of Israel."

"These signs," emphatic, these particular, extraordinary signs. "Not one but many, not a small miracle, but many great ones were wrought by Jesus." As only one miracle was mentioned in chapter ii., the conversion of water into wine (unless the temple purification may be set down as a "sign"), "these" is supposed to refer to unrecorded miracles, which had just then taken place, cf. ii. 23. "At this Easter Festival Christ did not hold back His glory, but let power go forth from Him," and the miracles thus wrought made a profound impression even upon the rulers. They are before the mind and heart of Nicodemus. "It is impossible that they can be the work of a mere man, they point to a higher causality, they prove 'God to be with Him.'" He is a divinely-empowered agent. Peter uses this same phraseology, Acts x. 38, showing that whilst Nicodemus doubtless weighed his words, he did not deliberately guard himself against making too strong an admission. Some have charged that he began with a profession that the kingdom with its divine Head had come, but now he resorts to a rationalizing endeavor to reduce the heavenly kingdom to a school of instruction, and its founder to a mere teacher. Nicodemus may have vacillated, but the tricks of rationalism, which with one hand offers to Christ divine honors, and with the other reduces Him to an exalted teacher, had hardly come into play. Meyer: "From the miracles Nicodemus infers the assistance of God, and from this again that the worker of them is one sent from God." In a sense God is with every man, but when the expression is especially used of one, it means that God is with him in quite an extraordinary manner, casting into the shade God's ordinary presence with men, cf. ix. 16, 33.

What Nicodemus wished to learn we may infer from the nature of the reply given. This was of course not what he expected, but it must have been prompted by what he asked or by what was

back of his inquiries. He had only uttered the preface of what he meant to ask. Jesus anticipates him. As the reply concerns the kingdom of God, this must have been the subject upon which Nicodemus sought light. Various suggestions have been offered: Whether He was the Messiah? What relation He sustained to the kingdom announced by the Baptizer, etc.? Nebe holds that Nicodemus thought, something was still lacking to him in reference to the kingdom of heaven soon to be established, and he looked upon Jesus as a new law-giver, who would lay down additional requirements by the observance of which his holiness, cf., Matt. xix. 16, would be increased. He learned, however, that it was not by observances, or holiness, or character, but by a new life that one enters the kingdom. And life begins with a birth.

3. "Jesus answered . . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Some contend that the early part of the colloquy is missing here, and that the reporter, who may have been present, or received an account of the interview either from Jesus or from Nicodemus, hastened at once to the central theme discussed. Some find here a direct reply to the misapprehension of Nicodemus betrayed in addressing Jesus as "teacher:" I am not come as a teacher in the sense assumed by you, after the manner of teachers who occupy themselves with conceits and problems and speculations. Not to give men learning, but to effect their moral transformation, is Christ's mission. Meyer: "The Lord reads the question that is in Nicodemus' heart, and his answer at once lays hold of the anxiety of the questioner in its deepest foundation, and overturns all Pharisaic, Judaistic, merely human patch-work and pretense." Augustine: "Jesus would lead him from faith in his miracles to that faith which effects a moral transformation."

As we cannot know the various thoughts which in so great a mind may have pressed for utterance, we can of course not with certainty make a direct application of Jesus' answer. Luther: "Jesus smites him as with a thunderbolt, for his hopes and good opinions must be dashed to pieces. He lets him acknowledge that He is a teacher, but answers, since you take me for a prophet of the truth I will discharge my office and declare to you the truth. The truth is, you do not believe what you say, for you are still afraid—you say that I have come from God and you praise me, but what are you doing that the right result may follow?" Thus the Lord would undeceive the self-sufficient Pharisee and reveal to him the need of a spiritual revolution. The kingdom consists not in doing or not doing, but in becoming something. Not new works

are required, or new teachers, so much as a new life, a new being, a new creature and, therefore, a new birth.

With a mighty hand Jesus lays hold of the timid Nicodemus, and suddenly transfers him into a new world; but it is not likely that Nicodemus was seeking this, though there was doubtless a certain preparation in his mind for the surprising response vouchsafed him. So far as he was a Pharisee he was self-sufficient, but the Pharisee in him had not extinguished penitential yearnings, nor stopped his search for something beyond himself. The answer is indeed a thunderbolt, which shatters the whole world in which Nicodemus till then had his being. Something absolutely new must take place.

With the majestic Amen, Amen, Jesus flashes upon his dazed mind the unheard of condition for admission into the kingdom: "Except a man be born anew." If you would learn concerning the kingdom, this is the *sine qua non* of entering or experiencing the kingdom, a condition which has to do with the springs of our being: you must have a new birth. Whether *ἀνωθεν* is to be rendered "anew" or "from above," puzzles commentators. Those who press the latter cite v. 31; xix. 11, 23, where it undoubtedly means "from heaven," "from above," But it also occurs in the former sense, Luke i. 3; Acts xxvi. 5; Gal. iv. 9. The birth which accompanies faith is usually designated by John as a birth from God, i. 13; 1 John ii. 29; iii. 9; iv. 7; v. 1; iv. 18. Subjects of the kingdom of God must be born of God; to be born of God and to be born *ἀνωθεν* seem to be synonymous. It may be that the efficient cause is meant to be indicated by the term, but Nicodemus certainly understood it as "anew" — "can a man a second time enter," etc. He understood it of a man in mature life, having his natural birth repeated. The other truth is of course not excluded, but Jesus does not correct this understanding of it by the teacher of Israel.

Unless a new life is begotten in a man he must remain outside of the kingdom. This interpretation of *ἀνωθεν* is confirmed by the *usus loquendi* of Paul, who designates what is here spoken of as "born anew" by the terms "renewal," "a new creature," "new man," etc. Rom. xii. 2; Gal. vi. 15; Eph. iv. 23 f.; Coll. iii. 9; Tit. iii. v. Meyer, who renders "from above," admits that the representation of a repeated, a renewed birth, is both Pauline and Petrine, 1 Pet. iii. 23. The disciples faithfully reproduced the Master's teachings. Hengstenberg: "It is significant that all parallel passages speak of a second birth, none of a birth from above. Jesus Himself speaks in Matt. xix. 28 of a regeneration of the earth, which presupposes the regeneration of the human race."

A second birth is required. This like a sharp sword cuts into the heart of Nicodemus, while it reveals to all the law which conditions a subject of the kingdom. Your life, however beautiful, is not acceptable to God, and you are not saved. Obedience to the law does not justify you. No external conformity suffices. You must keep it perfectly with all the heart and without any defect. With all your good works you are dead, and with all your Pharisaic holiness you are damned. You must undergo an inner, personal change. It is a matter of being something, not of doing or leaving undone; not of new works to be done, but you yourself to be made new, God's new work; not to live differently, but to be born differently. Fruit and root lie not alongside one another. The tree must be renewed through a new root, if the fruit is to become good. Not the hand or the foot is to be improved, but the whole personality is to be changed.

Otherwise, nothing will avail and no one can see the kingdom, no one can have a perception or an experience of it. From the innermost foundation a new start must be made, out of a changed heart a new life must be built up. The new birth means that man must be what he was not before, that something not previously present, enter his being. A man must be changed into another man, the whole personality, understanding, thought and heart. In Matt. xviii. 3, the same demand is expressed by "except ye become like little children."

The idea of regeneration was not unknown to Seneca and Horace, but while they speak of *transformatio* and *mutatio*, they confound this idea after all with *emendatio*, and do not get beyond the development of what already exists. They have no conception of a change of a wild olive tree into a good one. They recognize that the tree is unsound, but they understand not the grafting in of a new branch on the old stock, they think only of moral improvement. See Nebe. So, too, the idea of a new birth was not foreign to the Rabbins. Now, to forestall all objections, Jesus selects as a figure for the radical change the act of begetting. It is not something to be rendered by man; but something to take place with him and in him. The child does not beget itself, it is begotten, and born—when capable of an independent existence. So the regeneration of man in the spirit of his mind, is not his own work, but a work of grace in him. Much would be gained in the understanding of this truth were the begetting emphasized rather than the birth, or at least always included in the figure.

4. "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb" . . .

Some interpret this as a serious protest, and cavil. Others: he simply prosecutes his inquiry, desiring to know how such a process was possible. Meyer: "Nicodemus was taken back, confused and really perplexed, partly by the powerful impression which Jesus produced on him generally, partly by the feeling of surprise at seeing his thoughts known, partly by the unexpected and incomprehensible 'born again,' in which, however, he has an anticipation that something miraculous is contained." Some: such a requirement is as impossible in the case of a man already old as for one to enter again, etc. This makes the two questions identical, one being direct, the other figurative. Some: Nicodemus understood and appreciated the Lord's demand. He submits himself to it. He wants to enter, but knows that he has not been regenerated, and being an old man, how can an old man become a new man? He is no longer susceptible and plastic, but he is cold, hard and his characteristic impress has become fixed. He may here and there be improved, in a measure, but a total inward renewal is impossible. Nebe: "the inner, ethical life has furthermore a natural basis; if the former is to be renewed, then the latter on which it rests must also be renewed." This physical second birth is impossible, how then can we have a spiritual second birth, on the basis of the old physical nature?

Insensibility to spiritual things illustrated from nature, shows itself not only in the Samaritan woman, John iv. 11, but also in the disciples, Mk. viii. 15 f., a proof of the blighting, deadening effect of that externalism which characterized the religion of the Pharisees. Truly, the letter killeth, and the great teacher of Israel may have deemed the first requirement of the gospel an absurdity; but it is doubtful if the Master would have continued the interview, if the inquirer had shown a cavilling or trifling spirit. Nicodemus was a man of candor. His objection is the serious perplexity of a heart seeking the truth.

5. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily . . . Except a man be born (out) of water and (out) of the Spirit, he cannot enter" . . .

As if taking no notice of the question as to the "how," our Lord with solemn emphasis repeats the announcement concerning the necessity. He takes all the force out of the objection by designating the factors through which the new birth is effected. Jesus, as a rule, does not give the answer sought. His answer comprehends vastly more than the narrow inquiry. In due time the direct answer appears of itself, while the inquirer has obtained far more than he sought. How the new birth is effected, that is not the

burning question, but the fact of it. "In matters of faith it is best first to experience, then to reflect and investigate."

All doubt as to the possibility of the change is removed by the Amen, Amen, of Jesus. Possible or impossible, it must take place. As for the "how," no more is given than "the elementary forces" which coöperate in the new birth, water and spirit. Calvin makes a hendiadys out of the two: the water is nothing else than the inner purgation of the Spirit: *Hanc vero aquam esse spiritum*. Some find a reminiscence of the creation, Gen. i. 2. In 2 Cor. v. 17 the regenerate man is called a new creation.

The primary question is, what does the water represent or refer to? Some: The Baptism of John. Von Hofmann: "Water and Spirit condition the new life. Water as represented in John; Spirit, as the same promised by him of his mighty Successor. Obedience to John's preaching led the subject to submit himself to the water of his baptism and to believe on the Christ to whom he bore witness, expecting his baptism of the Spirit. John's baptism was a means to Christ's." This view has regard to the historic circumstances amid which Nicodemus came to Jesus, and serves as a key to the passage. Nicodemus, of course, knew that John's lustrations pointed to the coming Messiah. He doubtless heard him dwell on the "Coming One," as baptizing not with water, but with the Holy Ghost.

It is claimed, however, that the discourse is not meant for Nicodemus as an individual, but as the representative of humanity, a condition set for every man without exception. John's baptism was but temporary. This verse is hardly a mere command to Nicodemus, that he should present himself for baptism to John.

There is no alternative but to accept water as meant here for Christian baptism—the outward token, form and medium through which the Holy Ghost effects the new birth. So the FF., Luther, Tholuck, Meyer, Hengstenberg and Godet. "The disciples of Jesus were already engaged in ministering the ordinance, iii. 22; iv. 1. But Jesus could also by anticipation speak of being begotten of water, pointing forward to the institution of baptism, which He would ordain." Knowing of John's baptism, Nicodemus could divine that an ordinance similar to that was yet to be established by Him. Or, similar lustrations in the Old Testament and metaphorical references to them, Ps. li. 4; Ps. lli. 15; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Zech. xiii. 1; Mal. iii. 3, as means of cleansing from sin, would occur to him.

Nebe: "The birth from water must have been regarded by this scribe as an act of sin-cleansing, forgiveness, through which a new

nature was to be created. Out of water, *i. e.*, out of holy baptism and out of the Holy Ghost, shall regeneration proceed." The particle "and" must not be pressed as implying that both factors simultaneously contribute their respective parts. The truth is simply this, that "in a normal regeneration both concur." Acts ii. 38 presents baptism as the medium by which men receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and Tit. iii. 5 calls baptism "the washing of regeneration, and the renewal of the Holy Ghost." Note, also, Christ's baptism by John.

Regeneration is indispensable. It results from water and the Holy Ghost. Water alone is not baptism, but water in union with the Holy Ghost is. Luther: "The word in connection with the water, and the word is instinct with the Spirit," cf. vi. 63. The two are conjoined by Christ, "Go ye, teach all nations," etc. Matt. xxviii. 20.

"Enter" is stronger and also more general than "see," v. 3. One must do more than learn of the kingdom. He must enter it.

6. "That which is born (out) of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born (out) of the Spirit is spirit."

The neuter form is adopted to indicate the very first beginnings of life in the embryo before sex can be predicated. Luke i. 35; Matt. i. 20, cf. v. 8, where the masculine recurs. Some hold that it implies the universal application of the truth. John vi. 37, 39. From the natural birth springs only natural life; it is the connection that first shows the character of this life. As Jesus requires a complete transformation, it is obvious that human nature has become corrupted. The *σάρξ*, "flesh," that is, our nature under the pollution of sin, is anthithetical to the *πνεῦμα*, the Holy Spirit.

Nebe: "Everything born from the natural man, everything conceived by his own reason, born from his own will, everything that roots in him and springs forth from him, bears on its face the stamp that it is derived from him, that it is of his nature and character." But as flesh produces flesh, so does Spirit create spirit. Everything born of the flesh being flesh, there can be in man, and from man, no salvation for himself. And this again Virgil and Seneca recognized, though they had no conception as to a proper remedy. Sin had, in their view, so deeply penetrated human nature, that it might be indeed temporarily repressed, but it could not be overcome. Luther: "The world has in all ages troubled itself about the salvation of the soul." Heathenism was despair. It knew nothing of a Spirit, a life-potency, that proceeds from the living God, "to plant in the dead heart and in the world subjected to death, that life which can never be overcome by death. There is

a living Spirit who has power to beget, and who does not beget weak and languishing creatures, but transplants, imparts Himself." Hence, what is born of the Spirit has a spiritual character exempt from the *sarx*, which generates evil. It is "impelled, filled, ruled by the Holy Ghost." There are two heads to the human race, Adam and Christ, one the source of sin and death, the other the spring of righteousness. So there are also two generating potencies: flesh and Spirit. Each produces its own kind. If a miracle were to repeat the first birth, the result would be only the same old flesh. In each case there is first the natural, then the spiritual. Whatever comes by the ordinary course of generation is tainted with sin, has become subject to the flesh, is in a state of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins. Without renewal by the Holy Ghost it is lost and dead, and, of course, cannot become a subject of God's kingdom. Whatever is born of the Spirit can. Not what is born of water, but what is born of the Spirit, can enter. Water being merely the outward medium which conducts the Spirit, is not mentioned as an agent in producing the new birth. There is no *opus operatum*, no magical effect produced by the water. The contrast, besides, is merely between the flesh and the Spirit. By the former is meant in the New Testament sometimes original sin, sometimes the consequences of original sin.

7. "Marvel not . . . Ye must be born anew."

Reason cannot grasp this extraordinary doctrine. It fills Nicodemus with amazement and perplexity. Turn the matter over in his mind as much as he will, it is incomprehensible. Jesus says, Why are you dazed with wonder here? The world abounds in mysteries. If you believe other things you cannot understand, why not this also?

Evidently Nicodemus recognized the demand of regeneration as having reference specifically to him. But as he represented a class Jesus now uses the plural. Some emphasize "ye"—"ye," not "we." Jesus was not born of the flesh, as men are, not corrupted by it, and therefore required no second birth. At his baptism the divine approval was signalized, but there was no intimation of renewal.

Illustrations without number could have been selected from nature, but Jesus takes that of the wind, which is not only quite common and intelligible, but also symbolic of the Holy Spirit. The same term in a number of languages designates alike wind and spirit. The double sense of the word makes the analogy apt and striking.

8. "The wind bloweth (breathes) where it willeth, and thou hearest its roar (voice), . . . So is every one that is born (out) of the Spirit."

A number of ancient expositors render "the Spirit breathes," and they hold the subject of comparison not the wind and spiritual birth, but the Spirit and those born of Him. Bengel: properly Spirit. For He, not the wind, has a voice and a will. And from Him we are born, and he who is born from Him is like Him.

The operation of the Holy Ghost is to be illustrated. "The man is seized by the humanly indefinable Spirit, but knows not whence He cometh to him and whither He leadeth him. Πνεῦμα is neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament the usual word for wind. That is ἀνεμος, a violent wind. Some understand here "nothing fierce nor violent, but all is measured in His operation"—a gentle breath, not felt, but heard. Cf. however, Eph. iv. 14; Jud. 12; 2 Pet. ii. 17. Some find the point of comparison in the incomprehensibility of both. Some find three points: (1) The free self-determining action of the Spirit (where it willeth), 1 Cor. xii. 11; John v. 21. (2) The felt experience of His action by the subject. (3) The twofold incomprehensibility of the origin and goal. "Man is conscious of the gracious action which results in the new birth; but knows not whence it is; of its drawing, but knows not whereunto." To understand this, according to Meyer, "man requires the previously experienced working of divine grace, and faith ensuing thereupon." The key to the analogy seems to lie in the quickening, purifying, invigorating power of the air, "where it will," now here, now there. The wind is personified as the free agent, cf. 1 Cor. xii. 2.

"So is every one." "A concrete mode of expression." So is it with reference to the mystery of the new birth. The presence of the Spirit is as unmistakable as that of the wind, and so are its effects, but the hidden beginnings of spirit life and the blessed goal of eternal life pass understanding. The action of the Spirit is so subtle, so mysterious, that it is sometimes mistaken for our own inner activity. Fanaticism undertakes to diagnose and define the whole process of regeneration. But our Lord assigns it to the realm of mysteries.

In the "voice" of the Spirit there may be an allusion to the word, which is the Spirit's voice. The freedom of the Spirit's action must be noted. He is a free, self-determining power, working with His own pleasure and measure, not confined to any order of men, or restricted to any vessels. Only One can say, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, that is the Lord of the Spirit. He works in secret beginnings, but His power proclaims itself to the world.

Those born again of Him praise Him with tongues of flame among men. The new-born soul reveals the work of the Holy Ghost though He may know little of its origin, and less yet of its glorious end. Who knows where the first seed-corn of grace was deposited? Who knows what the harvest will be?

It is like the passage from unconscious to conscious existence. "The new birth is not the beginning, the immediate beginning of a new life, but the completion of a process, of whose first beginnings we are unconscious," although the new birth itself is again but the beginning of a process. The great indispensable matter is that it takes place.

9. "Nicodemus answered . . . How can this take place?"

Some see here Pharisaic pride. Some, Jewish obduracy. Others: hesitation, rationalistic unbelief; or, again, a proper spirit of inquiry, a hearty desire to learn. According to v. 12, Nicodemus did not believe. The yearnings of his heart which brought him to Jesus are not yet satisfied. He has not yet come to the light. "He wants to understand and then to be reborn; this is reversing the order. Regeneration can only be understood by him who has experienced it."

The question is not the same as in v. 4. Regeneration as a fact is recognized, believed in, but Nicodemus wants more light on the nature of its consummation.

10. "Jesus answered . . . Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not this?"

Lightfoot held this to be sarcasm. But Jesus seems not to view Nicodemus as an inflated, conceited wiseacre. He sits at His feet like a docile child. "The Redeemer's heart is bleeding at this disclosure; these are tones of the deepest sadness which we now hear." Jesus, Himself, in amazement and sorrow now becomes the inquirer. "Art thou" etc? The article is emphatic: "the teacher" *par excellence*. Nicodemus was pre-eminent among the many doctors of Israel. Bengel calls him a veteran, who had more auditors than others. Some: A teacher representing the whole teaching function of Israel, since we have no proof of Nicodemus' supereminence among the multitude of Scribes. "Israel" has here its theocratic and spiritual meaning, not the Jewish nation, but the spiritual, chosen element of the nation, in accordance with the original import of the term, and God's relation to the people, i. 31, 50; xii. 13. When John refers to the nation he always says "Jews," which expresses the hostile attitude they assumed toward the Lord. Nathaniel is the only Jew who is called an Israelite, i. 48. Nicodemus is a parallel case. "The

teacher of Israel" is a title of the highest honor, yet he is ignorant of the nature of the new birth. Can it be that so pious a man, so wise a teacher, who himself is seeking salvation, should be so blind regarding this fundamental truth? Marvelous ignorance in a man of marvelous attainments! What must be the darkness that envelopes the masses, when one standing on the pinnacle of knowledge, and charged with the instruction of the people, does not know the first letter of the Messianic A, B, C! Regeneration, it is claimed, was demanded in the Old Testament. "The circumcision of the heart, which in Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6, is laid down as the necessary badge of all true members of the God-chosen people, is but another expression for regeneration." Cf. Ps. xxxiii. 15. God changeth the heart, 1 Sam. x. 9; xvi. 13. He promises to give a new heart and a new spirit, to remove the old heart of stone, etc. Ezek. xi. 19; xviii. 31; xxxvi. 26; Jer. iv. 4; xxxi. 33. Not only the divine side of the work is presented, but also the human, Ps. li. 12. It looks as if the teacher of Israel had failed to study the Scriptures. His failure to understand is unpardonable, because it is voluntary ignorance. How poorly such a teacher is qualified to receive the new truth, which he looks for from this Teacher whom he acknowledges to have a commission from God!

11. "Verily, verily, . . . We speak that we know, and we attest that we have seen; and our testimony ye do not receive."

This is emphatic and impressive, as shown by the double "Amen." But why these plurals? Answer:

- a. He speaks of Himself and the Father, or, the Spirit.
- b. He speaks of Himself and the prophets, or, John the Baptist.
- c. He speaks of teachers like Himself.
- d. The plural may be rhetorical merely.

Jesus never uses the editorial "we." Alford: "I am one of these who attest that of which they have personal knowledge (plural of category), and whose testimony ought therefore to be believed." It is not rational but irrational, not to accept proper testimony. Nebe imagines that the disciples of Jesus, "sitting around Him in a circle," are included in the plural. To the objection that they themselves had as yet no full knowledge of regeneration, he replies: "Immature as they may have been, they were in possession of the kingdom. Something new has taken place in their hearts, though this new has not attained perfection, but is only in its first feeble beginnings."

While testimony is here, it is not accepted. Although it is testimony resting on personal knowledge, testimony of eye-witnesses in

every way competent to give it, they put no faith in it. Such a course is most unreasonable and extraordinary. "Ye receive not,"—also plural—referring to all for whom Nicodemus spoke. The most faithful and competent witness that ever appeared is rejected. Israel refuses the testimony of the Messenger sent by Israel's God. What a bitter disappointment, for the Lord to come to His own, and His own receive Him not!

12. "If I have told you the things pertaining to earth, and ye believe not, how will you believe, . . . the things pertaining to heaven?"

Plural adjectives denote whole classes: earthly truths, heavenly truths. We might paraphrase: things transpiring on earth, those transpiring in heaven.

"If ye believe not," is the same as, if ye do not receive our testimony. To receive testimony is to believe it. The former expression, a well-known term in daily use, suggests the new one, "believe." Faith is receiving what Christ speaks. It is not perception, nor reason, nor knowledge; it is reception of divine truth and reliance upon Him who bears it. It is far above our knowledge, for it avails itself of the knowledge of One who is from God, who is infallible.

The difference between the earthly and the heavenly is not a difference of form, the first figurative, the second figureless. Jesus does not from this on dispense with figures. He compares His saving death on the cross to the uplifted serpent. And this must belong to the heavenly things. The difference is one of content, of subjects. Of earthly things He has spoken; of heavenly things He is now to speak. He has spoken of the earthly side of salvation, regeneration, which takes place on earth, and is capable, therefore, of being contemplated and believed. The term heaven occurs three times in v. 13. Henceforth He speaks of His unique person, His death, matters which belong to the heavenly category, the heavenly side of salvation, things transpiring in the eternal counsel of God, regarding His only Son and the provision of salvation; for Jesus is He who came from heaven, is in heaven, ascends into heaven. How much greater yet this mystery than that of regeneration!

As the new birth is the work of the Holy Ghost, this might be reckoned to the heavenly things, yet it is accomplished on earth; proceeding through repentance and faith, it is a change taking place within the earthly realm of our moral life. To the category of heavenly things "belong the divine decrees for man's redemption and final blessedness." He had spoken of things which could be cognized by the outer and the inner senses, of whose reality men

could outwardly and inwardly convince themselves—and yet they did not believe. What faith might be expected, when He should turn to things of a heavenly, invisible character, which only the eye of faith could perceive!

13. "And no one has ascended into heaven, except he who descended . . . who is in heaven."

Of such a heavenly character are these things that no one knows them except He who sustains a unique relation to heaven—and Him they do not believe. No other can reveal the heavenly things. He, therefore, may demand faith—He the only trustworthy Teacher and faithful Witness. If men do not accept His testimony, heaven must remain forever closed. What follows seems to emphasize the reference to His exclusive and exalted relation. He is the Logos who interprets the Father, i. 18. It is a question whether "heaven" has in each clause the same sense. Some seek to give it a spiritual sense, denoting Christ's constant communion with heaven. But He reveals here His unique personality, His unparalleled position. He is God manifest in the flesh, the Logos become flesh. He has not arrived at eternal truth by any process whatever, He has possessed it from the beginning, from eternity, i. 18; vi. 46; iii. 31, 32; viii. 38.

The Perfect, "no one has ascended," may be understood thus: No one has yet ascended; only He who descended from heaven, who, in spite of His descent, is ever in heaven, is capable, therefore, of teaching heavenly things. The cases of Enoch and Elijah are not pertinent, since they did not ascend to heaven to view things there and then return to report concerning them. There is only One who has been to heaven, who is, therefore capable of bearing testimony in relation to heavenly things. Matt. xi. 27. Jesus' full revelation of Himself might have blinded the eyes of Nicodemus. So he does not say, "except I," but "except he who came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven." Nicodemus must by this time have had a foreboding of who He was.

"The Son of man" is a Messianic title, but it may have been selected here, because "this name indicates Him as the only one capable of testifying concerning heavenly things, since it shows Him to be the Son of God descended into the flesh. The Son of man came from the bosom of the Father, when He became man."

"Who is in heaven," not whose place is in heaven, but who at the time was (is) in heaven. His whole life between the descent and the ascent continued in heaven. He united with Himself God, whose dwelling-place is heaven; with man, whose dwelling-place is

earth. So that he ever was in heaven—not once upon a time did He have a glimpse of heavenly things, but He views them continually. He was, He is, He will be, in heaven. He is so identified with heaven that in 14 ff. He represents Himself as the fountain of life. The essential unity between the Son and the Father was never suspended.

Jesus is, however, not only the witness for faith, "He is Himself the object of faith, for the salvation of the world rests in His person."

14, 15. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent . . . so must the Son of man be lifted up: in order that whosoever believeth in him may have eternal life."

Nicodemus addressed Jesus as teacher, and this He is above all others; but his attention is now directed to His person as the Saviour of the world through the sacrifice of Himself. The teaching of Christ does not save, the lifting up of Christ is what pre-eminently concerns our faith: "Christ and Him crucified." The discourse passes from the subjective condition of entrance into the kingdom to the objective condition, which renders that entrance possible. V. 13 speaks of the personality of the bearer of salvation, these verses, of the work of salvation itself, His being lifted up, and faith in Him the uplifted one.

Jesus takes His Pharisaic scholar into the Old Testament, so rich in Messianic types. Wisd. xvi. 6 calls the brazen serpent "symbol of salvation." The history of it is given Num. xxi. 6 ff. The points of comparison are: the uplifted serpent, the uplifted Son of man; the result of the looking, the result of the believing.

Nebe further presses the article, "*the serpent*:" Christ is the essential antitype of the brazen serpent, that particular serpent. The Egyptians, Greeks and Romans viewed the serpent as a symbol of healing. But throughout the Old and New Testaments it is the symbol of cunning and subtlety. Gen. iii. 1; Matt. x. 16, the synonym of moral poison. The brazen serpent was like the others, but not essentially the same. Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet without sin. "He was made sin for us, who Himself knew no sin." The brazen serpent represented the poison which was destroying those bitten. The poison was counteracted by one made in the likeness of venomous serpents, though itself devoid of poison. So Christ, the representative of sinners, was nailed to the cross, and by being thus uplifted gives salvation to those trusting in Him. Rom. viii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 24.

"The being lifted up" refers alike to the cross and to the heavenly throne, the former being the ladder by which Christ

mounts the throne of His glory. Phil. ii. 6-8. In xii. 33 the same word is interpreted as signifying what death He was to die. *Δέι.* Like the serpent, so *must* the Son of man be lifted up. It was necessary that the sinless, spotless Son of man, in the likeness of sinful flesh, be lifted up to be crucified and glorified. Luke xxiv. 26. The necessity was grounded partly in prophecy, partly in the divine purpose. The prophecy itself was based on this purpose.

“In order that” (as every one who looked upon the serpent lived, so) every one who turns the eye of faith to Christ, might be saved. Not every one is helped and delivered by the sacrifice on the cross, but only those who view it with the eye of faith. There the look of faith and prayer rescued from temporal death to temporal life, here it rescues from eternal death to eternal life.

The practical treatment of the Pericope involves the treatment of regeneration in connection with the Trinity. Since it is the first Festival of the second Half-Year, it may also be confined to regeneration, for the *Semestre Ecclesiæ* aims in the presentation of the Lord Christ at nothing less than that this Christ for us become the Christ in us.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

REGENERATION, THE WORK OF THE TRIUNE GOD.

1. According to the will of the Father.
2. Through faith in the Son.
3. From the Holy Spirit.

Or,

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. God devised it. | 1. The Father draws to the Son. |
| 2. The Son mediates it. | 2. The Son proclaims the gospel. |
| 3. The Holy Ghost applies it. | 3. The Holy Ghost makes us
new creatures. |

THE THREE FACTORS OF SALVATION ARE

1. The truth (taught by Christ).
2. Baptism.
3. The Holy Spirit.

REGENERATION ATTESTS THE TRINITY.

1. The Father sends the Son.
2. The Son bestows the Holy Spirit.

CHRIST'S TESTIMONY TO REGENERATION. HE MAKES IT

1. Necessary. 2. Possible. 3. Actual.

WHAT IS REGENERATION?

1. The entrance into the Kingdom.
2. The work of water and the Holy Ghost.
3. The renewal of the entire man.
4. The fruit of the Spirit.

WHAT GIVES ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

1. Not the birth from the flesh, but regeneration from the Spirit.
2. Not the will of man, but the work of grace.
3. Not any conditions of faith, but the fruit of faith.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke xvi. 19-31.

NEBE: "The Trinity period is the period of instruction. Our life is the period of learning. It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment. The Half-Year which brings under review the great divine deeds which have occurred for our salvation, closes with the requirement of regeneration. Now we are taught to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, to redeem the time and not to neglect the means of grace, since our fate in eternity will depend upon our use of the day of grace and the means of grace. Our text moves altogether in the sphere of these earnest thoughts. It sharpens at once the eye and the conscience."

Whether we have parable or history here has always been a question. The story cannot strictly be called a parable, for that takes its imagery from a lower sphere, employing an event in the natural life of man to exhibit a mystery in the kingdom of God. Here the figure which is to illustrate the heavenly truth is itself taken from that sphere. If the narrative is an example, we may suppose that it is not fiction, but an occurrence in actual life. There is to-day a tradition of a Lazarus and a certain rich man having lived at Jerusalem in those times. Some have suggested that the narrative concerns the High-Priest Caiaphas, who had five brothers-in-law. Some: Herod Antipas. Jesus was not wont to pass sentence by indirection on any one.

The connection shows that the parable was aimed at the Pharisees. It gave them a lesson in ethics. In v. 14 they are called lovers of money, and they stand murmuring at the head of both these parable chapters. Some find beneficence to be the main thing urged in the parable. Others: The Lord shows whither riches will lead when one does not, according to v. 9, use them to "make himself friends." But in Abraham's reply not a word occurs about neglected deeds of charity. Neander: "The soul sunk in worldliness can by no new revelation, by no miracle, be brought to repentance and lasting faith, which is impossible without a thorough change of heart." Bleek: "An admonition to all who

live in forgetfulness of God, especially rich worldlings, to look within themselves, fix their mind upon God and His Kingdom, repent betimes, and be moved not to depend on special signs and wonders, but to cling to the word of God in the Scriptures." Nebe: "The Pharisees had shown themselves utterly devoid of love and mercy. In chapter xv. Jesus points them to the mercy of God the Son in the Good Shepherd, of God the Holy Ghost in the woman sweeping, of God the Father in the father of the prodigal. Chapter xvi. admonishes men to be wise and make friends in this life, for the right use of this life determines our eternal destiny."

19. "Now there was a certain man, rich and wearing purple and fine linen, living in mirth and splendor every day :"

The man had his fill, as shown by his conduct. His clothing was purple and linen, a combination much affected by the Hebrew women. Prov. xxxi. 22. The purple, which anciently was red, was worn outside, the linen was white and worn underneath, forming a beautiful mixture of colors, a proof of finetaste and of the selection of costly material. Purple woven of wool and dyed a bright color was worn by princes and nobles. The *byssus* was the finest quality of linen (or cotton), soft, delicate, white and very costly. The best quality was produced in India. Joseph wore it when exalted to high station. It was the vesture of the Egyptian priests, the glory of distinguished Roman ladies, and greatly prized by the Israelites, Exod. xxviii. 39. The saints in heaven, Rev. xix. 8, are arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright.

With this clothing corresponded throughout his style of living. He had a daily round of mirth and gaiety, was free from care and want. There is no charge of vice or shame or profligacy. His life was marked by wealth, splendor and mirth—but it was passed *λαμπρῶς*, decently, magnificently, gloriously. Yet here is the condemnation. In a world of suffering, want and wretchedness, a man to whom Heaven committed great wealth, consumed it on clothing and magnificent self-indulgence. The man is damned already who enjoys life for himself, even though he fall not into gross sin. Think of an immortal soul, bearing the impress of God, giving itself up to eating and drinking, to wearing fine apparel, and indulging in merriment! Luther: "He is not condemned for wearing costly raiment or having luxuriant feasts. Solomon, Esther, David and Daniel were arrayed in splendid vestments. But he is condemned because his heart hankered after them, they were made the object of his existence, the choice of his affections. All his joy, pleasure and delight consisted in them. They were his idols. This is brought out by the adverb 'daily.' He kept up

this magnificence all the time—a continual round of display and indulgence, not compelled thereto by office or position, or the interests of his neighbor, but simply because he made a god of his belly. This betrays the secret sin of his heart, unbelief. For where faith is it does not seek splendid apparel or costly viands, or any other good, honor, pleasure or power that is not God Himself; it seeks and clings to nothing except God alone, the chief good, indifferent to high or low living, splendid or poor clothing. But where unbelief is, man pursues and clings to these things and does not rest until he possesses them, and when he has them he pampers himself with them and never asks how his heart stands toward God, what he is to have or hope for in Him. This is the secret sin which the Gospel reproves and condemns, but the rich man does not see it.”

No name is mentioned. One would have expected the rich man’s name to have been perpetuated. Bengel: “Lazarus is known by his name in heaven. The rich man is not thought of by any name. His genealogy is known only in this world.”

20, 21. “And a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate . . . yea even the dogs came and licked his sores.”

“The poor ye have always with you.” They live close by the rich, that the latter may have in them an object of mercy, that love may have a field for its exercise, that faith may verify itself by works. The name of the poor man is given. The memory of the just is blest. Their names are written in the book of life. “Lazarus.” *Nomen et omen* holds good here. The name is generally regarded=Eleazar in Hebrew, later abridged into Lazar, the meaning of which is “God help.” A few render it “helpless.” The name is doubtless an expression of the man’s condition.

“Was laid at his door”—a graphic portraiture of his wretched state. He was unable to drag himself even with the aid of crutches to the door which opened into the rich man’s palace. And there was evidently no one to pity his helplessness, for even those who bore him to the rich man’s premises, instead of tenderly providing him a comfortable resting-place and interceding for assistance, threw him down as one casts down a burden of which he is weary, and left him alone to his fate. “The rich man had to see him, for he could not pass the threshold of his house without going by him, but his heart felt no emotion for the poor man’s plight.” A heart of stone, it would seem, must be touched by the sight of his running sores and the evidence of terrible suffering, yet there is no record of a word of sympathy or an expression of any concern for him. The poor man casts a yearning look

through the portal into the inner court of the palace; he suffers hunger, sees the profusion of meat and drink, and thinks of the crumbs which fall from the table and are either trodden under foot, or eaten up by the dogs. With these he would have been satisfied. The poor are easily satisfied in contrast with the rich, who can never get enough of expensive food and clothing. Expositors are not agreed as to whether he obtained anything. Some: The servants brought him something, but not enough. Luther: He let him lie and gave him nothing. Had he but told his servants, if he did not care to extend relief by his own hands! How long he was lying there, we know not.

DeWette thinks nothing at all is said about what was done or not done, but only about a lot and a condition. Meyer: "The following ἀλλὰ καὶ κ. τ. λ. shows that the craving was not satisfied, which moreover, presents itself *a priori*, according to the purpose of the description, as the most natural thing."

"Yea," or "but." Meyer: "Instead of being satisfied, even still the dogs came, etc.,—an aggravation of the misery, and that, too, not merely as depicting the negative evil of neglect, but also positively: the unclean beasts, and their licking aggravating the pain of the helpless creature." The action of the dogs thus becomes the climax of his misery—affording the strongest contrast to what is narrated in v. 22. So utterly forsaken was this miserable beggar, that there was even no one to keep away the dogs, and those unclean animals treated him like a carcass.

Other expositors understand the dogs as showing sympathy, etc., in contrast with the heartlessness of their master, offering some alleviation. But, doubtless, we are to see here a contrast between unmitigated woe in this life and unmitigated woe in the life to come.

22. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels . . . and the rich man also died" . . .

The tables are turned. The misery of this world does not last forever, neither do its pleasures. The poor man dies, the rich man also. Both exchange conditions. The poor man died first, having, as Nebe suggests, in this already an advantage. He passes the sooner out of his misery. With the hour of death came also the angels of God, like servants, to bear Lazarus aloft on their hands into the palace of glory. They are ever sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation. According to Meyer, he is not buried, but instead thereof is carried away by the angels, and that, too, into Abraham's bosom, where he lives once more and is blessed, v. 24 f. He declares "the usual device, that the burial of

the poor man was left without mention, as being worthy of no consideration, an evasion," which objection Von Hofmann pronounces absurd. Some have suggested that the body simply received no burial. The body serves no purpose in the parable.

The heathen believed that the souls of all the departed were brought by higher beings to their permanent abode, and the later Jews, that the righteous were led by angels into the land of the blest, but we have no proof that either heathen or Jews included the body in this passage. "*Justi, quorum animæ eo feruntur per angelos.*" So the Targum. The poor man for whom no mortal cared, is blest with the guardianship and the service of heavenly spirits; for not one angel, but many, came to the pious beggar as he closed his eyes. Rabbi Meir speaks of three hosts of angels escorting the righteous into the heavenly peace.

"Into Abraham's bosom" they bore his soul. Quite another resting-place from the hard stone in front of the rich man's gate. But there is a yet fuller contrast. "In Abraham's bosom," John xiii. 23, implies that he who suffered hunger and friendlessness is now at the heavenly feast. He who vainly pined for a few crumbs regales himself now with Abraham at the heavenly banquet. Matt. viii. 11. Others, referring to John i. 18, interpret the expression as indicating Lazarus' nearness to Abraham, resting like a dearly-loved son in his bosom. But the aim of the parable is to present the sharpest and fullest contrast. The picture yonder is the complete counterpart of the picture here. Here hunger, there a feast. Here one is friendless, there he has heavenly company. Here no one to minister to him, there a noble host of spirits. Men cast him down, angels bear him up.

Luther calls these angels *Kindermägdlein* (maids for children). Some regard them here as only an embellishment of the narrative, the chief thought being that Lazarus passed to the bosom of Abraham. Nothing of the kind is taught elsewhere in the New Testament, but such an idea has undoubtedly its root in the Old Testament, Ps. xci. 11 f. Rothe said, there ought to be no noise around a dying bed, so that the angels could draw near.

To an Israelite there could be no more exalted or glorious position than the bosom of Abraham, the renowned founder of their nation, the friend of God. It is an oft-recurring thought in the Rabbins that the souls of Israelites are borne into the bosom of Abraham. Since Abraham sojourned with Isaac and Jacob in the Garden of Eden, the Rabbins regarded the bosom of Abraham the same as paradise. So Luther: "In which all the just are received after death." But where it is, in heaven or in hades, on this ex-

positors differ. On the Hebrew view of the condition after death, which did not differ materially from the heathen view, see Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*. Homer and Virgil divided the underworld into two great realms, Elysium and Tartarus, the region of the blest, and the region of the damned. It is pictured throughout as a shadowy state, a pale, gloomy existence. Memory is not wholly extinguished, but all is like a dream. The place was regarded both among the heathen and among the Jews, as in the interior of the earth. Sheol (the Hebrew term) is to be sought in and under the earth, Num. xvi. 30, 33; 1 Sam. xxviii. 13; Ps. lxiii. 10; Ezek. xxvi. 20, xxxii. 18; Job. xxvi. 5, etc. It holds the good and the bad indiscriminately. Samuel, as well as the rebel Korah sank into this. It is no inviting spot, Ps. vi. 6. All is darkness there. The dead are shadows, Job. x. 21 f. It is a land of silence, where they praise not God. Job. iii. 17 ff.; Ps. xciv. 17; cxv. 17; Is. xxxviii. 18 f. A glimmer of hope, however, even in the Old Testament, breaks through this darkness. They who go down into the pit are gathered to their fathers. They go where they can be permanently united with these. Gen. xxv. 17; xxxv. 29; xlix. 33; Num. xx. 24; xxvii. 13; xxxi. 2; Deut. xxxii. 50. "This is the first beginning. The morning breaks. Faith boldly lays hold of God, the living God, Ps. xvi. 17; xlix. 73; Prov. xv. 24; xii. 28; Ecc. iii. 21. Prophecy beholds the awakening from the slumber of death, Is. xxvi. 19, the swallowing up of death, Is. xxv. 8; a redemption from sheol, Hosea xiii. 14." There are no clear passages in the Old Testament indicating a division in sheol, whereas the New Testament puts this beyond question. There is a realm of joy into which Lazarus was borne, and into which our Lord brought the dying thief, Luke xxiii. 43; cf. 2 Cor. xii. 4; Rev. ii. 7, but also a realm of torment where the rich man is found, and which is viewed as a prison, 2 Pet. ii. 9; Eph. iv. 8; 1 Pet. iii. 19. Both places are to be sought in hades, whose keys Jesus Christ holds in His hand, Rev. i. 18, into which He Himself descended, Acts ii. 27, 31, alike sojourning with the thief in Paradise, and preaching to the spirits in prison.

Hades is the universal receptacle, but with two divisions: paradise or the bosom of Abraham, and the place of torment. Meyer: "Abraham is in paradise and has there received Lazarus to his bosom." Under the influence of Origen, Augustine and Gregory the Great, there was developed the doctrine of an intermediate state for the purification and perfection of souls, purgatory. This the Reformers repudiated. The period intermediate between death and the resurrection had no interest for Luther.

"The dead are beyond all time, hour, year, place." All he recognized as certain was that "the souls of the just after this life are in the hands of God." The Dogmaticians taught that the judgment takes place immediately after death. Baier: "Immediately after they are separated from the body, the souls of the pious attain essential blessedness, but the souls of the wicked enter upon their own damnation."

This has again become a subject of controversy, especially among Congregationalists and in the Presbyterian Church, where Dr. Briggs has contested the doctrine of the Westminster Confession, that the souls of the righteous are at death "made perfect in holiness." Our passage makes it clear that an impassable gulf separates the two realms.

But it may be objected that Abraham speaks to his "son," to one of God's people, who knew Moses and the prophets, who had the means of grace. "The rich man is forever lost, because he shut himself out from the grace of God," and Paul's declaration, 2 Cor. v. 10, is referred not to the world in general, but to Christians before whose eyes Jesus Christ was evidently set forth and brought into personal contact with them, that they might decide for or against Him. It is contended that, if Jesus Christ is appointed Judge of the quick and the dead, and men's eternal doom is to be determined by their personal relation to Him, no one can fall under His sentence, who has not had Christ brought before Him for acceptance or rejection. Such unfortunate souls "must hereafter have time and place to determine themselves for or against Christ." Only for those who have here stumbled at Christ and thus decided against Him can there be no future probation.

The primary error in this reasoning lies in the claim that only the presentation of the personal historic Christ forms the decisive moment in a man's destiny. The pious Jews under the Old Testament had no knowledge of a personal Christ, but they had the Christ idea, they had the conception of redemption, of God graciously visiting His people, and Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, though without any knowledge of a personal Christ. Lazarus had here entered into covenant with God, and thus entered the portals of peace. Dives did not redeem the time of grace, he neglected the means of grace, and when death came he passed into eternal torment.

"He was buried." This is not simply an embellishment of the narrative, nor is it meant as a contrast to Lazarus being borne away by angels, for he was doubtless likewise buried. But his burial was of the plainest, simplest character, while the rich man

had a splendid, characteristic funeral. That was, however, the last of pomp or luxury for him. And it was no advantage, nor alleviation to him. He was already in torment.

23. "And in hades he lifted up his eyes . . . in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off" . . .

"Hades," the place of abode for departed souls, embracing Paradise for the pious and Gehenna for the wicked. That hades in itself does not mean the place of punishment alone, is evident from Acts ii. 27, 31, cf. Luke x. 15. The context shows, however, that the reference here is to hell, Gehenna.

Nebe: "We stand here before the threshold of a sanctuary, before which hangs otherwise an impenetrable veil." Hence the question, does the Lord remove the veil that we may see invisible realities, or have we here only figures without any essential reality? In opposition to the latter interpretation, which denies the dogmatic use of the passage for connoting the abode and condition of the departed, Thomasius, Kahnis, Nebe, and others hold that such a use of the passage is proper, that this transition into the other world is the climax of the narrative. It pictures before our eyes the judgment in the future world. "And this judgment can not be set forth without bringing into light the condition of those who are judged." Although Jesus is speaking to Jews, and in accordance with Jewish conceptions, we are not justified in viewing the whole as no more than the opinions of the age. "Jesus shared these views and here gives them eternal validity." They are realities of the supersensuous world.

If we translate "lifting up his eyes in hell," the interpretation is that he thus lifting his eyes found himself in hell. Or, we may render he sees Abraham in hades. The subject of his vision was in hades. Thus the rich man and Lazarus are in one and the same realm, only in different sections. Others: Hades can here mean only the region of the damned, Gehenna. Nebe says, we are not justified in merely transferring the Old Testament views of a two-fold hades into the New Testament. The righteous of the New Testament who have fallen asleep, and the spirits of the just (of the Old Testament) made perfect, are no longer in sheol; they are in heaven, xxiii. 43—the mansions Christ has gone to prepare are in the Father's house. Thither He assures them He is going, in order to draw them to Himself, that where He is, there also His servants may be. That house is not in hades. John xiv. 2. Christ did not go to the place of the departed spirits in general. He ascended into heaven, after He had descended into hell. Christ sits at the right hand of the majesty in heaven. He will come from

Heaven—not from hades, and those who fall asleep in Christ are with Christ, Phil. i. 23; they are present with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 8, 9; they form the church of the first-born in heaven, Heb. xii. 22 f. Of the latter passage Nebe declares that it evidently does not refer only to the New Testament saints, but also to those of the Old Testament, for in Heb. xi. these are held up to the members of the New Covenant as true examples of the power of faith. “Christ by His ascension took with Him into glory the prophets, kings and patriarchs, who desired to see His day. He took captivity captive as He ascended up on high. Eph. iv. 8.” The appearance of Christ is epoch-making in the history of the underworld (hades), as much as it is in the history of this world. The effect of it there is as great as the effect of it here.

The raising of the eyes, the mention of the tongue and of the finger, indicate that both the just and the unjust are possessed of bodies, and exercise bodily functions. Is this all figurative? Commentators have in every age differed. Luther refers all to the sphere of the conscience. Some hold all the dead to be absolutely disembodied. They have a purely subjective existence, an inward life, whilst their existence here was mainly objective, outward. They are destitute of bodily organs until the Lord shall raise them with bodies at the resurrection. Nebe contends that although the departed are spoken of as “souls” and “spirits,” showing that the bodily form is in the back-ground, this is not incompatible with “an interimistic, provisional, imperfect corporeity,” distinct from that glorified body, which is perfectly adapted to the spirit, its mirror, perfectly translucent and radiant with the perfect immanent glory. 2 Cor. v. 3 is too obscure, and is interpreted too variously, to throw any light on the subject.

We can form no conception of how created spirits have intercourse with each other, except through the medium of bodily organs, and the Scriptures represent the dead not as living like hermits, in solitary abodes, but as members of a society. John xiv. 2 speaks of mansions in the Father’s house. Rev. vi. 9 shows not only a community of martyrs, but as speaking out of heart and mouth, and in referring “to our blood” expressly acknowledging a close bond between each other. There is a communion of saints yonder as well as here. Lazarus is in Abraham’s bosom; and in hell, too, there is communion of spirits, for the rich man dreads the coming of his brothers, cf. Heb. xii. 22 f. A threefold body thus corresponds to our threefold state.

The specific nature of that body we can of course not know. Nebe denies that it is composed of external matter, or that it is an

extract or quintessence of the present body, or a form of body inherent in the soul, or a mere form of manifestation for the soul. He holds that as the first body came from God's creative hand, and as the last, glorified body will be fashioned by the same hand, so the intermediate body must also be the work of God. The glorified corporeity of Christ, of which we partake in the Lord's Supper, may be the germ of this body, a view held in the church from the second century. The body with which the damned are clothed must, of course, also be ascribed to a creative act.

"Lifting up the eyes." Meyer: "In his torment he has not until now lifted up his eyes to look around him." Some: Oppressed by sin and guilt, his eyes had previously been cast down on the ground. Others: Hell is no place for shame and true penitence. He lifts up his eyes above himself in quest of help, and there discovers Abraham, his great ancestor. Paradise is thus recognized as above the place of torment.

What a stroke this, for the hearers of the discourse: The poorest beggar on Abraham's bosom! A greater than Abraham, a higher place in glory than Abraham's bosom, could not be conceived by a Jew. *Κόλποις*, plural as often in the classics.

Dives recognizes in the realm above him both Abraham and Lazarus. Yet the former he had never seen, the latter he had barely looked upon. Nebe ascribes the recognition to intuition, as the form of knowledge in the eternal world. The intermediate corporeity may, also, be a plastic expression of the inner being. His view of Abraham brings Dives no alleviation. He is "afar off," "at a remote, vanishing distance." Thus he knows himself to be exiled, cast out, rejected. And yet more sad and terrible, the bitterest cut of all, he sees Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham, "as a child in the arms of his mother," a recess of quiet and sanctity.

What a humiliating reversal of conditions he now realizes! Luther: "What another scene! His beautiful palace is converted into hell. His red purple becomes fire, while the couch of Lazarus has all fullness; and, besides this, he is comforted, for his evils have all disappeared, and all is well. Previously Dives saw in the poor man only ulceration and sores, mockery and contempt; now he sees in him only what is glorious and blessed. Hell-fire was made yet hotter for him, because he had to see him so honored, whom he had previously despised. And Abraham did what he did, for the punishment of the rich man, showing him nothing but Lazarus. That with which we sin becomes also the occasion of our judgment."

24. "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me . . . for I am in anguish in this flame."

Αἰτός vs. Abraham and Lazarus.

"Crying out." Evidently he called loudly, moved thereto not only by the intensity of his sufferings, but also by his great distance from Abraham. He cries to Abraham, and that with the tender address of "Father." Some hear in this cry of a lost son the plea of a child in distress. Some: he presumes upon his glorious descent, and asserts a claim on that score. But that is hardly compatible with the extreme modesty of his request. The address is rather that of an appeal from a poor miserable child to the generous, piteous heart of the patriarch. Although he has forfeited every claim, yet he may expect relief from the magnanimous father.

He asks the patriarch to show pity, mercy; not to come personally to his relief, but to send Lazarus. Some see in this still a contemptuous estimate of Lazarus, but that would imply the loss of reason on the part of Dives. He probably recognized no one else among the blessed, for his friends were all in the same condemnation with him. He applies to Abraham as to a prince or lord to engage Lazarus to do this favor, as he hardly could presume, judging others by himself, that Lazarus, forgetting and forgiving all, would promptly respond to an appeal made to him.

Only with the tip of his finger let him procure a little moisture for my tongue—the most moderate request imaginable, yet what solace even this would afford! Hardly a drop might thus be secured, yet if only that much could be done for him! His tongue is on fire, this might for a moment cool a little spot of it. Some emphasize the tongue as justly suffering the most. The reference is doubtless simply to the thirst created by the fiery heat, which must be intense, for he suffers "anguish in this flame."

Greeks and Romans described Tartarus as a place burning with fire, whereby the greatest torment is inflicted on the damned. The Old Testament and the New Testament employ the same imagery: Is. lxvi. 15 f.; Ps. l. 3; Matt. xxv. 41; Mk. ix. 44 f.; Rev. xiv. 10, etc. Some explain the *ῥεξι*, "flame," of the base passions indulged and strengthened during life, which now vainly crave satisfaction. The objects by which they once were gratified are now all wanting, while the lusts keep burning with unquenchable fire. Again, memory, v. 25, may become a furnace of flame; and conscience, at last, freed from the delusions and mockeries by which a life of selfishness had besotted it, rages now like fiery billows in the breast.

Nebe thinks that as the blessedness of the righteous consists not only in subjective bliss, but has, especially in the crystal sea before the throne, a constant stream of delights, so these torments must not be viewed as merely internal, but also as external. The damned are not destitute of bodies, and the whole man, soul and body, endures punishment.

25. "But Abraham said, Child, remember . . . but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish."

Abraham acknowledges the relationship. The "father" answers the "child." The great heart which plead so pathetically for Sodom and Gomorrah turns his fatherly eye yearningly toward this child now so far from him and beyond his power to help. Cf. Josh. vii. 19. The fact that he is his son does not, however, assure him relief.

"Remember." "This categorical imperative is the rock on which go to pieces all the dreams of those who deny the self-consciousness of the departed. Thought, remembrance, is possible yonder. Consciousness is not extinguished by death. It accompanies a man into the eternal world." "Whether we wake or sleep, we shall live together with Him," 1 Thess. v. 10. The dead sleep and they wake. They rest from their labors here, as at the close of day, and they at the same time consciously reap and enjoy what here they sowed. Nebe: "As the Lord brought with Him His eternal consciousness from His previous existence, so His own, as they pass from this life, will carry with them their temporal consciousness into eternity."

He is to remember that he has "received his good," etc. Meyer: "Emphasis on ἀπέλαβες, hence placed first." "Thou hast received thy good things; there is nothing more in arrears for thee. Hence, the refreshing craved cannot fall to thy lot." He thinks if he had not used his riches for splendor and pleasure, but charitably for others, v. 9, he would, when splendor and pleasure had passed away, have still retained as arrears in his favor the happiness which he had dispensed. "Thy" has also emphasis. The corresponding "his" does not occur with Lazarus. Ἀπὸ in ἀπέλαβες is significant, Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16; Luke vi. 24. His good, the sum of his goods, he has seized and kept for himself, appropriated to his own enjoyment, making it absolutely his own, using it as his private property—having, in fact, no other possession, no other good. This was his *summum bonum*. The just penalty now follows. These goods cannot be had in the other world, and of other blessings he knew nothing. Luther: "Thou wouldst have it so. Hence no injustice befalls thee. Thou

soughtest thy heaven on earth. Money and goods were thy bliss, costly array and splendid living thy paradise; now let thy florins and dollars, thy purple and fine linen, thy worldly lust and joy help." The rich man was not damned because he was rich, any more than the poor man was saved because he was poor.

In reply to those who claim that this scene is not meant to set forth irremediable punishment in hell, it is justly said that Dives had the law and the prophets—the former a schoolmaster to Christ, Gal. iii. 24, the latter all testifying concerning him. He had therefore in his refusal to hear the law and the prophets rejected Christ.

Abraham, the father, could not help, for what a man sows he must also justly reap. Again he could not help, for

26. "Besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you . . . and that none may cross over from thence to us."

This is the second answer, the argument from the impossible. Though we fain would go to thee and cool thy tongue, we cannot. We do not act from mere will, we owe it to God to will only what He wills. It is not in our power to do it; even if we would, we are so separated that one cannot pass to the other. "When thou and Lazarus were together, it was possible for one to minister to the other; it was not necessary to pass over any gap; he was near enough to thee. Now, he is too far from thee for either thee to help him or for him to help thee." A yawning "chasm" stretched between the two places. The Rabbins held the idea of a wall of separation, but the intervening space is only a hand, or a thread in breadth. This is therefore an advance on Jewish representations. Though the chasm may belong to the poetical representation, the thought is that of unalterable separation. This part of the narrative has its didactic value. The fulfillment of the rich man's prayer is an impossibility. This is the only Scriptural instance of prayer addressed to a saint, and it availed nothing. The chasm is impassable.

Dives cried to Abraham for sympathy and help, and sympathy might move a saint to pass over and cool a wretch's burning tongue. But Nebe thinks that with the blessed, sympathy has vanished, and that instead of receiving sympathy, sorrow will fill the souls of the lost. For the damned would have it so. They have fallen into the pit which their own wilfulness has dug.

The drama is closed. There is no help. Those who enter there leave hope behind. The chasm will not be filled up.

27, 28. "And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him . . . lest they also come into this place of torment."

He submits to Abraham's answer. For him the slightest help is

impossible. But he still calls Abraham "Father," and still begs for the services of Lazarus. While the gulf is fixed for him, it is perchance not for his brothers. Nebe: "They are his brothers according to the flesh and according to the spirit. He had doubtless corrupted them." To the damned there is no comfort in having partners in their misery, especially not such for whose destruction they were responsible. These would forever heap their charges and curses upon him. This plea is no evidence of repentance, no proof of brotherly love, nor expression of a noble sympathy, although even Luther seemed to recognize such a feeling. "This damned one," he said, "has some piety, he would fain save others from damnation"—apparently more concerned on this score than some Christians—"but Jesus gives this touch only so as to warn them."

So far from there being any sign of true repentance, or any acknowledgment of the divine justice in his doom, he shows no consciousness of guilt, owns no sincere contrition, makes no confession of a misspent life. But in his very proposal respecting his brothers, he implies that timely warning would have saved him from coming into the place of torment. In excusing his brothers, he seems to excuse himself, and to lay the blame on God. The reproach against God is masked under a friendly intercession, "that he may testify" of the situation in which I am placed, that he may conjure them by the most impressive representations, not to go on to hell also.

Διά in composition with *μαρτυρεῖν* strengthens it. Acts viii. 25; x. 42; xviii. 5.

Significance may be attached to the fact that the rich man was not willing to go himself, but asked that Lazarus be sent to bear the awful testimony.

29. "But Abraham saith, they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

A square and summary refusal. Abraham at no time takes the rich man's name into his mouth. At first he calls him τέκνον, but now he omits that term, for the denial of his prayer for relief has shown him to be utterly destitute of any remaining good. So far from casting any reproach upon himself, he reflects upon God.

A special mission on the part of Lazarus is superfluous. They have testimony enough. Moses and the prophets are sufficient witnesses. "Moses and the prophets" is more than the personification of the law and prophecy. The Scriptures are spirit and life, not a congeries of isolated thoughts and extracts. The Old Testament is not a sepulchre reeking with dead men's bones. Moses

and the prophets live and testify in it. "The living forms of those men of God stand forth in those books, and we come into personal contact and communion with them."

Here the five brothers have the ample testimony of men who are credible, authoritative, divinely commissioned witnesses: more is not needed for those seeking the one thing needful. Let them listen to them. Faith cometh by hearing. Bengel: "We are saved by a believing hearing of the word, not by ghosts."

Note the seal of Christ for the evangelical doctrine of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures. How, too, He exalts the ministry of the word! What an admonition to attend faithfully the preaching of the gospel! "There is no other means whereby we can save men from the terrible doom of eternal damnation. We must cling to the office of the church and the objective word. God will not attempt anything new." "Since the old means of grace are perfectly adequate, there will be granted no new revelations, much as people prick their ears for them." And if already Moses and the prophets sufficed, what shall be said of further expectations, now that God has at last spoken to us through His Son, the true and faithful witness?

30. "And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent."

He still uses the endearing term "father." A Jew could hardly address Abraham by any other title. "Nay." They will not hear them—"the echo of his own experience." Abraham need not think that they will do any better than he did. He assumes to improve on the means of grace. He proposes a more effectual way of salvation than God's. He still reflects on the Almighty. Moses and the prophets were ineffectual with him. Godet recognizes here the Rabbinical love of disputation. While he still says "father," he does not comport himself like a son, does not submit to the father's solemn decision. He talks back: To Moses and the prophets the brothers are accustomed, hardened. But let them have an extraordinary visitation, let one go among them from the dead and testify of my torment in this flame. Dives is not only a sensationalist, but a believer in preaching hell-fire—and that by a ghost.

Abraham does not say that only repentance and faith can save men from the wrath to come; he refers primarily and exclusively to the word, by which true repentance and faith are wrought. But Dives appears to recognize the necessity of such repentance, only he proposes a new method for bringing it about. For him it is too late, but he is confident that they will repent if they will re-

ceive a direct communication from hell. He takes for granted that a message from him in hell will be mightier than a message from God in heaven.

31. "And he said . . . If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead."

What a testimony to the Scriptures! They are the power of God unto salvation. Where they fail there is no other remedy. A message from the grave, from the invisible world, from hell—must have terrific effect, must be irresistible. Yet it is impotent in comparison with the omnipotence of the still small voice of truth. The mightiest testimony that Rationalism can conceive is weak, compared with the word of truth which holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The latter worketh a godly repentance, contrition of the heart; the former could only inspire terror, attrition, remorse.

"To be persuaded" corresponds to "they will repent," v. 30. They will be moved by this testimony to examine themselves and to change. Others render "believe." Some refer to the fact that the Jews were more ready to kill Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead than to hear his testimony, John xii. 10. We have no evidence that the Jews flocked to Christ to hear His testimony after He had risen from the dead. The force of truth is intrinsic, and is not contingent on the bearer, nor on the place whence he proceeds. It is abundantly demonstrated that those who will not heed Moses and the prophets, will also not heed the testimony of one risen from the dead, whether the Risen One Himself bears the testimony, or sends out witnesses of His resurrection. The story of the resurrection was to many but an idle tale.

Reception of such testimony depends not on any extraordinary character of the witness, but on the susceptibility for the truth in man, on his having an ear for the voice of God. A little child may guide us into the way of life. A ghost from hell may seek in vain to move us. Nebe: "The faith in eternal life takes root only in him who through Moses has come to the belief in God's righteousness and the love of righteousness, and who through the testimony of the prophets has been brought to believe in God as the God of everlasting love. How shall he who denies to life its moral estimate, attempt aught with eternal life? Faith in immortality, wherever among the nations there is a vital consciousness of it, rests upon these two pillars, the righteousness and the love of God."

"As the proper thing now is the appropriation of salvation, it is

very fitting here to lay close to the heart, on the basis of this Periscope, the worth of this life as the divinely ordained day of grace, as well as the importance of the means of grace."

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

REMEMBER,

1. It is appointed unto thee once to die.
2. And after that the judgment.

THE JUDICIAL POWER OF GOD'S WORD.

1. The worldlings who despise it, it brings to the place of torment.
2. Those who devoutly accept it, it bears into Abraham's bosom.

THE REVELATION OF THE DIVINE JUSTICE.

1. It does often not take place in this life.
2. But it inevitably takes place after death.
3. It is determined by the means of grace in this life.
4. It admits of no further discovery of grace after death.

THE LORD IS A JUST REWARDER.

1. Glory, honor and peace to every man that worketh good.
2. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.

WHAT THE LIFE HERE IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT.

1. It is not the time for enjoyment, but in order to prepare for the enjoyment of eternal blessedness.
2. It is not the time of judgment, but a time in which we ripen for the eternal judgment.

LIFE'S HIGHEST WORTH:

1. Here largely misunderstood.
2. There understood too late.

THE POOR RICH MAN.

1. Poor in life.
2. Poor in death.
3. Poor in eternity.

WHAT BROUGHT THE RICH MAN INTO HELL?

1. His neglect of the day of grace.
2. His neglect of the means of grace.

GLIMPSES INTO THE HEREAFTER:

1. No dream-life, but a life marked by memory and consciousness.
2. No life of the pious and wicked in common, but one in which they are unalterably separated.
3. No life in solitary abode, but a life in fellowship.
4. No life out of the body, but a life in the body.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke xiv. 16-24.

THE course of thought from the First Trinity Pericope to the Second, is given by Altemus as follows: "It is the object of the First Trinity Lesson, by pointing to eternity, to arouse the careless, and to move all to the earnest question, what must I do to be saved? The Lesson for the Second Sunday, the Gospel of the great supper, brings the answer, which is at once comforting and alarming. The invitation extends to all, to some, indeed, later than to others. Those first invited fail through their own fault to partake of the supper, whilst those called later, the poor, the wretched, and the despised, following the call, are made partakers." The love of God is not made as prominent as His zeal to have His house filled. Nebe gives the connection between the two Sundays as follows: "The previous Pericope shows the importance of the day of grace with its means of grace; the present one shows how earnestly God is carrying forward His work in this day of grace, and then how great is the sin of those who love this earth more than the kingdom of heaven."

The relation of this parable to the marriage-supper in Matt. xxii. 1 ff., has puzzled expositors. Our Lord may on several occasions have employed the same analogy or a similar one. A speaker may repeat an illustration without giving each time every point. Nebe holds the one in Luke as "the more original of the two," "the chrysalis from which was developed later the parable of the marriage supper. Here everything is, so to speak, in the beginnings, there the end has come. Here a supper, there a marriage-supper, for the servant of God has laid aside his humble raiment, and revealed Himself as the only-begotten Son of the Father. Here we have excuses and non-attendance, there indifference has advanced to enmity, mockery and death. Here the proclamation that none of those invited shall taste of the supper, there the report that the murderers were executed. Here the narrative breaks off with the command, "Compel them to come in;" there, with a survey of the guests, a sentence falling on some. One parable has to do only with the inviting, the other closes significantly, 'Many are

called, but few chosen.' Here we have the beginning of the ways of God, there their issue. Hence, too, the fine tact of the church in placing this Gospel at the beginning of the Trinity Period, and that of Matthew in the conclusion"—twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

16. "A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many:"

Jesus was dining with a Pharisee on the Sabbath, and He healed there a man with the dropsy, and admonished likewise the guests to cultivate humility and to practice the ministrations of mercy and love. One of them was so impressed by His teaching that he exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." This transporting prospect, which reveals the mistaken security of the fellow-guest who fancies himself a subject of the kingdom, furnishes the occasion for the parable. "Jesus would remind the speaker and other guests that they are not sure of eating bread in the kingdom of God, that they must hear and accept the invitation which is now addressed to them."

Ἀνθρώπος: God, not the incarnate Son of God. *Per se* the Son may be viewed as He who provides the supper, "but as the kingdom of heaven is designated as the kingdom of God, and the Son appears as *ὁ δούλος*, "his servant," it is best to see represented by this term God the Father."

Δείπνον in distinction from *ἄριστον* was the principal meal in the East, and was partaken of at the close of the day, which does not imply that the parable points to something at the end of the world. The gospel is often spoken of as having "appeared in these last times," but the sense of the parable fixes the "supper" in the centre of time.

The Old Testament represents the kingdom of God under the image of a feast. Cf. Matt. viii. 11. The comparison is very striking. There is a void in every man which only God can fill. Man created by God and for God has a hunger for God, for the living God. To still this hunger man's thought aspires toward heaven, but he cannot reach God; he strives with all his powers for the righteousness that is acceptable to God, but his striving does not bring him to the goal. The bread which gives life to the world must come down from heaven. "For the God-hunger of humanity, for the sighing creature, God prepares the supper, He will feed it with the good things of His house."

"A great supper." Its greatness does not arise from God's providing it, nor from the magnitude of His love and grace, nor because the preparation, the gospel, is so great and precious that no

tongue can express it, no mind conceive it, and at the same time is everlasting, so that no one partaking of it can ever more hunger. Admitting the truth of these thoughts, Nebe holds that they do not belong here. The man prepared a great feast—he had a great house and he proposed to fill it. “Because the supper is intended not for a few, but for a countless multitude, it is called great.” The universality of saving grace is intimated from the beginning, while toward the close it is distinctly expressed.

Prevenient grace prepares the supper, and while in course of preparation it invites many to the board. The Jews in general are those invited. Some limit the invitation to the office of the prophets. But Nebe: “Israel received from its ancestors the promises, and every Israelite father imparted to his children the invitation to the great supper. All their institutions were invitatory voices; their whole history was properly a *cogere intrare*; Moses with his whole law was a task-master, driving to the great supper.”

17. “And he sent forth his servant . . . to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.”

The time of preparation is past. The high hour for the doors to open to admit the guests to the great supper has struck. The man sends out his “servant.” According to some the term is to be taken collectively: order of preachers, apostles; John the Baptist and the apostles; John and Jesus. None gave the invitation more earnestly and powerfully than Jesus Himself. The article and the pronoun show the “servant” to have been very near to the head of the family, the Son of God, the servant of the Lord predicted by Isaiah, the only-begotten Son who took upon Him the form of a servant. Phil. ii. 8; cf. Luke xxii. 27.

This sending already implies reproof—it indicates that the non-coming of the invited was due to their disregard of the supper. It is said to be a custom of the Persians and the Chinese to send out repeated invitations after the banquet is prepared, but this is never referred to in the Old Testament. Had those bidden attached any importance to the invitation, had they in some measure appreciated the great favor shown them, or felt any hungering for the feast, they would not have delayed till the servant came. They would have crowded around the doors in order to get in as soon as possible. “They behaved badly. When they ought to have been on hand, they had yet to be sent for.”

The master puts into the mouth of the servant just what he is to say. God speaks through the lips of Christ: “Come, for all things are now ready.” All that is asked of them is to come.

How little this is! They are not required to bring anything, no directions are given concerning dress. Only, Come. Everything will shape itself. This is not making any requirement. A feast is ready for their enjoyment. The satisfying of their hunger is in prospect. New strength will thus flow into them. Where the inner want is felt how quick the response to come and see, John i. 40! All things are ready now, *i. e.*, "even now," not a moment shall they wait, for "the prepared banquet is waiting for them,"

18. "And they all . . . began to make excuse . . . The first . . . I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it . . ."

Just the reverse of what was to be expected. A second invitation to a feast is not ordinarily required—only when the invitation is to a feast in the kingdom of heaven. When a second invitation is found necessary in human society, there is usually a hidden cause, a strained relation between the bidder and those bidden, a root of bitterness. A voice had just exclaimed, "Blessed is he that eateth bread in the kingdom of God." But the natural man has no fondness for that heavenly bread. He would rather starve his soul. Nebe: "That voice has not died away. Its echo is heard in every human heart. Even the heathen sigh for the golden days when gods and men sat and ate at the same table." John xiv. 23. Yet, *mirabile dictu*, those bidden begin to ask with one voice to be excused.

"Began." Bengel: "Previously they had professed to be in a state of expectation, now they began to decline the invitation." Meyer: "It brings into prominence the *beginning* of a most surprising contrast." The term is frequently employed thus in the New Testament. "With one"—the ellipsis may be "mind," "consent," "voice," "excuse." The sense is the same whichever word is supplied. With one heart and one soul they deprecate, *παραίτεομαι*, beg off, pray to excuse. However various the excuses offered, the mind and motive of all are the same. "The fact that they excuse themselves, instead of flatly refusing, shows that they recognize their duty to come. And this is certainly true when we turn from the picture to reality. It is not for man to do as he pleases, when God in the riches of His grace invites him to the great supper. He is solemnly bound to come, and his staying away, his excusing himself, is sin and guilt." When God speaks it is for us to answer promptly, Lord, here am I.

Jesus, not content with saying that all who had been previously invited excused themselves with one mind, proceeds to specify their excuses and pretexts, and introduces from among those called, three speakers. Such details were, doubtless, intended for

His Pharisaic hearers. These proudly imagined that they had obediently followed the divine invitation, and would surely be present at the heavenly banquet. He would rouse them from their security and awaken anxious concern. "Those thus introduced are accordingly not scornful despisers of God's grace, but men with a heart that would fain be divided between God and the world."

"I have bought a field." This does not mean that he had bought the estate unseen, and that he must at once examine it to see if it corresponds with the terms of purchase, making the first excuse the same as the second, to test the purchase before closing it. The purchase is final, but some necessity, so the purchaser emphatically claims, admits of no delay. The pressure of business makes it imperative to go out and see the property, not to satisfy himself by his own eyes that he has a bargain, but simply to make a proper inspection of his new possession, to make arrangements respecting it, etc. The excuse is not *per se* an absurd one, but the stress laid upon it shows his heart to be in his broad acres, rather than in the noble company of a feast. He pretends, indeed, to be very sorry that he cannot go; it is only the force of circumstances that detains him. *Humilitas sonat in voce, superbia in actione.*

"Have me as one begged off"—according to some, a Latinism. Meyer: ἔχει τινα with an added accusative of a substantive, participle, etc., expresses the relation of possession according to a special quality, cf. Matt. xiv. 5." "Place thyself in such wise to me that I am an excused person; accept my apology."

These business transactions are not bad in themselves; "but it is bad to be entangled and encumbered by such things and to make as our pretext, necessity in the case of earthly things combined with impossibility, v. 20, in the case of spiritual things."

19. "And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen . . . to prove them: . . . have me excused."

Ἠρόδωα implies eagerness to make gain. "To a worldly man when he is made sensible of the divine call, all vain things are new and sweet." While this one concludes just like the first, Nebe thinks that he speaks in an entirely different tone. The former pleads necessity in justification of his action; he cannot help himself. This one alludes to no outward necessity. It is evident that he could inspect these oxen a day or two later, but it was his good pleasure, his convenience, his decision, to attend to this at the very time he was to have been at the banquet.

"I am going." He was about to make this trip as the servant

met him with the invitation, and he declines to turn from his purpose. He makes his own final disposition of himself and of his time. Bengel: "Often there meet together the most acceptable seasons of grace, and the most urgent calls of worldly business. The first makes as his pretext a feigned necessity; the second, a mere inclination after other things; the third, a perverse allegation of impossibility, v. 20. The last one declares expressly that he cannot, the two former declare that they will not, but use a courteous formula of apology." He thinks, however, that the variety in their modes of rejecting the invitation lay not so much in the state of mind as in the objects in which their rejection of it rested—"land, cattle, wife"—and it can easily be imagined that the demands of the last were the most imperious. And as the last excuse sounds the more plausible, the refusal is the more blunt and positive,

20. "And another said, I have married a wife . . . I can not come."

The excuses proceed on a downward grade. The further the servant goes, the less scruple have the bidden ones with their flimsy excuses. The rudeness of the last is a fit anti-climax of the two first. He shows no respect for the servant nor for the lord back of the servant. He has taken a wife, and is having his honey-moon. "It is my right, yea, my duty, to stay with my young wife." Meyer refers to Croesus declining for his son the Mysian proposal for a hunting expedition on the score that he was newly-married, Herod. i. 36. The Old Testament regulation was, Deut. xxiv. 5, to excuse from military service for one year the newly-married husband. The man in the text appears to defend himself on this principle, as if when the Lord God calls him to enlist under his banner, he could fall back on it to enjoy himself with his wife. Instead of saying flatly, "I *will not* come, he says I *cannot*, prompted to it, doubtless, by a yet unextinguished spark of reverence for the Lord." *Nolle in causa est, non posse pretenditur.*

Nebe sees three mental conditions: Some cleave to the world from constraint, some willingly, and some very decidedly. To the first, the world service is a burden; to the second, their delight; to the last, their one and all. Again: some are choked by the thorns of care, some by the thorns of riches, some by the thorns of pleasure. Augustine: *Ambitio saeculi, concupiscentia oculorum, concupiscentia carnis.* There is also this distinction: The first two wished to increase their property real and personal, the last to enjoy what he had. The truth is, none of them cared for the

supper. Did they not, respectively, have this excuse they would have found another.

It is obvious, too, that had each of them accepted the invitation, neither the land, nor the cattle, nor the wife, would in the meanwhile have suffered any serious injury. We lose nothing in property, or domestic bliss, by giving primary attention to the gracious invitation of the gospel.

Allegorizing, we have different religious classes: 1. He buying the field represents the priests, as Jesus calls preachers husbandmen or sowers, and the word seed. 2. He buying the oxen, those wielding political authority. Ps. xxii. 12 calls rulers "bulls of Bashan." 3. He who married a wife represents a family. Or, 1. Pagans. 2. Israelites, five yokes—10 oxen, 10 commandments. 3. Heretics.

21. "And the servant came, and told his lord . . . Then . . . being angry . . . Go out quickly . . . and bring in hither the poor, and maimed and blind and lame."

Having completed his task the servant reports the outcome of his invitations. "He must have had a sorry journey homeward." Loving his lord with the whole heart, knowing the character of the despised supper, and having no other desire than that those bidden should come and be filled, his heart must have bled as he presented himself to his master with the mortifying report; for it was not his dishonor, but his master's; not his but his lord's supper will spoil if there be no guests. He simply reports the naked, nasty facts without comment or complaint. He has been faithful to his charge—and here are the results.

The "certain man" is now described as a great powerful lord, an *οικοδεσπότης*—not an ordinary owner of property, but a lord of such exalted rank, that he does not even tarry with the guests in a chamber, much less sit with them at the table, which we infer from the servant's later report that there was still room, he having been in the banquet hall and convinced himself of the fact, while the lord was elsewhere. The correspondence with Matt. xxii. continues. The *οικοδεσπότης* is represented there as a *βασιλεὺς*, a "king", who does at the close enter the banquet hall, but not to take a seat among his guests, simply to see the guests.

The master of the house is not unmoved by this most extraordinary report. In natural life such conduct is without parallel—almost inconceivable. Only where God is the host offering gracious access to a sumptuous table, do men become so shameless, so unthankful, so insulting.

Nebe: "The lord of the house feels keenly the indignity with which his gracious invitation is met. He is angry, and how could

he be otherwise? Love that he is, the embodiment of grace and bounty—how else could he have provided such a feast and after it was prepared kindly notify once more the guests by all means to come? He understands the real import of these excuses. Love changes to wrath. He is not a servant in the house, to be trampled under foot. He is the sovereign over the house, and he means to remain such and to be recognized and honored as such.” The conduct of those bidden is intolerable, the insolent answers brought by the servant justly excite rage in his noble bosom.

How wicked as well as absurd the refusal of the gospel call, because thou hast bought some ground! “The necessities of life, sayest thou, compel thee to cultivate it and thus secure thy daily bread. Who is it that causeth the grass to grow and herb for the service of man? Ps. civ. 14. What avails your toil, if the Lord bestow not freely rain and sunshine? The best you can do for your fields is to respond to the call of God.” The second one begging off can even not offer the plea of necessity. One able in those days to buy five yoke of oxen must have had abundance. But a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of what he possesses. All the treasures of this world cannot satisfy the soul. The very struggle, which never falters, for goods and possessions, this feverish hunger for earthly property, indicates that money and goods are incapable of satisfying man’s inner hunger and thirst. “There is a void which can not be filled though all the kingdoms of this world and their glory be cast into it.” Men pursue unsubstantial shadows, when the real and the substantial good is offered to them. Why dost thou not come to the supper, so bountifully provided, so freely tendered?

Look yet at the last excuse, at one so infatuated with his wife that he cannot come! Who instituted the marriage state? To whom do we owe this best bliss of earth? Is it possible to enjoy a happy marriage without the blessing of him who is here so rudely despised? “Do love and faithfulness, chastity and order, industry and patience, conciliation and peace, grow spontaneously out of the human heart?” The heaven of marriage becomes a hell, if God is not the third party—(or the first), in the marriage covenant. “Just because you married a wife, because you propose to found a home and a family, it is needful for you to go to the great Supper”—and this holds also of those who embark in purely business enterprises. “Irrational, foolish, groundless are all these excuses. Into what awful depths must the eye of the Lord have pierced!” Here is the great supper which He at an infinite outlay and sacrifice has provided, and over against it is the

feast offered by this world to the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. What comparison between the two! Heaven and earth, God and the world! Yet without hesitation or reflection, those bidden to the supper promptly return the answer that they prefer the latter feast. "They do not even entertain the thought of possibly repenting of their decision, or ask to have their place reserved. All of them have in advance made up their minds never to come." Yet what has not the Lord done in their behalf? "He has from the beginning graciously watched over them. By pure goodness He has from their earliest years drawn them to Him. He has constantly dealt with them as His friends, His guests, members of His family. But they will no longer have aught to do with Him. Worldliness has taken possession of their hearts and darkened their understanding." "They are so chained to earth that they leave heaven to God." Absorbed in this world, the richest and most inviting spiritual banquet has no interest for them.

The Lord is "angry." His love would not be love if one might trifle with it, or despise it. He is a jealous God, as well as the God of love. The energy of His love, so comforting and cheering to poor sinners, has a reverse side, namely the energy of His zeal, when His love is despised, the jealousy or zeal of His wrath, the "unimpassioned negation of everything opposed to Him and to His being—which is holy love itself—that must inspire the wanton sinner with terror."

It is not stated here in what manner the lord's wrath manifested itself, but in Matt. xxii. 7, the curtain is withdrawn: the king destroyed them and burned up their city. Only at the close here, the house-holder once more animadverts upon those who were first bidden, and disposes of them summarily. Here the zeal of his house consumes him. Everything is ready for the guests, and the one thing now to be attended to is to fill up the table. The victuals must not perish. Go on with the invitation. There are still persons who may be called. Those first invited, v. 16, were πολλοί ("many") but not πάντες (all). "Go out quickly into the πλατεῖαι (broad streets) and ῥυμαι (narrow lanes). Is. xv. 3. The lord does not go himself, but sends his servant once more—and this time he requires him to hasten. Not because these people, too, might get away, but "because all the viands were already prepared and still warm, and the excellence of these viands is to be vindicated from contempt, by means of other guests." The invitation proceeds now indiscriminately. It is not directed to the prominent and esteemed, the rich and mighty, but to the lowly and despised, the poor and the beggars.

These outwardly poor are not to be viewed as the subjectively poor, such as feel themselves to be poor lost sinners. Jesus has in His mind those poor Lazaruses on whom scarcely any one takes pity, and who have to beg the passing stranger for alms to still their hunger. They are pictured in all their misery, being not only destitute of goods, but even lacking perfect un mutilated bodies—they are cripples, maimed, lame and blind; even when they have all their members, this or that member has become damaged or useless. Bengel understands: (1) Those whom no one feels disposed to invite; (2) Those whom no women would take; (3) Those who cannot go; (4) Those who cannot see.

“Bring in hither.” The servant is to do more than give the invitation, “Come, etc.” He shall conduct these poor creatures right into the house. Nebe thinks that the high standing of those first bidden would not have admitted of the servant going to the first one and asking him to accompany him to the second and third, and then escorting all three to the house. These poor, besides, were not accustomed to enter such a palace. They may often have passed it, and thought what a grand, splendid building! Such as *we* can never enter there. Is it likely that now they would at once hasten thither on invitation? Could they have the courage to go? They are too backward; the servant must accompany them—take them by the hand, and lead them like children into the house.

The human heart is a strange self-contradiction. Those first invited were too haughty and defiant to come. These are too diffident. The first thought they did not need to go; the second, they did not dare. This second class, in distinction both from the first class, and from the third class who are sought in the highways and hedges, are often viewed as “the heathen among whom the Jews were scattered, those nations to whom a glimmer of God’s light had come through Israel.” But these poor were within the city, in the commonwealth of Israel, clearly defined and walled in.

Bengel: “Those already called (v. 24), were those accounted among the Jews as the best men (vv. 1, 3), the Pharisees and scribes; the poor in the streets are the publicans and sinners, outcasts, who welcome the invitation. xv. 1; Matt. xxi. 31.” Luther: “You want to keep your priesthood, royalty and riches, and let go me and my gospel; so will I also let you go, that you may thereby lose everything, while I bring myself other guests. This took place among the Jews. For when the great lords, princes, priests and leaders among the people would not receive the gospel, our Lord chose the humble fishermen, the poor, miserable and despised ele-

ment, whom no one would have esteemed worthy to be the servants of the priests and princes. They come to grace and honor in that they become to God acceptable and beloved guests, because those other high and mighty ones would not." Thus the reference is restricted to the Jews. Nebe holds that no other interpretation is tenable. "The parable looks to the future. In broad lines it gives a history of the inviting grace of God." This view is confirmed by history. Not the rulers became disciples of Christ, notwithstanding the extraordinary public activity of Jesus at Jerusalem in the beginning of His ministry. John ii. 23; cf. Matt. xxiii. 37 ff. The very men who despised the invitation to the great supper inquire subsequently with derision, "Have any of the rulers believed on Him?" John vii. 48 f.

While accepting this interpretation, Meyer contends against a first and second call to Israel by Christ. Referring to the circumstantial character of the narrative, why, since this is not mentioned, should we understand that "the servant went away again, and after fulfillment of the commission returned? No; the servant when repulsed by those who had been invited, did of his own accord what the master here directs him, so that he can reply at once to his behest, 'It is done,' " etc. This he regards as a point "strikingly appropriate to Jesus, who by the preaching of the gospel to the poor and miserable among the people, had already before his return to God fulfilled this divine counsel, in regard to which he did not need further instruction."

The fact that the gospel came first to the rulers, then to the people, is no indication of Jesus despising the people, but simply a proper regard for circumstances. "Would He influence the people, it was the first and most natural thing to preach the good news to their rulers. If those were won, the people would of themselves follow their leaders." Jesus was acting on this principle at the very time He spoke this parable, having accepted the invitation of "one of the rulers of the Pharisees," v. 1, because such a friendly attitude toward Him would doubtless promote His cause among the people. We act on this principle in church and mission work, ever seeking to win to the gospel the influential, the leading men of a community. When we succeed in this, we feel that a great door has been opened to the gospel. Even in established congregations, common sense teaches the importance of bringing prominent persons and leading minds under the power of the truth, so as to secure free course for the gospel.

22. "And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room."

Nearly all exegetes except Meyer assume that the servant had gone out on the specific command of the lord—this being his report on his second return. The language of the text “as thou didst command,” seems to conflict with Meyer’s view above. “Not according to his own judgment, after being repulsed by those first bidden, did the servant repair to the poor, not *motu proprio* does the servant proceed, but only as he was commanded.” On the other hand, Jesus did not actually return to heaven and report the failure of a first mission and then re-descend to earth to offer the gospel to another class; neither can we apply the anger of the lord of the house to the Father in such a way as if in revenge for the contumely of those first bidden, he had resolved upon filling his house with the lower classes. Not every word of a parable is to be pressed.

The servant does not report his reception among the poor, nor their response. That was assumed in the instructions given him: “bring them in.” They came. The rulers stayed away, but publicans and harlots pressed into the kingdom, crowded to the banquet. Yea, the servant himself (Jesus), ate and drank with them. The feast was not provided in vain. So is it ever. If those come not who are first in privilege, most highly favored, the poor and the miserable will take their places at the table of the King.

The will of the “lord” is done. But the clear eyes of the servant, sharpened by love, discern not only the *τόπος* (“room”) unoccupied, but the multitudes without, for whom no one is caring. Evidently he has feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. He gives the hint, Here am I, send me, to bring yet others. It is so great a supper that even if all the poor of the city are there, there will yet be room for others. The banquet is prepared by the God of heaven and earth. All the poor of Christendom cannot consume what the fullness and riches of grace offer to men. Nature abhors a vacuum. So does the kingdom of grace. The whole earth shall be filled with the glory of God. “The Lord of hosts shall make unto all people a feast of fat things,” etc. Is. xxv. 6.

23. “And the lord said . . . Go out into the highways and hedges . . . that my house may be filled.”

The lord acts promptly and hastily on the suggestion (intercession) of his servant. This was a true servant, who divined the secret counsels of his heart, understood his wishes, and anticipated his commands. He sees the largeness of the preparation, while his lord himself has in mind also those without the city on the high-

ways and among the hedges. Expositors are generally agreed that these are the heathen, "pure unmixed paganism." The highways and the hedges lie beyond the city. The servant has completed the round of the streets and lanes. He now proceeds to the *ὁδοί* and *παγμοί*—"hedges and brush which enclose farms and gardens, so that they may not be used as roads." Bengel: "the house-walls of beggars, where the houseless encamp." Nebe: "the people are either traveling on the road or, being weary, are resting in the shade of the hedge which borders the road." He adds also: "The people who did not live within the walls of Jerusalem are migratory, they have as yet found no rest for their feet, they travel about on the highways, but in their wanderings toward the longed-for goal they grow weary and lie down among the hedges to refresh themselves." As with the Israelites, so with the heathen, there is a difference, some are still striving, others have become ensnared in sin and are pining in the dust.

The servant is not to say "Come," nor is he simply to "bring them in," *εἰσάγειν*, but to "constrain," compel these to come. Not compulsion of every kind is meant. He who is altogether dragged or hurried by force cannot be said to come in (a voluntary act) cf. Matt. xiv. 22, induced by urgent command. 2 Cor. xii. 11; Gal. ii. 14; Luke xxiv. 29; Acts xvi. 15. The later the call the more urgent is the lord. The three forms of invitation make an ascending climax.

The last commission was fulfilled by the apostles. Eph. ii. 17. Their urgent holy zeal carried out this command, but its perversion to the forced conversion of the heathen, or the coercion of heretics, is a sad instance of wresting the Scriptures. Augustine was the first to cite it in support of force in matters of faith (against the Donatists). This was a sad error on the part of Augustine. All the great FF. before him had emphasized the doctrine that force cannot be employed in religion. It is contrary to the genius of Christianity, which uses spiritual weapons for spiritual ends. "God will have no forced service." The compulsion is not outward but inward. Men are to be so urged and pressed as to feel constrained. Our preaching is to have that character. *Ἀνάγκαιεν* is not used in the New Testament of outward force. Matt. xiv. 22; 2 Cor. xii. 11; Gal. ii. 14. In this way He constrains us, says Luther "that He has it preached to all men: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Both are thus shown, hell and heaven, death and life, wrath and grace. This is properly to

constrain, to terrify with sin; God's wrath shall strike men with terror, smite conscience with fear that they will constrain themselves to cry out, O Lord God, what shall I do to be freed from this misery? Where man has thus come into terror, feeling his misery and need, there the time has come to tell him: sit down here at the table of your rich Lord and eat, *i. e.*, be baptized and believe in Jesus that He has paid thy ransom." He regards this language "constrain them to come in" as signifying extraordinary grace and comfort to us lost and condemned heathen, God thereby picturing and exhibiting His infinite grace toward us. "It was of His unutterable love that He showed Himself so concerned for our salvation that He commands not alone kindly to call and to encourage poor sinners to come to the supper, but to constrain and move and press them, and not to cease this urging till they come to the supper. For He is immeasurably more anxious to give and to help than we ever can be to take or to ask."

Nebe: "The servant shall constrain them, because they are the last to be called, and if they fail to come, the table will not be filled, and the lord means to have his house filled. The absence of those first asked must be made good, the room left by their absence filled up. He has prepared a feast for many, and he must have much people." Through the falling away of Israel, salvation is come to the Gentiles; the fall of them is the riches of the world, the loss of them the riches of the Gentiles, Rom. xi. 11-14. God will have His salvation partaken of and enjoyed. Bengel: "Nature like grace does not suffer a vacuum, and the blessed form a multitude, who acquire the greatest portion of its fullness in the last periods of the world." Having seen the travail of His soul, Christ shall be satisfied. Is. liii. 11.

If men are still called, it is because the holy will of God is not yet fulfilled. The end will come when God's house is full. Cf. Rom. xi.

24. "For I say unto you, that none of those men . . . shall taste of my supper."

These are words of the "master of the house," not of Jesus, though some hold that they are the threat of Jesus. *Γάρ* connects the clause with the preceding "go out, etc.;" so *μου*, "my supper," also shows the reference to the subject of the parable. Jesus in the parable is the servant. Since those first called cannot be expected, the lord seeks any persons whatsoever, rather than those first bidden who disdained the supper. For these despisers of his goodness, there is no longer any room left open. "Those men." The pronoun has the force of putting them to a distance.

"You." Some: the plural appertains to the poor, etc., who

had been brought in. But the lord did not see these guests, did not know of the room. Meyer: "the servant and those who were supposed to be elsewhere than there present" are addressed. Not the Jews in general are excluded, but those who as the representatives and chiefs of God's people were first of all invited and placed under the obligations of the gospel call, and who despised this call.

"Taste"—not, as Bengel suggests, "not even taste." The word implies not only to taste, but to "partake of," "enjoy," ix. 27; Matt. xvi. 28; Mk. ix. 1; John vii. 52. "The terrible sentence falls upon the invited who would not come, that they shall have no share in the supper, *i. e.*, that the wrath of God shall remain on them, that they shall be damned in their unbelief. And this will stand unalterable." This conclusion is the sum of this Lesson. "This," says Luther, "is the sum and conclusion, that those who are the most secure and want to taste the supper [by means of their works] shall not taste it. And why not, dear Lord, since they have done no evil? The reason is that they have refused to believe."

"The Pericope portrays the all-consuming zeal of our Lord, and reveals the thoughts of many hearts respecting the gracious call of God."

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

WITH WHAT ZEAL THE LORD INVITES TO THE GREAT SUPPER!

1. He causes us to be invited.
2. To be brought in.
3. To be constrained to come.

GOD WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED.

1. He prepares a great supper.
2. He sends repeated and pressing invitations.
3. He does not indifferently accept the excuses.
4. He seeks yet the very last.

INCENTIVES TO ACCEPT THE CALL.

1. The magnitude of grace.
2. The earnestness of the call.
3. The salvation of your soul.

WHAT IS NEEDFUL TO TASTE THE SUPPER?

1. To deny worldly lusts.
2. To realize our spiritual wants.
3. To come into the house of God.

THE GREATNESS OF THE SUPPER.

1. Great is the grace provided.
2. Great the worldliness which despises it.
3. Great the zeal which will have the house filled.
4. Great the judgment brought about by its neglect.

WORLDLINESS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD. WORLDLINESS

1. Despises the invitation.
2. Cannot retard the growth of the kingdom.
3. Excludes itself forever from it.

OUR MISSIONARY DUTY TO CHRIST.

1. Those invited to the supper do not come.
2. The poor who come do not fill the house.
3. Hence, we must call the heathen that the prepared supper do not waste, and the house of the Lord be not empty.

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. .

Luke xv. 1-10.

LUTHER: "The words of this Gospel live and make alive when rightly apprehended, and form one of those comforting Gospels, which are preached the year round." Two precious pearls are selected from the string of parables in chaps. xv. and xvi. The organic connection with the previous Lesson is quite patent. The direction there "compel them to come in" receives two striking illustrations. The man goeth after the lost sheep till he finds it, the woman sweepeth the house and seeketh diligently for the lost silver coin until she finds it. Nebe: "The invitation to the great supper has been given. Those favored most refused to go, then appeared the poor from city and country and the curtain falls. Here it rises again. We see those first invited stand, and those later invited draw near. The former are particularly the Pharisees and scribes. They stand at the entrance of the Pericope and murmur, "He receiveth sinners and eateth with them!" The Lord replies to the murmur of these who shall never taste His supper. He justifies the grace which calls the poor and receives publicans and sinners. The parable of the Great Supper teaches that God will have all men to be saved, but not all are willing to be saved; the present Gospel, how men who are to be saved are found, the work of the faithful, pursuing love of God."

1. "Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near . . . to hear him."

This series of five parables is peculiar to Luke, and he prefaces them with this introduction, giving the occasion which led Jesus to narrate them.

The periphrastic construction of the opening sentence is peculiar. Meyer: "They were actually engaged in, busied with, drawing near to Him," *i. e.*, when the Pharisees saw their approach they anticipated that Jesus would fraternize with them even to the point of fellowship in eating, and in advance of His actually doing it they murmured, possibly in order to restrain Him from doing it, or to restrain by their protests the approaching crowd from coming to Him. Others: They were murmuring over something

actually taking place before their eyes. As in xix. 7, they murmured when He had gone in, not when He was on the point of going to Zaccheus, the chief of the publicans, to dine with him, so here. Sinners were continually coming to Him. This was a daily scandal to the Pharisees. What irritated them was not an incidental crowding of the publicans around Him, which might soon cease, but a continual, never-ending stream of them, "a regular migration of publicans and sinners to the Lord."

"All." Meyer: "A hyperbole of simple narrative. The throng of such people became greater and greater." Nebe: "A hyperbole would not have caused the murmuring of the scribes." Luther: "All kinds of, every variety and grade of sinners." Others: literally "all," *i. e.*, all the publicans and sinners of that locality. The *τελώναι* are named first, the tax gatherers, or collectors. In the Roman empire the tolls or taxes of the provinces were farmed out to knights who were called *publicani*, and these again farmed them out to an inferior class called *portitores*.

"They were as a class detested not only by the Jews but by other nations also, both on account of their employment and of the harshness, greed and deception, with which they prosecuted it." Some conspicuous exceptions are noted. Theocritus on being asked what were the most dangerous animals, replied: "in the mountains bears and lions, in the cities publicans and informers." Cicero regarded the office unworthy of a free man.

Those collecting the revenues among the Jews were not all heathen. Levi was called, Matt. ix. 9, from the Custom-House into the apostolate, and a publican stands with the Pharisee praying in the temple, Luke xviii. 10 ff. Jewish accounts confirm this view. Josephus gives a decree of Julius Cæsar, allowing to the Jews as a special privilege the collection of the taxes. And they accepted it. The Rabbins had, however, some perplexing problems as to what was to be done with a publican. He was not allowed to give testimony. He was a disgrace to his family. The publicans were the pariahs among the Jews and were universally shunned. Even where they were guilty of no dishonesty in their administration, the office itself was enough to fix a brand on them in the eye of a pious Israelite. According to the strict interpretation of the law, it was not right to pay tribute to Cæsar; publicans were, therefore, viewed as having apostatized from the faith of the fathers, and as dallying with the power of heathenism.

With the "publicans" Luke connects the "sinners," *οἱ ἁμαρτωλοί*, cf. Matt. ix. 11; Mark ii. 16; Luke v. 30; Matt. xi. 19; Luke vii. 34. Some: The former are the notorious, crass sinners, the

latter such as are more secret, less degraded. Thayer: "Such [the latter] as are preëminently sinful, especially wicked," cf. 1 Pet. iv. 18, specifically of men stained with certain vices or crimes. The heathen were called by the Jews ἀμαρτωλοί *par excellence*. The intensity of meaning attaching to "publican" may be inferred from the connection in Matt. xxi. 31 f. of publicans and harlots, and in Matt. xviii. 17, of heathen and publicans. The Talmud has the order, publicans, highwaymen, murderers, hucksters and others. Evidently, those called "sinners" were regarded as vile, base, depraved characters. No difference in degree obtained between them and the publicans, both representing the most abandoned and reprobate element, the publicans receiving conspicuous mention as a specially notorious class. Both classes are embraced in the one term "sinners," v. 2. These depraved people now throng around Jesus to hear Him. They must have perceived that He had something for them, not something to gratify or encourage their degraded lives, but something suited to miserable creatures like them. Realizing their wretchedness, and finding in their sins no rest for their souls, they stream to Him in crowds. One sinner encourages another, until their coming is like an epidemic. Luke does not report what Jesus did with them, but we know the welcome He was wont to give: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." And if we were ignorant of their reception, we are told by "those who sneaked around Him as spies that they might make Him an object of suspicion and vilification."

2. "And both the Pharisees and the scribes . . . This man receiveth sinners," . . .

Pharisees and scribes correspond to publicans and sinners. Not individuals, but the whole body of the latter came to Jesus, so the body of the former murmur, hence the articles. There was a mass of both classes. Nebe: "A considerable movement and wholesome awakening had taken place in that region, wherever it was, and the Pharisees and scribes accordingly gathered together in order to quench the flame which had been kindled."

Luke only has the compound word διεγύγναι, here and xix. 7; the simple verb in v. 30; cf. Matt. xx. 11; John vi. 41, 43, 61; vii. 32; 1 Cor. x. 10. Διά certainly strengthens the verb. It adds the significance of contending, hence Meyer: "always of several, whose alternate murmuring is meant," cf. John vi. 43. They had before indulged in similar mutterings of censure. When Jesus dined with Levi, Luke v. 30, they asked indignantly of His disciples "Why do ye eat and drink with pub-

licans and sinners?" Jesus well knew how they pointed the finger at Him, and called Him "glutton and winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Matt. xi. 19. Here they say: "This man receives sinners and eats with them." *Οἷτος* is already contemptuous, implying their scornful aversion to Jesus. They can have nothing to do with a person who thus affiliates with the criminal element. He "receiveth" them when He should repel them. Meyer makes the word quite general, the special meaning coming in with the clause "and eateth with them." He not only shows Himself friendly toward them, but He enters into close and confiding relations with them, honors them with the most intimate intercourse; He eats with them. "Where sin has abounded, grace does still more abound." "The great sinner has need of great mercy."

The Pharisees had failed to accept the counsel of Jesus in Matt. ix. 12 f., where He exposed their ignorance of the Old Testament, which they professed so strictly to follow. Nebe suggests that before they murmured, it would have been well for them to attend as unprejudiced people one of those meals in which Jesus dined with publicans and sinners. They make a bad revelation of themselves, in having no idea of the love to sinful men, and in being swallowed up in the consciousness of their own self-righteousness. "Jesus, the sinless One, has compassion upon sinners, and shows mercy to the publican, and we who have all come short of the glory of God, want to exclude the poor and wretched from our pity and kindness. Jesus did not keep up such intercourse with every publican, but with such as came to Him to hear God's word from His lips."

Müller accordingly urges that when you find nothing is to be done with your wicked neighbor, you would better stay away, partly, that you may not suffer in your own well-being; partly, that he may become alarmed in his ungodliness, by your staying away; partly, that you may not cause stumbling among the weak.

The murmuring of the Pharisees is a glorious testimony to our Lord's moral character. Had another gone among these sinners, their outcry would have been, birds of a feather flock together. But here they voice their dissatisfaction, because they find united at the same table what is so dissimilar, Jesus sitting with a company of sinners. "With the Lord, whom no one can convince of any sin, sits the sinner whom the whole world judges and condemns. How gladly would they in their pride of virtue have drawn this virtuous One—they, the self-righteous, have taken this righteous One—completely into their fellowship. They cannot

understand what it is that draws Him, the lofty, the exalted One, so downward." Jesus in this case solves their perplexity.

3. "And he spake unto them this parable, saying."

"While sitting at the table with publicans, etc., He also spreads a table for His enemies. By means of parables He offers to break unto them the bread of life." Once before He justified to them His conduct with sinners, Matt. ix. 13, from the Old Testament. He now adopts another course. He takes an image from the natural world, in order to give them an impression and right conception.

"He knows that little children must have only small crumbs, and so He presents the eternal truth first in two small parables." Their close connection is evident not only from "ἔ," v. 8, with which the second parable is joined to the first, but also from the—almost literally—same refrain with which both parables close, and from the "ἐπειὶ δὲ" with which v. 11 proceeds to the parable of the lost son. The first parable has a counterpart, Matt. xviii. 12 f. The pictorial representation is the same, "nevertheless the reference and the application are different." A different truth is to be represented.

4. "What man of you . . . doth not leave the ninety and nine . . . and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

As on the occasion when they attacked Him about healing on the Sabbath, He asked them whether they themselves did not drag out an ox or an ass which had fallen in the well on the Sabbath, Luke xiv. 5, so here He questions them regarding a case of daily occurrence wherein men are wont to show great concern for an unfortunate brute. He asks them to be their own judges. Luther: "He takes a very common occurrence and confutes them with great tact, yea He confutes them by their own practice, that they must feel heartily ashamed over their charging and censuring Him for doing in great matters what they themselves are doing in much smaller matters. How could He have better answered them than in that He says: you great masters and dear prudent souls, do you want me to reject poor sinners who long after me and come to hear me, when you yourselves for the sake of a poor sheep do a great deal more, where you among hundreds miss a single one, and leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness—in the field with the shepherd—and go after the hundredth part of the flock, and you have no rest until you find it again? And this men call doing well, and if some one should reprove you for it you would regard him a fool. And I as the Savior of souls should not do for men what you do

for a little sheep! And yet a soul is not to be compared with all the beasts of the earth."

His conduct Jesus compares with the action of a shepherd, having a hundred sheep, or rather with the owner of a flock who is also shepherd. The number one hundred is not to be pressed, it is a round, complete number. The "sheep" are mankind. The FF. interpreted the parable of the history of the Lord from eternity, a history comprehending the whole *cosmos*: one hundred is the perfect number of the rational world, angels and men. Heaven is the desert. Man is the lost sheep. Christ is the shepherd. Going after the sheep is the assumption of human nature. Jesus took the sheep upon His shoulders when He bore our sins upon the cross. The return is the ascension, and the friends and neighbors are the angels who are having a jubilee because humanity has in the ascended Lord been again exalted to heaven. Tertullian, however, restricted the import of the parable to the earth and to the present epoch, but with him the lost sheep represents the heathen.

The murmuring of the Pharisees against the course of Jesus towards sinners offers the key. He represents the shepherd who has many sheep; those "sinners" are the sheep that had been lost. In receiving them to Himself He is but reclaiming His own. The sheep is a very striking figure of a man. It represents his impotence and helplessness. "He cannot govern himself, guide himself, protect himself; he needs a keeper."

"Publicans and sinners" are counted with the flock, they are the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Israel was His own, John i. 11. The flock belongs to Him, for He has redeemed them out of the hands of their enemies, fed them upon the green pastures of His word, and led them by the still waters of His promises. But be the shepherd never so faithful, it is inevitable that here and there a sheep will go astray. So, to the Keeper of Israel who never slumbers nor sleeps, men are lost, they have gone astray walking in their own ways. And as the shepherd does not leave the wandering sheep to its fate, but goes in pursuit of the helpless creature, neither does Jesus.

The "wilderness" is not a desolate barren region, cf. John vi. 10, but simply land not under cultivation and therefore not thickly settled.

Some criticise the shepherd's leaving the entire flock, exposing, hazarding ninety-nine sheep for one. Some: he leaves the faithful dog in charge, or he commits them to a hireling. But flocks were not in charge of a single shepherd. There was wont to be a company of shepherds, Gen. xxix. 3; xxx. 37 ff.; xxx. 12; Luke ii. 8.

The shepherd had friends and associates to whom he committed the flock in his absence.

"The ninety and nine" serve to bring out the truth that the search for the lost one was not prompted by its being the sole property of the shepherd. It is but one of a hundred, but his heart clung to this one sheep as if it were his all. He prizes it not according to its intrinsic value, but according to its value to his heart. "From the greatness of the flock, the solicitude of the shepherd for his one sheep is evinced." Nebe suggests, even if the shepherd knew that sooner or later it would of itself return and that in its isolation it could defend itself against rapacious wolves, he would still not have been content to remain with the flock. His sheep was too dear to him. In faithful compassionate love he goes after the lost. He does not get angry or scold the poor creature, he grieves over it and prays and labors for it. And it was no easy journey to go after that lost sheep.

"None of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed thro'
Ere he found the sheep that was lost."

If the shepherd would find the sheep he must first go to the place where the sheep went astray, he must follow the same road, "rough and steep," on which the lost one went. "Into what bogs, into what clefts and briars and thorns his pursuing love leads him!" But he goes and goes, regardless of the burning sands beneath his feet and the flaming sun above his head. He lifts up his voice, calls the dear sheep by name, and tries in the most endearing manner to allure it to himself. Thus Israel's Shepherd went after the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Bengel: "For this reason Jesus Christ followed sinners, even as far as to where their daily food was taken, even to their tables where the greatest sins are committed." This says too little. "The Lord must not only enter the likeness of sinful flesh, He must as the Lamb of God bear the sins of the world in His own body, yea in His own heart. He bore them thus not only as He in pursuit of the wandering sheep entered the dark valley, where He thirsted in anguish and cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' but from the hour when John pointed to Him as the Lamb of God, He bore the sins of the whole world." The obedience unto death was the climax of His passive obedience, but His obedience permeated and determined His whole life. The active and the passive obedience of Christ must be recognized.

The evangelists see in Christ's life a bearing of our sins, a taking on Himself of our punishment, a mediation by Him between God and man. Matt. viii. 17, when He cast out spirits and healed all manner of sick, regards this as a fulfillment of Isaiah liii. 4; 1 Peter ii. 24 refers the same to His death on the tree.

"Forever on thy burdened heart
A weight of sorrow hung."

The burden of the world's sin oppressed Him through His whole life: either externally, in that He was despised, reviled, persecuted, or internally, in exciting His heart's compassion, as when He saw the multitude panting and fainting like sheep without a shepherd, or when He sighed deeply as He stood by the deaf mute, Mark vii. 14.

"The sting of death which He suffered was so bitter because He not only outwardly endured the most painful and ignominious death, but also because with the increase of His sufferings, the guilt and the damnation of the world likewise increased." All through His life He drank from the bitter cup whose dregs He drained in His dying hour. "And if the last obedience was meritorious so must have been also the first obedience, which was the preparatory school for this." Jesus as the true Shepherd followed the sheep into his life of sin, and felt the same inwardly as well as outwardly; and as the shepherd goes not only a short distance but until He finds the sheep, "so the Son of man goes after that which is lost not only with the purpose of finding it, but until He does find it."

The shepherd cannot rest, hard as the journey may be; it is His own sheep, it has grown into His heart; He is shepherd and no hireling. Jesus cannot let the wanderer go his own ways, though he must be sought through long and great trials. "The lost man belongs to Him as the Saviour of sinners, and His heart belongs to the sinner, and impels Him to seek unremittingly."

We cannot too strongly emphasize the utterly helpless condition of man in sin, taken captive by the devil and led away from God's word, 1 Peter v. 8. "Our wretched, miserable plight stands day and night before the eyes of Him who has engraven our names on the palms of His hands, and it will not let Him rest. The wandering to and fro of the lost sheep, that cannot find the way back, seems to the faithful shepherd like an unutterable sighing, 'come and help before I perish.'"

5. "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing."

The search is not in vain. As every laborer is worthy of his

hire, so faithful pastoral duty like this will not go unrewarded. "Seek and ye shall find," is the promise. "It cannot be that the child of so many prayers shall perish," said a bishop to the mother of Augustine. The shepherd finds his sheep. What now does he do with the starved and pining creature? He lifts it to his own shoulders and that with joy. Bengel: "He might have employed the agency of a servant; but love and joy render the exertion to himself sweet and delightful." No one but himself shall carry home that sheep. "Lost as the sheep is," says Luther, "it has sense enough on hearing the shepherd's voice to go right to him and will not be turned away from him, though all the world should woo and call it. Neither has the shepherd come to show his anger to it, to thrust it away or cast it into the jaws of the wolf, but all his thought and concern is in the kindest manner to woo it and to deal with it as gently as possible. So Christ, when He has found the sheep, does not execute the law—though He would have the right. Neither does He drive it before Him like other sheep and let it go by itself, but He runs to it and lays it upon His shoulders and carries it the whole way through the desert, enduring himself all the labor and care, only so the sheep will have rest and comfort, aye, and He does this with all His heart, He is so rejoiced that He has it again." Luther contemplates also the dear lamb lying with entire rest and security on the back of the shepherd and glad to have so soft a place and needing not to walk, secure from dogs and wolves, *i. e.* from error and lies, danger and destruction. "So does the Lord Christ for us, when He redeems us, which He once did in His body by His sufferings and death, and which He does in effect continually and spiritually when He has it proclaimed to us that He died for us and bore our sins in His own body on the cross."

Nebe: "The life of the found sheep is contingent upon the shepherd carrying it. Should he bear it for only a short distance and then set it down to run of itself, it would perish in the way. It is not sufficient for him whom Christ found in the desert of his sins, that He bear him for awhile, He must bear us evermore. His bearing us is our life."

6. "And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends . . . Rejoice with me . . . for I have found my sheep which was lost."

Nebe rejects the usual interpretation that the shepherd carries the sheep back to the flock. Not to the ninety and nine which were left in the wilderness, does he bear his sheep, but, as the text explicitly says, "to his house." The flock out in the fields is at a disadvantage compared with the one which was lost but which is now brought into the house, to a place of peaceful and favored security. It is

henceforth the darling. The FF.: The Lord bore the lost sheep into heaven, either by bearing in His ascension humanity with Him into heaven, or He bears on His heart in heaven the lost sinner who has been found. Heaven is the home of Jesus Christ, John xiv. 2. At the ascension He returned home. He took a lost sheep with Him, one that He followed even to the cross.

Bengel understands by the φίλοι and γείτορες "different classes of the inhabitants of heaven, nay even of the angels," v. 10. "Neighbors do not occupy the same, but an adjoining house; friends are those joined together by inclination." Heavenly beings have a profound interest in the loss and recovery of souls. Nebe, however, does not seek in heaven for the counterpart of these two classes, though maintaining their distinction. "The joy of the shepherd on finding his lost sheep did not disappear under the heavy burden he had to carry; it seems rather to have increased, so that by the time he reached home it became so great, so overpowering, that he could not confine it to himself. His own heart was too small for so much joy, he must find others with whom he can share it; weary as he was from the long search, he goes out to seek and to call partners of his joy. He first goes to friends, persons standing nearest his heart. And such a shepherd with such a heart of love has many friends; but numerous as the friends are, they are not sufficient to help him bear this great burden of joy. Hence he proceeds also to the neighbors, who are close to him outwardly rather than inwardly, and begs them, likewise, to rejoice with him. His whole heart is turned into joy, and he would have everything rejoice and exult,"

"Rejoice with me," share my joy. The shepherd's joy surpasses that of the sheep which was found. Unutterable love has bound up his life with that sheep.

"The sheep, my sheep, the one that was lost—" so, literally the text, "the one which you know about." In order to explain his joy, he describes it to the neighbors, as his sheep, his lost sheep, It was his even when lost. His right remains unimpaired. Not as in v. 9: "the one I lost." "The sheep being a living creature is lost of its own accord, in contrast with the *drachma*."

As the shepherd celebrated a grand festival in his house over his recovered sheep, so is it an hour of highest joy with the Lord when He reaches the goal with the burden of a soul. And those who love him, who are friends or neighbors to him, will not stand murmuring, "He receiveth sinners," but will hasten to rejoice with Him that rejoices, and to bless and glorify Him for finding the lost sinner. Such is the course of those in heaven, as the Lord

now reminds these cavillers "who despise the sinner-seeking and sinner-saving grace."

7. "I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, (more) than over ninety and nine . . . which need no repentance."

"Unto you." "Impressively the murmuring of the Pharisees is rebuked by this joy." Bengel presses the Future, as if that joy in heaven would occur when He would ascend amid shouting and triumph. Nebe: "The joy of heaven occurs every day that a sinner is found and rescued by the good shepherd." Meyer: "The Future refers to every circumstance of the kind that occurs." As often as a sheep is found new joy swells the volume of heaven's bliss.

"In heaven:" by those who inhabit heaven. Bengel: "The spirits of just men, who are sharers in this joy the more in proportion as they have the stronger tie of connection with men." He holds "angels," v. 10, to indicate "an ascending climax." Cf. Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 1, 4, 6. Luther: "God and the entire heavenly host." The solemn, festive, rapturous joy is shared by all. The father of the prodigal in his overjoyed welcome to the returning lost one, certainly represents God. Nebe emphasizes the point that Jesus does not say "In the Father's heart," to show the cavillers that as not only He rejoices over the lost publicans and sinners whom He has now recovered, but all noble, pious, merciful souls join in this joy, so also not only God in heaven rejoices over the successful work of His Son in the heart of sinners, but with Him also the entire population of heaven. All heaven is filled with joy over that which so displeased these Pharisees. Heaven and earth constitute indeed one house (*oikos*) for God. The spiritually-minded are in communion with heaven. The eye of faith hath glimpses of the unseen world. And the angels of God ascend and descend not only on the Son of man, but on every one whom Christ draws to Himself. The pure and blessed spirits which are sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation, know of our peril and our rescue, even though we know them not. Nebe: "Voluntarily are they grieved and suffer a diminution of their blessedness when we fall into sin, and then again they join in the holy joy of the Lord when He succeeds in redeeming us from destruction." "Into such connection with the angels has God placed His Church." "Such friends have we, but how little we take it to heart."

And all this joy is over "one sinner that changes." How immeasurable the worth of one soul! The good shepherd goes not in pursuit of a flock, but of a single sheep, of each individual lost

sheep. "He does not care for souls in general, but in particular." Each individual soul is the object of special concern, of His watchfulness, His seeking, His carrying, His love. John xi. 5. And a soul has this value not only in His eyes, but in the eyes of the heavenly world. God and all His holy angels rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory when one poor wanderer returns. What must be the measure of their joy on seeing all the publicans and sinners returning!

How does Jesus come to speak of *μετανοία* (change of mind)? The subject is the lost sheep and its being found. "The shepherd finds it only when the erring one hears his voice, gives attention to his inviting call, when he repents and his heartfelt confidence lets himself with his sins be carried by Him." He finds only the sheep who lets itself be found. No unrepentant soul is a lost one found.

The joy over the one lost sheep reclaimed is compared with another. *μάλλον* is wanting, cf. Matt. xviii. 8; Luke xviii. 14. More joy over a sinner repenting, than over ninety-nine "righteous ones who need no repentance." Augustine recognized a certain irony in this. Meyer: "The legally righteous, who indeed from the legal standpoint have no need of repentance, not from that of the inner character. They need not repentance, so far as they have not swerved from the standard prescribed by the law, while in a purely moral relation their condition may be altogether different, (the Pharisees). This explains the greater joy over a single sinner that repents." The elder brother of the prodigal is "distinctly and aptly described as such a righteous man."

Some object that those murmuring cannot be compared with sheep which have not wandered from the fold. How can they be regarded as sheep of the flock of the good and true Shepherd? So far from listening to His voice they murmur at Him. *μετανοεῖν* and *μετανοία* must not be used in different senses. Hence these "righteous" ninety-nine are regarded as absolutely righteous ones, who need not change, after whom the Shepherd need not go out. They require no bringing home. The FF.: Angels. But as these are represented v. 10 (and so here) as rejoicing over the repentant sinner, we should have to conclude that they are less joyful over their own blessedness than over the salvation which the lost sinner experiences. This seems absurd.

Bengel speaks of those not needing repentance "inasmuch as they are with the shepherd and have long ago obtained repentance." "The righteous is in the (right) way; the penitent returns to the way." Nebe claims this interpretation to accord

with Scripture in general, as well as with the context, cf. 1 John iii. 6, 9. He that is born again is a *δικαιος*, "a righteous one," *i. e.* one who needs no *μετανοία*, "repentance." True, the regenerate also sin, but not wilfully; they are rather passive in sin than active, and sin is not imputed to those who are justified. A new foundation of repentance, Heb. 6, is not required, only the removal of the debris that accumulates upon it. A new course of life is not called for, but we must be careful not to depart from it. So in the text: the sheep that is lost corresponds to the sinner, the being found corresponds to the repentance of the sinner, *i. e.*, the general radical change by which he is made a new creature. Nebe, therefore, looks for the righteous ones upon earth, repudiating the suggestion that Jesus does not stop to ask whether there really are any upon earth. He holds that although the Christian life is to be a continued repentance, and that although we daily confess our sins and pray against temptation, yet we have the righteousness which avails before God, we have been justified by faith and have no longer need of repentance. This is a truth, but one that could certainly not be comprehended by the Pharisees to whom it was addressed.

These penitents must not be regarded as better than the righteous; they occupy the same plane of moral perfection, and yet there is more joy over one of the former than over all those pious ones who walk in righteousness. Luther finds analogies to this everywhere. The lost thing always causes more pain, sorrow and anxiety, and that which is found again is always more dear and causes more joy and comfort than that which remains and has not been lost. "A mother with many children loves them all, and would not part with one of them. But if one becomes sick there is soon a difference; the sick one becomes the favorite, and the mother is not concerned for the others nor waits on them as diligently as she does on the sick one. Any one who would judge the mother by this attention would have to say: She only loves the sick child, the well ones she doesn't love. This, says Jesus, is my way. In the additional parable He sees an admonition that others shall follow Christ's example and not cast out sinners, but seek them and bring them to repentance."

8. "Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one doth not . . . seek diligently until she find it?"

Nebe contends that it is unworthy of the divine word to repeat here under another form just what was given clearly enough in the first parable. This he maintains against the FF., who held the shepherd and the woman to be virtually the same. They explained

the *drachma* by human nature made subject to the passions. The light was kindled when the Logos became flesh, who lightens up the darkness not only by the splendor of His divinity but also by the brightness of His life. The "sweeping" was His driving away the darkness which had settled on the world, etc.

Nebe claims that something new is set forth by this parable—and this new thing is not incidental merely, or supplemental. The first parable portrays the Son, the third, God the Father. As between these we have the parable of the lost *drachma*, why should not this be recognized as a portrayal of the work of the Holy Ghost? But the Scriptures nowhere else compare the Holy Ghost to a woman—though a striking comparison is perceptible—and Jesus follows the analogy of the Scriptures. Cf. regarding the shepherd Is. xl. 11; Jer. xxxi. 10; Ezek. xxxiv. 10 ff.

Luther makes the woman the Christian Church, and this accords again with Old Testament imagery. Israel is the betrothed wife of Jehovah, that it may obey him as the betrothed wife her husband. Hos. ii. 21. Falling into sin Israel commits adultery with strange gods, Jer. iii. 1; Hos. ix. 1; cf. Eph. v. 23, where the New Testament takes up the figure to express the relation between Christ and His Church, and Rev. xix. 17; xxi. 9. It is a beautiful, striking and instructive figure.

The woman had ten *drachmæ*, while the shepherd had one hundred sheep and the father two sons. *Δραχμή* only here in the New Testament. It is of Greek Asiatic origin and often mentioned in the Apocrypha. Matt. xvii. 24 has *didrachma*. It was of nearly the same weight as the Roman *denarius*, and worth about 20 cents, having on the obverse side mostly the head of a king, or an emblem, on the reverse side the image of a heathen deity.

Nebe interprets it not of "the rational creature in general, but the human species." It is represented by a *drachma* "either because this has an image and superscription, or, because it is made of precious metal." The first is a reference to the image of God in man. Bengel sees here the intelligent and voluntary sinner, *vs.* the stupid sinner in the first parable. But Nebe thinks the publicans and sinners did not show themselves stupid and ignorant. He finds the occasion for the selection of the *drachma* stated in xvi. 15, which chapter is closely connected with xv. Nebe: "The Pharisees and scribes viewed themselves as the divinely called shepherds of the people. Jesus has shown them what a shepherd's duty is. But they were also covetous, lovers of money. A *drachma* had great value to them. They were ever intent on acquiring one, and if they lost one they did not say, lost

is lost, but with diligence and care they sought for it, until the lost was found. This offers the point of connection: "of what value is man, compared with a *drachma*." If they seek so energetically for the latter, should not the lost human soul be searched for much more earnestly?

Godet recognizes in this the only difference between the two parables; others, the chief difference. Common to both is the divine solicitude for sinners; the difference is: the first shows compassion to their misfortune, the second, the value attaching to their personality.

The FF. regarded "ten" a round, complete number. Gregory the Great: "The totality of rational creatures; man is but a single unit, while there are nine different classes of angels." Some: the *drachmae* are heavenly gifts. Nebe sees in the diminishing numbers the percentage of loss, the shepherd losing one out of a hundred, the wife one out of ten, the father one out of two. Such is the relative magnitude of the loss. "The smaller the number possessed, the greater the joy over what was recovered."

With a lighted lamp "she sweeps the house." This is dirty, servile work; with the light and broom she cleans out every corner, where the dust has long lain undisturbed. Though not very agreeable work, she prosecutes it with diligence, until she has her reward in finding the coin.

Nebe: "The woman loses her *drachma* as often as the shepherd loses a sheep. He who is not a *drachma* of this wife is also no sheep of this shepherd. The shepherd loses his sheep but through no fault of his does the sheep tarry behind and wander off; the wife loses the *drachma* but the *drachma* does not lose itself from the wife. The church cannot wash her hands when one of her children goes astray and justify herself; and those Pharisees were not free from blame that their brethren became sinners and publicans. The church loses her children when her candle is under the bushel and the broom is not faithfully applied; when the woman would seek the lost coin she kindled the lamp and took the broom into her hand."

The lamp represents God's word. With this the Good Shepherd went out after the lost sheep of the house of Israel. To the poor the gospel was preached. "To them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." "If the church would seek what she has lost she must preach the word of God pure and unadulterated, warm and living"—in one hand the candle, in the other the broom. The sweeping will make dust on man's part. The church must exercise discipline—clean out the filth that

gathers, if she would find jewels. This discipline is not applied to the lost, but to that which is in the house, and which is the cause of some being lost.

Nebe: "The coin lies on the floor, she that seeks it must bow down and bend over. The church can only seek, when she keeps humble before the Lord and comes down and comes near to the lost. The search with the consciousness of one's blameworthiness, with the feeling that we have not discharged our duty, is painful." The shepherd does not really seek for the lost sheep. He goes after it, knowing in advance where it is to be found; the woman seeks here and there, till she comes to the right place.

Ἐπιμελῶς indicates her diligence and care. She searches, determined to find. She is sincere, in earnest, hence, too, she will have her reward.

9. "And when she hath found it, she calleth . . . (female) friends and neighbors, saying, rejoice with me," . . .

"The woman is the bride of the shepherd: no wonder that her language is almost literally the same as his." According to propriety she celebrates her joy with her female friends, not with a company of men. The idea contained here is simply that her joy is too great for her own heart to contain. It wells up in such proportions that she must share it with a great company of her kinswomen and neighbors. "In the greatness of her joy she, however, does not forget her sin. She confesses to the jubilant throng that she found the coin "which I had lost."

The Middle *συγκαλλῆται*, instead of the Active v. 6, "describes the action more precisely."

10. "Even so . . . arises joy in the presence of the angels of God" . . .

The conclusion differs somewhat from that of the first. (1) *ἔσται* and *γίvetαι*." Various reasons for the distinction are offered, none satisfactory. See on v. 7. (2) "In heaven," and "in the presence of the angels;" the latter, a more precise statement. The joy is not limited to the angels. Literally the text says: "He who is enthroned before the angels is rejoicing; when He their Lord and God rejoices, His ministering spirits rejoice with Him." Meyer: "The joy of God is rendered perceptible, as He, surrounded by the angels, allows it to be recognized in their presence." Luke xii. 8.

Luther: "The dear angels and heavenly spirits have a feast of joy and sing a special *Te Deum* when a poor sinner is converted. Now if a man rejoices over one lost sheep when he has found it and a woman over one lost *drachma* when she finds it, and the angels

in heaven rejoice over one sinner when he turns and repents, why do you Pharisees condemn me, says Jesus, that I receive Publicans and sinners who come to me and hear diligently and heartily my preaching." He adds that such sweet and comforting words "we should carefully consider, that we may learn to comfort and support ourselves against an evil conscience and against our sins."

Nebe warns against the error of identifying the second parable with the first, at most, only carrying one feature of it, the diligent seeking, into the scene of the good shepherd.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

JESUS RECEIVES SINNERS.

1. How true ! 2. How precious this truth !

Or,

1. He seeks the lost with joy.
2. He commands to seek them with diligence.

CHRIST'S RECEIVING SINNERS REVEALS

1. The displeasure of the self-righteous.
2. The salvation of the lost.
3. The joy of the Savior.
4. The pattern for the church.
5. The bliss of the saints.

JESUS THE FRIEND OF SINNERS.

1. He misses the lost one.
2. He goes after it till He finds it.
3. He bears it when found.
4. And has joy over the saved one.

TWO EYES ARE WATCHING OVER YOU:

1. The eye of the Lord, the Good Shepherd.
2. The eye of the church, the diligent careful woman.

SEEK THE LOST WITH

1. Compassion for them.
2. Recognition of their worth.

THE LOVE OF SINNERS, OUR DUTY.

1. As disciples of Jesus, the Shepherd.
2. As children of the church, the diligent woman.

THE BRIEF CAREER OF A CHRISTIAN:

1. Lost. 2. Sought and found. 3. Borne and saved.

THE IMMEASURABLE VALUE OF ONE SOUL.

1. The Lord Himself goes after it till He finds it.
2. He commands His church to go after every individual soul till she finds it.
3. And declares that there is joy before the angels over one sinner that is found.

THIS JOY BEFORE THE ANGELS

1. Vindicates the honor of the Lord.
2. Condemns the Pharisees.
3. Consoles the repenting sinner.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke vi. 36-42.

THE connection with the last Gospel is obvious. There, in reply to the cavil about his receiving sinners, Jesus showed that heaven and earth rejoice over a sinner's repentance. Now he addresses the Pharisees directly and admonishes them to be merciful like their Father in heaven. As in the case of the shepherd and of the woman who commend themselves to all, God by His word calls all with the most faithful love and concern, but He calls them through men, "through men to fellowship with other men." "Hence they who are to call, need such an admonition, as well as those who are to receive the called into their fellowship." The Pharisees had been commissioned and qualified of God to point the blind their way, but in their pride and contempt they failed to extend their hand to publicans and sinners, and were at pains to block the way for such as came seeking fellowship with Christ.

This Pericope has no parallel, except in Matthew for several verses. It is a fragment of the Sermon on the Mount, Luke giving in large part the individual verses in a connection different from Matthew. In answer to the charge against Luke's grouping, Nebe feels persuaded "that this text which the church has from ancient times recognized as a complete unity, will prove itself on closer examination not a meaningless compilation, but a rounded whole."

36. "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

The parallel in Matt. v. 48 has the more general term *τέλειος*, "perfect." Note the connection with what precedes our passage. God is represented there as making no distinction in His kindness between the thankful and the evil-minded, as being kind indiscriminately to all. Mercy, *οἰκτιρμῶν*, is only another form of goodness, *χρηστός*. "God, who has a heart so tender that it is moved and He must help whenever He sees one suffering, is our Father. Would we be children of the Most High then we must also become merciful. Man's destiny is to become godlike—this eternal truth even the heathen recognized. Therefore it behooves them to be-

come, *γίνεσθε*, what God is. "The ultimate goal of the Christian is to have Christ formed and transfigured within him, to become like God." But the goal is not easily reached. "He who would in but a single point become like God must deny himself and overcome himself. God is merciful, but we have become so corrupted, we are by nature so destitute of mercy, that the Lord must require mercy of us with earnest words and strenuously warn us against a practice which is thoroughly unmerciful. Mercy is the root of all offices of kindness—some of which (sparing mercy and giving mercy) are immediately subjoined.

37. "And judge not, and ye shall not be . . . and condemn not and ye shall not be . . . release, and ye shall be released:"

Jesus warns first against passing judgment on others. Matt. vii. 1. Judging is the very opposite of being merciful. Some have thought that every kind of judgment is forbidden, especially as the idea of condemning and punishing generally in the New Testament, clings to the verb *κρίνειν*. John iii. 17, 18; Rom. ii. 1; xiv. 3. The humble and wise Christian has no inclination to become a judge of others, though occasions arise when he may and must. Peter by the Holy Ghost judged Ananias and Sapphira, and Paul, the incestuous person at Corinth, 1 Cor. v. 1. Paul forbids judging, Rom. xiv. 4; 1 Cor. iv. 5, and then again gives command to judge, 1 Tim. v. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 2. Among the charisms of the Holy Ghost given to believers, was that of the *διάκρισις* of spirits, 1 Cor. xii. 10, and Christ Himself requires of His disciples that they judge, Matt. xviii. 15 ff.

Nebe: "Unwillingness to judge is in fact ungodly, unchristian; a sign of the lack of understanding, or of weakness and the fear of man." De Wette: "The Christian ought to judge and prove the conduct of others, not with a view to censure and condemnation, but for the purpose of improving others." Gal. vi. 1-5. This is inseparable from truth, love and duty.

Nebe presses the distinction between this term and *καταδικάζειν*, the latter expression being that for condemnation. A pleonasm is not to be thought of. Accepting this interpretation, some think of an adjunct idea being implied in *κρίνειν*. "Judge in small matters," straining out a neighbor's gnats and swallowing one's own camels, judging rashly, officiously, as a faultfinder, as a busy-body, whose curiosity spies out other people's conduct. Bengel.: "To judge without knowledge, love or necessity." Others simply: do not judge, affect not judging, be not judges, do not set yourselves up as judges, do not assume the office of judge, *per contra*, show mercy even as your heavenly Father does. There is too much of judging,

fault-finding and condemning among Christians. More charity would cover multitudes of sins over which we now pronounce sentence. It is not essential to a believer to become a judge of other men. When we hear God's law we at once apply it to others so as to judge them, not ourselves. Such was the use made by the Jews of the oracles of God, which had been entrusted to them. Rom. iii. 2. Christians are to have a different spirit. Setting up a high standard for others and judging them by it, using this standard for the discovery of the shortcomings of others, while we fail to subject ourselves to the same test, is not the most acceptable service we can render to God.

Thiersch: "If we have more light than others, we should use it as a means of testing ourselves, so as to make our growth in knowledge a growth at the same time in humility and charity." Severe judgment of others is not the best proof of our own piety, though some evidently assume that their extraordinary capacity for discovering motes in a brother's eye, entitles them to special consideration before God and man. "God will note their own failings so much the less, the more they discover those of others!"

Nebe thinks that such judges have a sense of condemnation in their own hearts, and they seek to escape from this judgment by mounting the judgment-seat themselves, and pronouncing an inexorably severe judgment on their neighbor. They would by this means throw sand into people's eyes. By their severe moral judgments they would prevent others from judging their morals. To enforce this command the Lord, who knows how hard it is for man to subject himself to this prohibition, annexes the promise "and ye will not be judged—" *οὐ μὴ*, in no sense.

Our own judging is brought into close connection with our being judged. Here there is nothing but the simple connection *καὶ*. In Matthew it is *ἵνα*, κ. τ. λ., "that ye be not judged." Luke merely gives the consequences of our judging. The result of your judging others will come back in judgment on yourselves. Matthew, on the other hand, warns, without saying whether this judgment is a mere natural consequence of our own judging or a penalty imposed for it.

Many refer the expression to the final judgment at the end of the world, or to the Messianic judgment. Some: No more than the divine law of moral reciprocity. As we judge others so they according to a divine law will judge us, v. 31. This counter-judgment of men may be sinful like our own, yet does it execute the law of God. Nebe holds that the Passive here corresponds with the foregoing Active, and it seems best to allow both the same

sense; unseemly judgment of one another. The reference throughout the passage is to earthly recompense. The expression is not so much a matter of counsel as the statement of a principle. "Your judgment is a blow in the face of God's law, but the law is elastic and the blow flies back on yourself." As the member by which we sin is wont to be punished for its sin, so frequently the very sin we commit against others is in turn committed against us. Nebe: "Your sin makes an opening in the wall, and how will you hinder your neighbor, now that he is not for a moment safe himself, and has been provoked by you, from using this opening for your injury?" This Nemesis was clearly recognized by the heathen.

He who assumes to judge another does so to belittle and to condemn him. Hence climactically Jesus proceeds: "and condemn not, etc." Why should we condemn one? Even if he has fallen into a great sin and we judge him justly, we have no right to condemn him. Each stands or falls to his own master. "Nor is it our duty, for the Son of man is not come to destroy but to save men's souls." It does not become us to lift stones against our brethren—we are in the same transgression, but supplicating hands ought we to raise that they may be saved. There goes John Bradford but for the grace of God, said Mr. Bradford on seeing a convict led to the gallows.

Nebe: "He who pronounces an unmerciful sentence on his neighbor, will receive an unmerciful sentence not only at the last judgment, but already during his life will he experience merciless judgments, and no one is eager to fall under the condemnation of men." Bengel: "By judging we decide as to the goodness or badness of an action; by condemning, we determine as to the person, what the guilty one has deserved."

We are to show mercy not only negatively, avoiding injury—it is a wretched love that simply does no injury to one's neighbor. We are to do him good, positively. Mercy will make gifts. In our social life it is impossible that one does not commit wrong against another in person or in property; therefore we are liable to seizure or imprisonment. Hence the Lord directs "release, and ye shall be released:" release everything from seizure, forgive debts, pardon, give up, forget, and as you do, it will be done to you. Instead of avenging personal wrongs and injuries, discharge a man from them. Hold him not responsible.

But mercy is not satisfied with even this. It is not content to lift a heavy burden from a neighbor's heart, but loads him in turn with tangible, perceptible, practical proofs of kindness.

Love not only forgives, it not only removes an evil, it also gives. Hence:

38. "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure . . . into your bosom. For with what measure . . . it shall be measured to you again."

The clauses about condemning and giving are not in Matthew, but in this last reference to measuring he agrees again with Luke. This giving is not limited to foregoing a claim, surrendering a right. Mercy not only gives up what it might have, but it freely gives what it has. Note the good Samaritan who besides oil and wine, his beast and the payment of charges at the inn, offered really himself, having placed his life in imminent peril by tarrying where the robbers had left another one half dead.

Let love not grow weary in giving, for it will also in turn receive. The bread given to others keeps on increasing until as in the feeding of the five thousand we have more than we began with. Instead of becoming poorer we grow richer by giving. "He who sows love will reap love." And he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Behold the reward promised to mercy by Him who is the pattern and inspiration of mercy: "Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, placed in your bosom."

Bengel erroneously refers the different terms to a variety of goods. Others recognize a climax. Those who would recompense him who has shown them mercy cannot do enough to satisfy their own hearts, strive as they will to pour into his lap their blessings. They bring a large measure, but it appears too small, so they press down the contents in order to add more; then they shake it so that the grains will settle together more compactly and make more room, and then they keep heaping on top even while it is running over, and before much can run away they pour it into their benefactor's bosom, *κόλπος*: "the hollow formed by the upper forepart of a rather loose garment bound by a girdle." Nebe makes it "the bosom" neath which the heart beats, to express the delight felt by the heart in the exercise and recompense of mercy. And he thinks that he finds here the explanation for the change from the Passive to the Active voice: "they will give." The merciful one is made to rejoice not only in the return to him of an overflowing measure, but in the personality of those who make the return. "By his love he enters into fellowship with others. A close band is formed by mercy between man and man."

"With what measure," etc. Matthew connects with the negative exercise of mercy, Luke with its positive manifestations. Others

have been objects of your compassion, like favors will come to you. If the measure you used was large, they, using the same measure, will make you a large return. This is not to be taken *tale quale* simply. Jesus has shown already that we receive more than we give, that the reward exceeds the service rendered. The merciful shall obtain mercy. Matt. v. 7. That the same measure is used in returning a kindness or an injury was doubtless a proverb. Very often a seed corn of merciful kindness results, like the seed sown into the ground, in a harvest of blessings, thirty, sixty, one hundred-fold, "whose sheaves cannot all be gathered into your bosom."

This promise of mercy is not always fulfilled by those who have been its objects—it is said, do a man a favor if you would make him your enemy—yet a righteous judge who rules the world will see to its fulfillment in an exceeding abundant measure. Retribution in kind is the law of the universe. Is. lviii. 7, 8.

39. "And he spake also a parable . . . can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit?"

Matthew's recension of the Sermon on the Mount omits this "parable," and proceeds at once to v. 41 of our Lesson. There is a parallel, however, for v. 39 in Matt. xv. 4, and for v. 40 in Matt. x. 24. Some hold that these two verses sustain no connection to what precedes. They are out of place. Meyer: "As Luke himself indicates by *εἰπε καὶ τ. λ.*, etc., it begins a new, independent portion of the discourse." But cf. Luke xxi. 29. "As the evangelist proposed to himself, i. 1, to set forth in order his Gospel, it is not likely that he here jumbles together a discourse without sense or reason."

Αἰροῖς points back to v. 27 "those hearing him," not exclusively to the disciples.

According to the parallel, Matt. xv. 4, "the blind" one represents the Pharisees. "The Sermon on the Mount defines the position of Christ toward the Pharisees and Sadducees; it is the address from the throne in which he develops the policy of the kingdom over against the policy of the Pharisees and Sadducees." The people understood it and were astounded. Matt. vii. 28. "Luke recognized the polemic character of the sermon and prefaces it accordingly by two interviews of Jesus with the Pharisees." But He not only refutes the Pharisees, He contrasts the pure and the corrupted doctrine, the genuine and the hypocritical righteousness. Hence v. 40 is not to be limited to the relation between the Pharisees and their pupils, but to apply also to that between the Lord and His disciples. Jesus is a teacher, and by His

word "judge not," etc., He opposes Himself to the Pharisaic teachers. He addresses His hearers as His disciples, who now receive a wholesome timely warning to break with their leaders.

Nebe connects thus: "The Pharisees were the veritable counterparts of that which the Lord had been pressing on the heart of His hearers. Who was so quick to mount the seat of judgment as these Pharisees? Remember the Pharisee praying in the temple, and the two scenes at the opening of this chapter. Of forgiving love they knew little. They gave alms, but with a cold hand and a dead heart, in order to be seen of men." "These masters in Israel were blind, not only in this that they had beams in their eyes and knew nothing of mercy and grace, but also in this that they had no eye for the mercy of God which was presented to them as a pattern."

Τυφλός. Bengel: "Suffering under the pressure of his own beam; namely, destitute of compassion and love." 1 John ii. 9; 2 Pet. i. 9; Phil. i. 9. And thus, themselves smitten with blindness, they offered themselves as guides to the people who were also blind. Certainly he who would show others the way must himself know and tread that way. Otherwise he will only lead into error and drag into the pit those who trust themselves to his leading. The guide goes in advance, and when he who is guided is also blind the result of such leadership can easily be forecast. "To make disciples who are of the same perversion into which they had cast themselves, this was the outcome of Pharisaic wisdom and virtue."

40. "The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one . . . perfected will be as his master."

"The teacher is the guide of the disciple, who treads in his footsteps, and follows him like a shadow, sees in all he does or omits, his pattern, his ideal." The most he can do, then, is to be up with his master, he cannot go beyond him; the moment he does, he ceases to be his disciple. If the Pharisees are merciless, proud judges, the people led by them will soon have learned to judge and condemn as mercilessly and as proudly as their teachers. They had fixed their own stamp upon the nation. "Israel was at last throughout a Pharasaic nation." Cf. Rom. ii. 17 ff., where Paul portrays in the same picture a Jew and a Pharisee.

Κατεργισμένος. "Every one that is, however, fully prepared shall be as his teacher, i. e., when he has received the complete preparation in the school of his teacher, he will be equal to his teacher (will land where the former is). He will not surpass him. But surpass his teacher he must (in knowledge, wisdom, disposi-

tion, etc.,) if he were not to fall into perdition along with him." 1 Cor. i. 10. When the disciple has reached the highest goal he can but be as his master—so far as he is a disciple he cannot exceed him—if the master be blind so is the disciple and both land in the pit. Note the emphatic position of this Perfect.

Nebe adds: He hints to them of another teacher, who with the words "Judge not, etc.," presents Himself to the people. If the disciple of the Pharisees becomes himself a Pharisee, though originally this is not his intention, to whom shall those who need a master go, if not to Him, who does the opposite of those leaders, or rather deceivers, of the people? The disciple follows after his master, to Him, therefore, the only Teacher, should the people repair, if they would be saved from the pit—to mark His word, be intent on His work, be transformed into His image.

41 "And why beholdest thou the mote . . . but considerest not the beam" . . . ?

Bengel: "But why dost thou, whereas a master ought to excel his disciple, wish to be master of him, to whom thou art even inferior? To be teacher thou oughtst not only to have vision, but also unobstructed vision." Meyer: "In order not to be blind leaders of the blind, ye must before you would judge (41) and improve the moral condition of others (42), first seriously set about your own knowledge of yourself and improvement of yourself"—an entirely logical connection. Some deny that there is any indication that this is directed specially to the leaders of Israel. It is addressed to the people, to those whom He admonished "judge not, give, etc., after He has exposed to them the blind leadership which they had blindly followed. Jesus viewed them all as unconscious, secret Pharisees, though they did not belong to the party. "You can find in your own bosom the Pharisee sitting in judgment over his neighbor, pronouncing a merciless sentence upon him. How foolish, how irrational. how insane this judging and condemning others!" We may challenge him who is engaged in judging motes, "Why, how beholdest thou the *κάρφος*—the smallest particle of wood in the eye?"

Why this figure? A splinter or a thorn is found much oftener in the foot or hand than in the eye. Bengel: "The noblest, tenderest, and especially the most conspicuous part of the body." Nebe repudiates this application. The point is that the mote-judge, to be true to his name, must hunt up motes where one cannot with ordinary vision find them. The eye conceals the mote or splinter. In every other exposed part of the body in which a splinter may lodge, it is more easily perceptible than in the eye, the

eyelids concealing the little atom of which one indeed is not conscious. "But the argus-eyed mote-judge penetrates through every veil and covering; mercilessly he exposes to the light what has been deeply hidden." And that, too, when it is the eye of a brother that thus conceals an infinitesimal mote. It is thy brother whom thou pursuest with thy piercing, furtive, spying glance, it is thy brother whom thou so mercilessly condemnest. Some see in the eye the organ or representative of spiritual vision, calculated to awaken serious thought about one's fitness to lead the people.

Κάρφος, a slight moral defect, the slightest and most unapparent blemish. In the case of a brother, with the keenest eyes they strain out flies and the smallest specks. Their own camels they swallow. Of the beams in their own eyes they are unconscious.

Δοκός, a rare, odd, extravagant, and apparently uncouth figure. How can we conceive of a rail or rafter in another's eye? It is an old metaphor among the Jews. The people were evidently acquainted with the grotesque figure. "It enters into the domain of what is incredible or nearly so, for we cannot believe or understand that any man should find pleasure in judging and condemning his neighbor." While judging another he is at the same time judging himself, in condemning that one he is condemning himself. The brother's fault is a small one, but your very act of judging shows yours to be large.

The beam in contrast with the splinter (both are of the same substance) is the image of a grave and dark sin. Some: The beam, this great evil, obstructs the sight of the judge, incapacitates him for judging. Luther: "Every one who judges his neighbor has a big beam, while he who is judged has only a small mote, hence by condemning this one he is himself tenfold more deserving of judgment and condemnation."

It is certainly paradoxical that one who has a huge rafter in his eye should be so keensighted as to perceive a tiny splinter in a brother's eye—as great an absurdity as for a blind one to lead a blind one, an exploit which it certainly suggests. The expositors find here a crux. Some: The beam obstructs the vision. Some: It sharpens the vision for other's faults. It is like a microscope. Our own sinfulness certainly deprives us of that correct spiritual vision, which is needful to judge rightly of another's transgression, though this may not be directly taught in the text.

Nebe: "The mote-finder judges and condemns, it is his merciless fondness for judging and condemning which causes him to see the mote. Had he put this aside, he might in the name of the Lord

pluck out the mote. Not the sight itself is hindered by the beam, but the right divinely acceptable brotherly vision."

The observation of Jesus, that those who search for motes in others are not conscious of their own beams, is found widely in ancient and modern literature.

42. "Or how canst thou say . . . Brother, let me cast out the mote . . . when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first . . . and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote . . ."

The latter half of this verse is almost literally the same as Matt. vii. 5.

"Hypocrite." This turns the light on the whole procedure. With the affection and concern of a brother, the mote-finder asks most politely that he may be permitted to relieve his dear brother of that infinitesimal mote, that he may correct the very slight error (it is all dear brother, brotherly love, brotherly service), and yet with all this concern for righteousness and affectation of brotherly kindness, the man is so stone-blind that he does not see the cord-wood of iniquity in his own eye. He is a miserable, heartless judge, not a brother at all. The zeal for righteousness is confined to the condemnation of unrighteousness in others. This is arrant hypocrisy; an insult to God's righteousness. He who has genuine zeal for righteousness will most earnestly examine himself to learn wherein he is yet lacking. In the absence, therefore, of real zeal, how canst thou pretend to assist thy brother who lacks but little? No, no, it is not the concern for the brother's well-being, not the zeal to help him to righteousness, that makes him see the mote. What he feigns to be a work of mercy is a work of judgment. It is malicious joy that makes him detect it—the captiousness of secret bitterness and hate that prompts him to tender his kindly brotherly service. Verily, if he could get a chance at that eye he would show marvellous gentleness and tenderness toward the sensitive organ! A crowbar and a pick would no doubt be employed if one of these blind hypocrites should attempt an operation to extricate the mote out of your eye. These are the men to perfect the sight of others, men of a captious temper and fault-finding disposition, who have neither love nor mercy in their hearts! Verily, Jesus uses the right term "hypocrite"—and He directs such a one to begin at home—where a crowbar may indeed be needed. You Pharisees put forth high claims for your own righteousness and perfection, and you put on the appearance of great zeal for righteousness. But you have only the appearances—you are hypocrites, pretending to be one thing while you are another. Your whole business and occupation is hypocrisy.

"They are neither concerned to please God nor to serve their brethren, or they would long since have removed the beam from their own eyes." Before they can reform others they must reform themselves, especially as they need it so much more than the others.

Know thine own sin, consider its magnitude as the eye of God sees it, cast away thy hardheartedness toward thy fellowmen, be merciful as thy Father in heaven is. When thou hast learned and experienced the mercy of God in the removal of thy great blindness, then shalt thou see clearly to cast out another's mote.

διαβλέψεις. Then your vision will be clear enough to cast out another's mote (potential). Others: concessively, then mayst thou cast around to pluck out, etc., etc., (permissive). You will have a clearer eye and a sweeter, lovelier spirit for correcting others. It is not said that the casting out of the mote is the result of taking out of the beam, (self-improvement prompts us to improve others)—but simply that it follows this. Luther: "The attempt to reform the rogue in your own bosom will give you so much to do from day to day that you will never find time to pull out the mote of another." But Nebe thinks that this would be to deny and abandon brotherly love, if one did not seek to correct a brother's fault so far as it lies in his power. "This purifying treatment Christ does not set forth as a general command, and on the other hand He speaks only to such as feel themselves called to proceed with men in this manner." Men are hypocrites "as long as they do not apply the judgment of God to themselves, but they are instruments in God's hand when they submit to have their natural endowments purified by saving grace." It is both our right and duty to deliver a neighbor from an evil which cleaves to him. But we must remember first, that it is our brother whom we would deliver; and secondly, that brotherly love must impel us to this work and continually animate us in it. It is an eye in which the mote is found. It must be handled very carefully and tenderly and forbearingly, if everything is not to miscarry. The love of faultfinding is not synonymous with the love of a brother. The latter qualifies us to correct another, the former disqualifies us.

The subject of the Lesson may be treated from many points of view—a circumstance not to be regretted, for we cannot too earnestly or too often preach against mote-judging, and urge the exercise of true mercy toward one's neighbor.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

GUARD AGAINST JUDGING OTHERS.

1. Remember the mercy of your Father, which you have experienced.
2. Remember the judgment, which you thus invoke on yourself.
3. Remember the Lord, who has given to you an example.
4. Remember the sins, which still cleave to you.

HOW TO CONDUCT OURSELVES TOWARD THE ERRING BROTHER.

1. Bear with him in mercy by word and deed.
2. Direct him aright with tenderness by word and deed.

BE YE MERCIFUL.

1. Remember your Father's mercy.
2. Remember the righteous recompense.
3. Remember your Master's perfection.
4. Remember your own great sinfulness.
5. Remember your brother's salvation.

THE DUTY OF MERCY IS

1. Perpetual.
2. Comprehensive.
3. To be learned from the Lord.
4. Facilitated through self-knowledge.
5. A duty richly blest.

MERCY A CHRISTIAN DUTY:

1. God in Christ its source.
2. Christ its master.
3. Salvation in Christ its goal.

CHRISTIAN MERCY (**CHARITY**).

1. Its source.
2. Its manifestation.
3. Its aim.
4. Its reward.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke v. 1-11.

THIS Sunday, says Nebe, closes a small circle of the Trinity Period. The first phase, that of the calling, is now completed. Note once more the order of succession. The First Trinity Sunday exhibits the import of this Semestre of the church. It is the period of decision. The Second Sunday presents the universality of the gracious call, which, however, the act of man circumscribes. The Third Sunday treats of the agents through whom the call and the acceptance of sinners takes place, showing the activity of the Lord and His church. The Fourth Sunday removes an obstacle and teaches the duty imposed upon man by the gracious call; "Be ye merciful, even as your Father, etc." The Fifth Sunday, finally, shows how the gracious call of the Lord seizes men and makes them men-fishers. The heavenly call of God is transmitted through human speech and human activity. The circle is complete.

A synoptic question confronts us. All of the evangelists narrate a call of Peter. John i. 42 reports Christ saying to Peter when introduced to him: "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas." Matt. iv. 18-22 and Mk. i. 16-20 report Him walking by the sea of Galilee, and, as He sees two fishermen washing their nets, saying to them "I will make you fishers of men." A little further on there is a similar scene respecting the sons of Zebedee, and henceforth the four disciples follow Him.

There is much rationalistic criticism in connection with the alleged difference between Luke's presentation and that of Matthew and Mark, especially as the latter records only the summons and the promise, whereas Luke records the great miracle. The first two evangelists report no acquaintance between Jesus and Peter prior to the call. Luke, on the other hand, iv. 38 ff., gives the history of the miracle in Peter's family as occurring before, yet the effect of the miracle of the draught of fishes on Peter shows, it is claimed, that he could not previously have known aught of his Master's miraculous power. In other words, Luke

contradicts himself [?] But a mind may be differently affected by different miracles, yea by the same miracle at different times. At one time the impression may be superficial, at another very profound. "Quite readily the first miracle may have wakened up psaltery and harp in the heart of Peter, whereas the second one threw him upon his knees and impelled Him to the confession of his sins."

The acquaintance of Peter with Jesus, which precedes the call in Luke, is not denied by Matthew and Mark. Nor is it true that here the miracle determines Peter to follow Christ, whereas the other synoptists give the command and the promise as the determining factor. Just the contrary, the miracle moved Simon to ask the Lord to depart from such a sinner. Here also, v. 10, it is the word of promise which decides him to follow Jesus. Against the charges of fancy and myth, etc., Nebe says: "those words of Peter, 'Depart from me,' etc., give the impression of such a characteristic original utterance, that it breaks every net which would draw it into the bottomless abyss of a myth. The whole narrative in Luke is, on the other hand, so fresh, so completely of one cast, that we must entirely agree with Schleiermacher, Neander, Bleek, Godet and others who regard it as original."

Some of the FF. held that Matthew and Mark report a third and final call. Others, on the contrary, that Luke reports the third and final call, and Matthew and Mark the second. Euthymius: "At the call reported by the first two, they abandoned their vocation by day, but at night they continued to follow it—at least for one or two nights."

The synoptical accounts sustain the following relation to John's: The latter records the first meeting of Jesus with Peter and Andrew. Those who then met and for a time kept together, separated again, but later Jesus summoned these disciples to be His constant companions, His apostles. The first aim of Jesus was to stir up the minds of the people, to awaken a longing for the kingdom of God. Those who came to Him from the circle of John's disciples received the first impulse, and with it the task to spread this impulse in their circles. Later the Lord selected from the circle of those awakened the Twelve, and took them into His constant fellowship. Nebe draws a comparison between the Twelve and the pious women who followed Jesus from Galilee, who certainly did not at once and for all attach themselves to Him, but for a time would come and go again, until they could no longer tear away from him—excepting only that a very special summons to follow Him was afterward addressed to the former.

1. "Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed . . . and heard the word . . ."

Our Pericope places us in the great year of Jubilee, in which, as Jesus said, Matt. xi. 12, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force." A powerful movement sways the masses. "From every quarter they stream to Jesus, the great magnet who draws them over hill and dale." He has to suffer from the pressure of the mighty crowd. He has to learn early the exercise of patience, for He will need such a measure of that as no mortal ever required.

Ἐπικεισθαι, xxiii. 23; Acts xxvii. 20; 1 Cor. ix. 16, to be pressed, crowded, thronged. "The people became oppressive to Him"—not the crowding of the sick to touch His garment. They streamed and crowded together to hear the word of God from the lips of Jesus. And as He stood down on the shore of the lake and not on a mountain summit, His voice could not penetrate the dense mass which was constantly growing. Those farthest away would in order that they might better hear Him, throng and push those who stood nearer, and thus jostle the Teacher Himself.

Αὐτὸς ἦν ἐστῶς: "He on His part was standing," etc. Against the pressure He had to sustain from the throng He continued standing for awhile, "like a rock standing immovable against the floodtide of humanity."

How often we find Jesus by the Lake of Gennesaret! Cf. Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, Sexagesima, Laetare. Was it the loveliness of nature which ever drew Him thither? Josephus speaks of its wonderful beauty and fertility, its palm trees, fig trees, walnut trees and olives, the extraordinary character of the climate which produces plentifully both the vegetation which requires the coldest temperature, and that which grows best in hot air or in temperate regions. He calls it a happy contention of the seasons, as if every one of them laid claim to this country. Bell, Jud. iii. 10, 8. Pliny confirms this.

2. "And he saw two boats standing . . . the fishermen had gone out of them . . . washing their nets."

Two boats are no longer to be seen. The lake lies there as dead, and is not plowed with boats any more. "The curse of God rests upon the spot which rejected the blessing of the Lord."

Whose the boats were we are not informed, but incidentally we learn that the one belonged to Simon, and conclude that the other belonged to those who were "partners with Simon" in the miraculous draught. Nebe calls attention to the strangeness of the scene: The people in crowds press to hear His preaching, the fishermen pay no attention to it, but are engaged in cleaning their nets after

the night's work now done. Who could have believed that Jesus was not drawn to any of that crowd that had come from far, as He was to those fishermen, who had just then thought of nothing better than to attend to their earthly business, and who, notwithstanding that they had long known Him, showed no interest in Him! But Jesus knows what is in man, and He knows that these apparently indifferent men would become His chosen apostles.

3. "And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little . . ."

Though not able to endure further the stifling oppression, He must in some way satisfy the longing of the crowd for the word of life. If the land does not allow Him standing room He will enter the sea, He will turn a fishing-boat into a pulpit, He will use not only fishermen, but in order to illustrate the analogy of the two vocations, He will make use of their ships in order to catch men. "When the hour of grace strikes for us, He will find ways and means of drawing us to Himself."

It is Simon's boat—already signaling a priority. He takes possession and command of it, just as He did of the ass when about to make His entry into Jerusalem. He is Lord of all. "His stepping into Simon's boat brings about the turning-point in Simon's life." Nebe pictures him as feeling very different from what he did when he plunged into the sea to be with Jesus as quickly as possible. He may surmise what Jesus is after, but he is out of humor, sullen, this morning. He is disgusted with the sea which has long been his delight. He has no services to offer, the Lord has to ask for his assistance, the Lord who so lately healed his mother-in-law. Jesus does not command him, for he has not yet reached that stage where He might say to him, do this, and he does it. Bengel: "He begged as not being yet intimate with Him." Others: "He asks a favor from Simon as one already a disciple." Nebe recognizes in this request a proof that Simon was to Him the nearest of those present, for one is wont to prefer such a request to His best friend.

Ἐπαναγαγὲν, a technical term for sailing out into the deep sea. Peter evidently obeyed with promptness, and when the boat had moved some distance from the land Jesus sat down in it and taught the multitude. He had not thought of withdrawing from the people, but to gain an advantageous position from which He might preach to these thousands.

We do not have the contents of His sermon, but we know, says Nebe, that while He was speaking to the people on the shore, "He was especially addressing Himself to the man who sat im-

mediately behind Him at the helm. This sermon was preëminently intended for him. He was washing his net, giving no attention to the word preached, when the Lord entered his ship and requested a favor, and now he sits there quiet in the boat with Jesus, unable to get away from the word, even if he wished to. He is in a manner already caught; he must hear." "His nets are laid aside, but the Lord in the meanwhile throws out His net in order to get a catch."

4 "And when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Put out into the deep . . . for a draught."

From the mass in general He turns to Simon in particular. Nebe: "He throws not His net over all in a mass and calls us not in the lump; He deals in particular with every individual soul. Only hereby is He the Saviour of all men, inasmuch as He cares for each individual soul. He now turns to Simon, no longer with a request but with a command: "Put out, etc." Peter is now in a better frame of mind. The sermon has not been lost on him. Above, he was to put out *ὀλίγον*, "a little," now *εἰς τὸ βάθος*, "into the deep." The first direction, "put out," is singular in reference to Peter alone who was the steersman, the second *χαλάσατε*, "let down," plural, in reference to the whole fisher-company in the vessel.

Bengel: "The Lord does not immediately promise the draught but first puts to the proof the obedience of Simon." Some find in *εἰς ἄγρην* the promise. After all the experiences vouchsafed to Simon by Jesus, the latter is about to reveal Himself mightily to Him as Lord, as Lord over him, as Lord over all. The prophet mighty in word will reveal Himself also mighty in deed. "Leave your helm when out in the deep, and with your associates seize your nets and throw them for a draught." Nebe thinks that Peter was glad that Jesus did not command him to steer back to the land, that he had been so deeply affected by the sermon that he could not bear to see this preacher disappear again in the great throng. Besides, he did not himself care with his deeply moved soul to join in that surging mass. The heart to which the divine hook has been fastened does not want tumult and distraction, but silence and solitude.

This command to cast the nets, after all, did not suit Peter, who as ever when he received a command had objections to offer. What? Down with the nets? By daylight, the sun already high in the heavens! Successful fishing requires the dark and silent night. And besides, they are here in deep water; the fish are found along the shoals; "they love the shady, cool ground."

"Throw out the nets," which they have just carefully cleaned and dried in the morning sun! The whole night through they had fished without intermission, and caught not a single fish, and now after their utter failure and bitter disappointment they are to make another attempt. They are to hope for a catch when according to human reason the last hope has been quenched. And who requires this of them? From their youth they have been accustomed to this sea, they are thoroughly versed and expert in fishing, and Jesus has just lately removed to Capernaum from the interior. What does He know of fishing? This must have been a severe test for Peter, who would have preferred doubtless to continue sitting at His feet. Of course, a word of promise, "for a draught," encourages him to obey the command, but what a demand such a promise made upon his faith.

A catch was thus in prospect, but the magnitude of it was not foretold. The Lord would not move us to obedience by the promise of extraordinary rewards. It is not good for us to see the full blessing in advance. They were content with the assurance of some results. What is done at the command of Christ, in the name of Christ, can never go unrewarded. Thus He ever commands that at which we stagger, but His commands are always accompanied by a promise. "The ark of the covenant contained with the law also the pot of manna."

Peter stood the test bravely, heroically. As soon as his objection had passed his lips he proceeded to obey.

5. "And Simon answered . . . Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing: but at thy word I will . . ."

Ἐπιστάτα, superintendent, occurs only in Luke in the New Testament, and that, too, always addressed to Jesus, xvii. 13. Luke never has "Rabbi," which the other evangelists have so frequently. The two terms correspond, cf. viii. 24, with Matt. viii. 25 and Mk. iv. 38, Luke ix. 33; Matt. xvii. 4; Mk. ix. 5. "Peter does not yet address Him thus as his doctrinal chief, but generally, vv. 1, 3." This very first word shows that Peter means to obey at all events. Whatever the Master may command he must irresistibly carry out. Nebe holds that διδάσκαλος is the exact equivalent of Rabbi, and that Luke has the disciples call Jesus ἐπιστάτης, when either His glory has radiated before their eyes, or when they desired He should in some way bring counsel and help, or if they complain that some one has done violence to His majesty. Baur distinguishes ἐπιστάτης from the κύριος of the Christian *usus loquendi*, as "defining a relation in which the twelve stood over against Jesus as one of them as yet inwardly foreign commander, if

not in servile fear, yet in solemn veneration." The term thus expresses in a lively form the feeling of the disciples toward the exalted majesty of Jesus. "Simon has recognized Him who preached to the people from his ship as one having authority."

Listen to his complaint: "toiling," "all the night," and yet "we have nothing." They began early, they were at it late, indefatigable, never giving up, without a moment's rest, working, *yea κοπιῶσαντες*, exerting all their strength, but all their long-continued toil was not rewarded with a single fish. It is vain to rise up early, to sit up late. Our will, our pains, our toil, our running and tearing, our planting and watering, does not bring results. God's blessing does. Man cannot reverse this order. He wants to have the care and let God have the work. Hence it comes, as Luther suggested, that every one seeks money and gain so that he need not work. "Labor you must, this is commanded, but leave care to God, believe and labor."

Peter preëminently needed this object lesson. The most resolute, rushing, restlessly active among the Twelve, it was his natural propensity to depend on self-help. Our strength and wisdom, the Master teaches him, avail naught, they do not even suffice in the affairs of our earthly calling. This experience he could carry with him into his spiritual calling, when fishing for men. He would thus from the start recognize the true position, and despairing of self "come to Jesus and stay with Him as the fountain of all power, the spring of every blessing."

"Toiled the whole night and caught nothing," that is the stone in the way, "but," nevertheless, faith springing up in the heart does not stop for a stone or a mountain. Faith in the word of Christ arms one with the power of Christ, and there is nothing impossible to him that believeth. Peter triumphs over Simon. Faith conquers reason. Obedience bears off the victory. "At Thy word"—that is sufficient. All obstacles vanish when the Lord speaks. *Ἐπί*, Meyer: "For the sake of, on the ground of, Thy word." It gives the reason for the proposed action. "Peter had become sensible of the power of Jesus' words." Matt. xiv. 28.

Χαλάσω, "I will let down." In his capacity as captain he speaks thus, cf. *ποίησαντες*. But Nebe suggests that while he had steered the vessel into the deep, he did not propose to sit still at the helm, he will take a hand also in the fishing, his own hand shall cast the net into the deep. Peter is always true to his nature. He may have feared, too, that his colleagues might hesitate or demur. He will take the lead, show them a good example, and, as later, strengthen their weak faith by his strong faith.

His language implies a conflict; faith is not so easy, it requires a resolve to do what the Lord commands; reason protests, others deride, but by planting himself on the word of Jesus he conquers. He no longer asks concerning heaven or earth. It is enough that Jesus has spoken. What a deep impression that sermon from his own boat must have made upon Peter! He must have experienced in it the power of God, hence he ventured now upon a work which, according to all reason, was hopeless. "And if the word of Jesus moved Simon to this venture of faith, it is evident that if results follow his effort, he will most thankfully ascribe them to Him who equipped and directed him to the work."

6. "And . . . they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their nets were breaking;"

No one will come to shame who builds upon the word of Christ. Do what He has commanded, and because He has commanded it, and your net will in due time be filled. So multitudinous was the catch, that when they were about to draw out, the immense weight was beyond their strength and beyond the strength of their nets, which began to break. Faith recognizes the miracle. Unfaith pronounces itself a fool when it would ascribe cunning to Jesus Christ; as, for instance, that He saw shoals of fish in the water, and bade them try their nets there. It was not at the spot where they made the haul that Jesus gave the command. They were still hugging the shore when He said, "put out into the deep and let down your nets." Besides, these old fishermen would have descried a shoal of fish instantly had they been in sight.

Strauss can find nothing in the Old Testament that will enable him to make a myth out of this miracle; he can find no chrysalis from which the butterfly is developed. We may assume either that Jesus by His omniscience knew these fishes to be there, or that by His omnipotence He brought them there just at this time, like the fish with the half-shekel in its mouth. Peter doubtless knew that the fish collected near the shore, not in deep water, and that it was against nature to expect a draught there. The idea that Jesus created these fishes on the spot is at variance with the wonted character of miracles, which are usually connected with something at hand. Cf. this fishing with John xxi. 3, 6 ff.

Allegorical expositions make the ship the church, the net doctrine, the sea the heathen world, the breaking of the net heresies.

The breaking of the nets was only beginning. Note the Imperfect. Cf. i. 59. Further damage was averted by the assistance signaled for. How wonderfully God helps, doing exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think. Truly man's extremity is but

His opportunity. The unalterable order in Christ's reign is seen, first the kingdom of God, etc., and all these things will be added.

7. "And they beckoned unto their partners in the other boat . . . And they came, and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink."

On the last clause cf. last clause of v. 6. There is no exaggeration in either statement.

Kareuevov beckoned, signaled. Some: Being unable to speak from astonishment and fear. Meyer: "The other craft was still lying close to the shore, v. 2, too far away for the sound of the voice to reach, hence they could only make signs, gestures, which is in fact customary with seamen." Nebe: "Peter, realizing what was in the net was filled with awe, and loud calling out would be incongruous with his feelings."

The net was doubtless giving way where the few hands held it. By others seizing it at another part the strain at this point was relieved, and the whole multitude of the fish secured. The Master who performed the great miracle did not work another to save the breaking net or to secure the escaping fish. Where human effort will answer, the supernatural is not called in.

Métroχοι, v. 10: *κοινωνοί*, partners. James and John were Peter's associates in the fishing business, having a common interest. They went out together and divided the results. Even the present miraculous haul they are to divide, although the partners had no share in the work. They were upright, honorable men. None of them sought his own. "Already in earthly things they were one heart and one soul." And this they are to be in heavenly things. "Christ does not dissolve the relations He finds, but glorifies, sanctifies, blesses them."

These "partners" like Peter himself did not here come for the first time in contact with Jesus. They had been in His company before, John i. 40 ff. Only a signal was needed to bring the partners promptly to the assistance of the others. The net was saved, the contents made sure, the promise fulfilled, the reward brought into their possession. Never in all their lives had this fishing firm met with such success. The vessels themselves almost sink beneath the water's edge from their weight. Richly has the Lord given, yet no more than could be borne, as He always gives both joy and sorrow. What a lesson of Christian beneficence! 'Share God's gift with thy neighbors. There is enough for all. Both ships were filled to the water's edge, sunk low in the water by reason of the weight. Had Peter attempted to secure all for himself his vessel would have sunk and he would have lost his fish, his boat and himself.

8. "But Simon Peter . . . fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

The boat sinks under the burden of the miracle, and Peter sinks before the Lord, overwhelmed by the exhibition of His grace and power. "He fell at Jesus' knees." So the Gergesene viii. 28, with a similar entreaty, for which Mk. v. 6 has *προέκυνησεν*, worshipped. So we are doubtless to interpret here, cf. Acts xvi. 29. The term "at His knees" is not always given. Here it is quite picturesque, showing the tumult of feeling in Peter's breast. With the one hand he seizes His knees unwilling to let Him go, with the other he signals Him to go so that no misfortune may befall Him. "Simon Peter embraces the knees of Jesus as a suppliant in deep distress; he lies prostrate before the Lord as God manifest in the flesh," "Lord" at the close, being not so much by way of address, as "an expression of the ground why he cannot endure to have Jesus in his ship."

"Depart from me," *i. e.*, out of my ship. So some. Recognizing in Christ the manifestation of a superhuman power and conscious of his own sinful nature, he is terrified—some great evil may overtake him—"just as men feared the like on the appearance of God or of angels." 1 Kings xvii. 18; Is. vi. 5; Mk. v. 17. Sinful man is ever stricken with terror at a supernatural apparition. A sinner cannot without risk continue in the presence of the divine. Nebe: Not only now, for a moment, but evermore shall the Lord depart from him. There can be between them no longer any personal relation, since he knows what a sinner he is.

"That recognition of sins is deepest which arises from the recognition and acknowledgment of the divine glory." Only as we come to know God do we come to know what sinners we are. Some emphasize "man;" in contrast with the mighty, holy Lord, Peter regards himself only a weak and sinful man; cf. xix. 7, where the Pharisees also add *ἀνὴρ* to *ἁμαρτωλός*, "He who professed to be Son of God was the guest not only of a man, but of a sinful man."

Some interpret the prayer, of Peter's concern for the Lord. It is not safe to be on the same boat with a criminal. But there is no warrant for regarding Peter as a criminal pursued by the curse of heaven. It seems impossible that one who is overwhelmed with the majesty and glory of the Lord should at the same moment soberly recognize the danger of the Lord in sharing his own boat, especially since the sea must have been calm.

It was not simply the presence of the Lord, but that presence which manifests itself in saving blessings, which brought Peter to

this state of mind. It is the overwhelming revelation of the goodness and grace of the Lord which so powerfully affects him. The key to it is found in v. 5, "at thy word." He is compelled now to view the result as the fiat of His power. Hence his falling on his knees. It is a homage of fear and solicitude. When the consciousness of one's sinfulness is awakened the manifestation of the divine can only produce fear. He confessing his sins cannot salute such a manifestation with joy. He feels uneasy in its presence. It must disappear before he can breathe freely. Richly as the mighty hand has now poured out gifts, how soon, the guilty conscience reasons, may it send down penalties and curses, and grace turn to wrath, especially as that is the normal thing to happen to a great sinner. This request to depart is not then to be viewed as a delirium of joy or surprise, but as an earnest prayer.

Nebe: "The incomparable blessing of God poured into his lap draws Peter to Jesus' feet and breaks his heart. He fears not the wrath of God, but the earnestness of His grace. The goodness of God leads him to repentance, Rom. ii. 4. Not that God's goodness in bringing the richness of His saving power before the soul, reveals at the same time the extent of His consuming wrath. God's goodness shall not only lead us to repentance, but remain before our eyes and heart while we are repenting. Thus we have the confession of one whom the goodness of God has brought into the deepest repentance—a case of genuine Christian experience. Peter feels his unworthiness, and is moved to confess himself a great sinner. He is becoming changed. The sermon to which he listened is working in him, and now that the wonderful miracle is superadded he recognizes the divine in Jesus, and trembles on account of his sins. Such grace he does not deserve—much rather the wrath and displeasure of God, and he becomes anxious how he may abide before God and this man, who has shown such grace to him, the unworthy, sinful man." Peter is to learn, like Luther, the path of life by a deep experience, so that he may point it out to others. Hence he is brought first into spiritual distress, into terror of conscience, before he obtains pardon and comfort, so that both the ship and the world become too narrow for him, and he knows not where he is to remain in the presence of Christ, whom, indeed, he has found not terrible, but loving and gracious. The conscience stricken by the terror of sin, would fly through a hundred worlds when God comes near, yea fly before the Savior who offers pardon and safety. Such grace is too much for us. "And it does not comfort a man to tell him what goodness and grace God has shown him in advance; this only terrifies him the more,

because he realizes then that he only deserved greater wrath by his unthankfulness and his sins." Even such as have experienced divine comfort must again and again be astounded at the overwhelming magnitude of divine love, our hearts being too contracted to comprehend it. "Stay Thy hand, Lord," was the cry of a saint who felt himself overpowered by the grace of God. It is a mercy that superabounding grace is concealed for us in a veil, obscured often by the clouds of affliction. Luther: "Such is the unnaturalness of our nature, that where Christ comes with His gracious comfort, it takes to fright and flight before its Saviour, whereas it ought to run after Him. It would rather become clean and worthy and by itself deserve a gracious God and Christ. Peter would fain seek peace and escape from sin by getting away from Christ and seeking something in himself, that he may be worthy to come to Him, and thereby falls only into deeper terror till Christ rescues him by His word."

This sudden and un-heard-of relief from a deeply-felt misfortune was too much for Peter. He prostrates himself and confesses his sins. The nearness and grace of the Lord bring his sins before him in such a way as if there could be no forgiveness. He cannot endure the presence of this divine being. Yet he cannot get away. He is transfixed to the spot, he cannot move, he is held fast by the Lord, his power is broken, Christ has overcome him. Terror drives him away, faith rivets him to Him. He cannot free himself from the Lord. If the bond is to be dissolved it must be by Jesus Himself.

9. "For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught" . . .

All with him in the boat were seized by the same feeling which overcame Peter. *θάμβος*, used by Luke alone, expressing in iv. 36 the impression made by the sermon of Christ, and in Acts iii. 10 connected with *ἐκστασις*. It expresses, accordingly, a high degree of amazement. Andrew was doubtless with Peter, and some hired men, all of whom shared the feeling to which he as usual gave the expression.

10. "And so were also James and John . . . partners . . . And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

These two also were seized by the same feeling of awe and astonishment. They now first saw and learned what had happened. They are, of course, as fishermen competent to judge of the miracle, and as they also had probably been toilers with Peter throughout the night, it must have made upon them an overwhelming impression. It was doubtless in accord with the purpose of Jesus to have

these two brought to the scene and made witnesses of the miracle. The three principal apostles especially needed this object lesson. All had been planned before. John, as well as Andrew, had been pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, and had gone quietly after Him. Thus while the net was being drawn up, the Master Himself secured four in one catch; the four which in all the lists of the twelve stand at the head: Peter, the chosen vessel for the circumcision, Andrew, the careful one who brought the Greeks to Jesus, John xii. 22, James the protomartyr, and John the beloved.

The miracle was a great inspiration and confirmation of their faith. In their own wisdom and strength they had long toiled fruitlessly, now when the Lord is with them and they submit to His word what success is achieved! The lesson could not be misunderstood. Our own work avails nothing. If we would have results we must hold to the Lord and do the work of the Lord. The star directed the astrologers to Jesus, the fishes point the fishermen to Him. "They preach: surrender yourselves wholly to Him; He provides for the whole man, soul and body."

Jesus addresses Peter, who had spoken to Him, v. 8, though doubtless as representing all: "fear not, from now on thou shalt catch men." The first sentence contains an absolution, the second a command. So the prophets also, cf. Is. vi., when called into their office, saw the Lord in His glory, confessed their sins and then received command to preach. "The vessels through which the word of God is to be conveyed to the world, must first be cleansed that they may proclaim the word pure and untainted, and may seal their preaching by a righteous life."

The glory of the only-begotten Son of God is full of grace and truth. Hence the word "fear not." You are, indeed, a sinner, and your sins have laid hold upon you, but I am the Saviour of sinners and you have laid hold of me in faith, be of good cheer. "Thou art mine and I am thine, and we remain forever undivided. I do not depart unless I take thee with me into my fellowship, my service, my kingdom." Not only will I not condemn thee, but I will accomplish through thee a greater miracle than this: a multitude of men shalt thou gather with the net of the gospel into the kingdom of heaven. Fear not! I am not come to smite sinners with my righteousness and majesty. Holy as I am, I will not depart from thee. My righteousness shall draw thee to me that thou also through me mayest become righteous. "Fear not, Peter, thou hast not only a gracious God, but thou shalt also help many others to come to that to which thou hast come." Joyfully assured that his sins are forgiven, he never after this

knew fear, except when seized by the panic on the eve of the crucifixion. The experience of divine grace had permanently cast out fear.

With the discharge from his burden of sin Jesus commits to him a charge analagous to his earthly vocation. Jer. xvi. 16. The miracle is a prophetic symbol. On the great deep sea of humanity he is to prosecute another calling,—there, too, at Jesus' word let down the net, after men have toiled in more promising waters through the long night of the ages. Here the draught is one of fishes, there of undying men. As here the multitude in the net was so great that others must come to his help, and he could not confine the haul in his own boat, so there, too, he will have such multitudes in the gospel-net, that partners must be hailed, as it would be impossible for him by himself to bring in all who are caught by the word. How Jesus forecast the success of His cause! What a miracle of prophecy! "What a perspective this opens to the apostle, not so much of the result of the proclamation of the gospel in general, as of the success of the preaching of the apostles, and especially of his own!" Acts ii.

'Απὸ τῶν νῦν: from henceforth, cf. ix. 2. *ῶντων*, catching alive: "in characteristic keeping with this ethical draught (winning for the Messiah's kingdom), as well as with the figure taken from fishermen." More detailed instructions are not given here—many suggestions are offered by the figure—"but it must have been clear to Peter that his preaching must reach the 'Fear not' through the world, and extol the grace of God which crowns the penitent with grace and mercy."

11. "And when they had brought their boats . . . they left all, and followed him."

The earthly calling yields to the heavenly. There appears to have been no hesitation. Their solemn duty is clear. They renounce all they have, and this sacrifice is not grievous, for "His yoke is easy, His burden light." Their ships are taken to the shore. There let them remain. They are now fishing in another element.

**ἅπαντα*. Bengel: "Even the fishes they had caught," but that would have been inconsistent with the Master's practice to allow no waste. Nebe: "As the Magi brought the parents of Jesus money for the trip to Egypt, so now Jesus gives the parents of the four fishermen, whom He takes from them, some compensation for the loss which at first they would seriously feel."

"Christ did not choose as apostles the high, the wise, the learned, but men who were capable of self-denial." The kernel

of apostolic faith is the self-denying love of the Son of God, and the kernel of the Christian life is the self-denying love of the Christian man."

As all follow the Lord, it is clear that every one applied to himself the words addressed to Peter, that the hearts of all burned to follow unalterably the Son of God. They had doubtless previously followed Jesus, cf. Acts i. 21, 22; John i. 43 f., "but not yet in such a way as to leave all that they had."

"The most suitable theme from this Pericope is the gracious call of the Lord portrayed in its wisdom and its relations to human activity. Earthly calling and heavenly calling are placed side by side, and the blessing of God appears, which crowns every work in faith."

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE ART OF CATCHING MEN:

1. Exhibited toward us by the Lord.
2. To be exhibited by us for His sake.

THE WISDOM OF JESUS IN OUR CALLING.

1. How He brings His word to the indifferent.
2. How He reveals His glory to those affected by the word.
3. How He brings to repentance those beholding His glory.
4. How He confirms in His fellowship those confessing their sins.

JESUS THE TRUE FISHER OF MEN.

1. He comes near with a kindly request.
2. He blesses us in a wonderful manner.
3. He brings us to the knowledge of our sins.
4. He takes us into His salutary service.
5. He strengthens us by His constant fellowship.

THE LORD CALLS US

1. To the obedience of faith.
2. To the experience of His grace.
3. To follow after Him.

WHAT THE LORD REQUIRES OF HIM WHOM HE CALLS:

1. A believing heart.
2. A busy hand.
3. A humble mind.
4. Brotherly love.
5. Cheerful self-denial.

IT IS OUR LORD WHO BLESSES THE EARTHLY AND THE
HEAVENLY CALLINGS.

GOD'S CALL AND MAN'S PART.

1. Man does nothing toward the call, it is purely of grace.
2. Man does nothing in the call, but accept and trust the word of God.
3. Man does nothing after the call, but to acknowledge his unworthiness and follow Him who has called him.

WHOM DOES THE LORD CALL?

1. Him who faithfully pursues his earthly calling.
2. Him who amid earthly cares keeps a sense for the one thing needful.
3. Him who is led by earthly blessings to repentance.
4. Him who with the earthly blessings brings himself an offering to God.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt. v. 20-26.

THE Lessons of this and the following Sundays are well adapted for the beginning of instruction in the chief articles of Christian doctrine. This is especially apparent in the Epistles of the six Sundays embraced in this new section of the Trinity period. "The circle of the call is completed; our Gospel sets forth before the called, the righteousness which they must strive after in order to be acceptable to God."

20. "For I say . . . except your righteousness shall exceed . . . of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into" . . .

The connection indicated by γάρ, "for," is a crux to expositors. Nebe gives it as follows: Jesus has proclaimed the eternal validity of Moses and the prophets; but there are those who destroy the commandments and teach the people accordingly, and these shall be least in the kingdom of heaven; whosoever shall do the law and teach it accordingly, He shall be great in the kingdom. He, therefore, who would enter the kingdom must be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees are.

The righteousness demanded here is the righteousness of life, general morality, cf. vv. 6, 10, and not the righteousness of faith—*justitia imputativa*, as Calov and others have claimed. All true morality springs, indeed, from the latter. Δικαιοσύνη is not used of faith righteousness in the Gospels. The following developments of the subject by Jesus show also that moral rectitude is meant. The Pharisees were in popular esteem models of righteousness and piety. They formed the strictly pious element according to the standard which obtained. Acts xxvi. 5. Jesus attacks them on their own position. They were strict in their outward observance. But it was a mechanical literalism, a formal legalism, a mere semblance of righteousness devoid of sincerity and virtue, a false righteousness lacking a corresponding inward state, without judgment, mercy and faith, Matt. xxiii. 23.

Such righteousness the Master repudiates and thereby turns the people away from those they had hitherto regarded as their ex-

amples. The life-law of the Christian man is contrasted with Pharisaism. For righteous living something more is necessary than the scribes and Pharisees demand. Christ is more rigid than they. *Ἀέγω*: Let me assure you. It is emphatic. The fulfillment of the law and entrance into the kingdom are unattainable by existing standards. There is an ellipsis in the original, the full sense of which reads: The righteousness of Christians, if they would enter the kingdom, must by all means be better than that of the scribes, etc.

Scribes and Pharisees represent two kinds of false, inadequate righteousness. Bengel ascribes to the former the teaching, to the latter the doing. Luther: "The Pharisees maintained a pious life, outwardly violated no commandment, kept aloof from everything foreign, hence their name "the separated," the select.

In like manner the scribes, the *élite* among the Jews, were conversant with the law of God and the Scriptures so that they taught others, imposed laws upon the people and passed judgments in all things. Calvin held that the Pharisees stood much better than the scribes. Others: The scribes were the most learned among the Jews, specially authorized to expound the law in general and in particular. The Pharisees were esteemed among the people as having extraordinary holiness on account of the zeal by which they sought to observe the whole mass of Jewish ordinances. The former, again, may be viewed as holding the essence of righteousness to consist in the teaching of orthodoxy, or the intellectual apprehension of God's word; the latter held religion to consist in observances of the law, and found their righteousness in leading a life of legalism, fearing God and doing right. The former saw in religion a *modus cognoscendi Deum*, the latter a *modus colendi Deum*.

Jesus demands something more, John xiii. 17. Religion must have its seat in the heart, not in the cold regions of the intellect. True piety does not consist in outward legal exercises, it must come from a pure and new heart. "No dead knowing saves, no deadly doing; faith must be living, manifesting itself in the life, rooting in the heart." A very high requirement is thus made, which some have sought to modify, either on the score of irony: the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees is only a feigned or so-called righteousness; or, on the assumption that the better Pharisees, Gamaliel, Nicodemus, etc., are excepted. But it was to Nicodemus, John iii. 3, that Jesus said, Ye must be born again, a requirement essentially the same as this one. Nicodemus, too, and those like him are outside the kingdom of God. We must exceed in righteousness the very best of the Pharisees. Pharisaic

righteousness in its whole character, in its best representative, does not admit one into the kingdom. Luther observes, there was nothing wrong in their conduct being strict and free from scandal. God will have us abstain from all evil deeds. But the unrighteousness of their character lay in this, that because of this outward observance and rigor they boastingly considered themselves pious and righteous before God, whereas God will have not only works but a new and pure heart. The Pharisaic righteousness is content with external expressions of piety. It holds that in view of such works a man is holy and needs nothing further, the law has no further demands on him, he has fulfilled it perfectly. God is satisfied and is not angry, even though the heart within is full of sin and evil lusts. "This righteousness, says Jesus, does not belong into Heaven but into Hell. God's commands cannot be fulfilled by mere works; the heart must be freed from all wrath, hatred, envy, licentiousness and every kind of evil lusts; he who can effect this may say that he is pious. But inasmuch as sin and evil lusts are not all dead in the heart, but ever bestir themselves, though not always coming into outward action, beware of thinking thyself pious, or of hoping for heaven."

The superior righteousness is "where action and heart are together pious and determined by God's word." The law requires not only action, but a pure heart conformed throughout to the word and law of God. This we do not have, and yet we hear the sentence, unless we have it we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Luther adds, "This we are to do. Besides all the good that we can do, to humble ourselves before God and to say: Dear Lord, I am a poor sinner, be thou gracious unto me and judge me not according to my works, but according to thy grace and mercy which thou hast promised and vouchsafed to us in Christ." Jesus' aim was doubtless to warn against spiritual pride, to bring men to the acknowledgement of their impure and evil hearts, and to lead them to the hope of grace, which is the true righteousness that belongs into heaven.

The righteousness thus demanded for entrance into the kingdom, is not in conflict with Paul's doctrine of justification, but leads up to it. The faith of Christ's disciples in Him will enable them to partake of and embody the true righteousness. By the spiritual demands of the law and the impossibility of the unregenerate fulfilling it, they are brought to the appropriation of a better righteousness. Christ's attitude toward the law is also here vindicated against those, who in their exclusive claims of maintaining it, attacked Him. He meets the Scribes on their own ground, Matt. xv. 3, 6; John v. 45. It is Moses that condemns them.

"Shall in no wise enter." Cf. vii. 21; xviii. 3; xix. 17, 23. A great shock must have been given to His hearers when Jesus, whom they regarded as a great teacher, placed Himself in antagonism to their models in doctrine and conduct. Hence He now proceeds to particularize, to show them by six forcible antitheses the striking and convincing contrast between the Pharisaic conception of the law and His own interpretation and higher requirements, between the manifold limitations and one-sided apprehension and lax application of the law, and its unity, universality and purely moral absolute meaning, demonstrating the imperative need of a superior righteousness.

21, 22. "Ye have heard . . . to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill . . . shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say . . . every one who is angry with his brother . . . in danger of the judgment . . . and whosoever shall say . . . Raca . . . in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Moreh . . . in danger of the gehenna of fire."

A contrast between the *τῶς ἀρχαίους* and the *ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω* is unmistakable, a contrast which presents the Pharisaic and the Christian righteousness in their true light toward each other.

It has been strongly urged that Christ takes up here a position of antagonism not to the Pharisees but distinctly against Moses himself. But this is opposed to the context and to Christ's view of the law, 17, 18, 22, 27 ff. He always emphasized the sanctity of the law. He presupposes its perfection, Luke x. 28. His idea of a perfect religion accorded entirely with the Old Testament, but not with prevailing methods of explaining and applying it. The idea of the law had not been realized. According to Luther and a sound Protestantism, Christ merely antagonized the dominant mode of understanding and explaining the law. The absolute character of the moral law of the Old Testament is upheld, Ps. xix. 8; Deut. xxx. 19. A number of the FF., the Roman Catholic Church, Socinians and Arminians, hold that Christ maintained only a relative validity of the law. The form in which Moses imparted it to the people had only a relative value. Even in its moral requirements the Mosaic law was intended only for the people of Israel, and that in a form corresponding to the standpoint which they occupied in the Old Testament. The love to one's neighbor was limited to those of their own nation, and the prescriptions of the Mosaic law related preponderatingly only to external acts. Christ, on the contrary, extends the love to one's neighbor to one's fellowmen in general, even to such as hate us, and He always carries an act back to the motive and determines thereby its ethical value. So, unmistakably, is this also in general the spirit of the moral precepts which Jesus here lays down,

“in contrast with those from the Old Testament.” The difference is not one between the Old and the New Testaments, but between the Old and New Testament command on the one hand, and the false expositions of it on the other. Christ does not oppose his authority to an earlier. Against the objection that the Mosaic law relates preponderatingly to the outward act, Nebe quotes Luther as having recognized and confessed in his exposition of the Ten Commandments, that they begin with the command that we shall have no other God, and thereby teach that the keeping of all the other commandments springs from obedience to this one. The Decalogue also closes with the command, thou shalt not covet, thereby teaching that none of the preceding commands is kept by us, if we are not freed from evil concupiscence.

Could Christ place Himself here in opposition to the law, after having just most solemnly protested that He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it? After declaring, if any one destroy the least of these commandments he shall be the least in the kingdom, could He now solemnly announce Himself as not in harmony with Moses, and pronounce decisively against the law and the prophets, as only leading their devotees to hell? In v. 18 Jesus affirmed that the law must be fully realized; in v. 19 that in its whole extent it is valid, and in v. 20 that the new righteousness must transcend not the law, but the teaching and practice then in vogue.

According to Christ the whole law is in principle contained in the two great commandments. And indeed Paul also regards the salvation of the New Testament, especially its moral law, Rom. xiii. 9, as contained germinally in the law, Rom. iii. 21; xvi. 26.

The plea offered by Bleek, that several passages 27, 38, give the Mosaic law without additions, and that the additions 21, 31, 33, 43, are not material, is met by the answer that the additions as they were understood at the time are very serious perversions of the Mosaic principle. All are intended to blunt the edge of the law, while Christ makes the law more incisive. The addition, “thou shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths,” is evidently meant to teach that only an oath made to God is binding. Even those passages which give literally and exclusively the Mosaic text are perversions of Scripture, inasmuch as the law “eye for eye and tooth for tooth,” Exod. xxi. 24, was not a law for the individual, authorizing private revenge, but the fundamental law by which the divinely ordained magistracy inflicted penalties.

The law against adultery, v. 27, is without gloss, but our Lord's declaration offers no exception to it, “but a defense of the

Mosaic law against such violations as the scribes did not disallow." We must take our point of view from the sentiments which Jesus confronted. He directs His animadversions not against Moses, but against those who sit in Moses' seat and misrepresent him. The law *per se* is holy, just and good, Rom. xii. 7; 1 Tim. i. 8.

"Ye have heard:" not "so it is generally said." Jesus does not comment on a vague saying, but on some definite teaching. They knew only from hearing; the people had no copy of the Scriptures, but derived their knowledge from the reading of the law and its expositions, John xii. 34; Rom. ii. 13; Gal. iv. 2; Acts xv. 21. In v. 31 "have heard" is omitted. Tholuck: "To the people (and the disciples here addressed) the Mosaic law was known solely through the reading in the synagogue of the 54 portions of the law." Only through a medium were they acquainted with it, and that medium was incorrect. The leaders both of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees were scribes, hence they possessed the Scriptures, and accordingly could read their contents, cf. Matt. xxii. 31; xix. 4. But the people could only hear, and they had to accept in faith what their teachers imposed on them, without assuring themselves that it was such, free from all human additions and corruptions.

Τοις ἀρχαίοις many render "to the ancients," others "by the ancients." Of the latter, Nebe says: "if not grammatically incorrect and harsh, yet opposed to the context." He renders: not Moses and his expositors, v. 1, but they taught their hearers, *I* teach mine. Meyer finds the contrast decisive. "Ego" *vs.* the subject of ἐρρήθη; "you" *vs.* "the ancients." Wherever else ἐρρήθη occurs in the New Testament or the LXX, the Dative invariably denotes the person addressed. Rom. ix. 12, 26; Gal. iii. 16; Rev. vi. 11; ix. 4. And the technical term for rabbis is not ἀρχαίοι but πρεσβύτεροι. "To the ancients," the forefathers in general, to whom the law was dispensed, not only by Moses, but also by the scribes, for both the law and its interpretation are brought forward, just as both were taught in the synagogue, the people not distinguishing between text and comment. They were, in fact, made to believe that the law was delivered to the fathers by Moses, precisely as it was now expounded by the scribes. Their additions were put in the mouth of Moses. Ἀρχαίος is used of the recent past, Acts xxi. 16; 2 Cor. v. 17. Some: The ἀρχαίοι were the immediate ancestors of the Jews of that day. Hence—it is currently taught, or, in other generations it was taught.

Jesus selects such examples as illustrate most forcibly the earthly

element in the prevailing interpretations and the deep spiritual import of His own. *Φονεύσεις*, the Hebrew jussive Future, the milder form of command, expectation. Sometimes, **however**, **peremptory**, v. 48; vi. 5.

To this command had been added "whosoever shall kill shall be in danger," etc. Jesus does not follow the usual order of the commands about murder and adultery in the New Testament, but begins with that which protects the life of the neighbor, the one best suited, doubtless, to put to shame their righteousness.

The gloss at first sight presents nothing alien to the law, no misconception or distortion—it appears to be only adding weight to the commandment. In the Decalogue it has no threat. The expositor's addition points to the penalty sure to follow the transgressor. Luther perceives sharply the deadly wound, the perversion, which the gloss suggests. It limits all to the word "kill." There is left out of view the temper and disposition required by the command. "Thou, not only thy hand, foot, tongue, or any other member, but thyself, all thou art in soul and body, art to do no murder." "Thou" is more than the hand, kill is more than that which causes a dead body, and the prohibition is not simply that of outward, bodily murder. By this the scribes strangled the command. They did not explain but weaken it, by repeating the word "kill." The law goes deeper, even into the heart, as is shown by the concluding command, which is directed against the lust that begets murder. This the doctors of the law overlook, they have no desire for the eradication of these lusts from the heart. "They prefer to cherish hatred, reviling, injury."

To the objection that the Mosaic law was the foundation of a civil and religious theocracy, and could therefore not take cognizance of the inward temper and feeling, we reply that Christ did not put a meaning into the law which did not historically belong to it. The Mosaic legislation is a part of the divine education of man, Rom. vii. 7. The motive of obedience was spiritual: gratitude to God. The command is also relaxed by the *κρίσις*, "judgment," which is not to be taken of the divine judgment in general, but of an inferior court, as shown in v. 22 by the gradation of the courts. The *κρίσις* in both verses is the same. It was a court lower than the Sanhedrim, found in every town of 120 people, Deut. xvi. 18, which could exercise jurisdiction over lighter offenses and capital crimes, and "decree the mild penalty of the sword." 2 Chron. xix. 15. The higher court took cognizance of crimes punishable by stoning, and the very idea of an inferior court makes the offense appear less heinous, while at the same time the penalty

is limited to this world. Josephus makes this court consist of 7 members, the rabbins of 23. The term "judgment" denotes at once both the court and the punishment. Nebe: "Besides these courts the elders in every city constituted a senate, on which as the representatives of the citizens, the theocratic community devolved the duty of banning crime." It could take cognizance of capital offenses, Deut. xxi. 18 ff; xxii. 13 ff; xxv. 7 ff.

"But I say to you." Emphatic contrast of Christ's moral conception with that of the current teaching—how deeper, how much more intense His judgment! The Mosaic-Pharisaic legislation punishes the overt act, the outward crime, whereas He visits the very punishment which the Pharisaic statute inflicts on the open outbreak, on the faintest beginnings of the offense, on the passionate impulse of the heart, in its germinal, invisible inception. To Him the prohibition of murder is aimed at its ethical character, not simply at its criminal aspect. This flagrant crime is not to be thought of in His kingdom; even outbursts of anger in acts or blows are not to be mentioned, much less such gross violations of the law. The evil is traced to its hidden source, to the blind irrational impulse. Anger is a punishable offense, and still more so its outbreaks in insulting or defamatory speech. Neither thy heart nor thy thought nor anything thou hast or art is to commit murder.

In the Talmud one teacher often confronts another with "But I say," etc. It is clear here, however, that Jesus makes the impression of one having immediate divine authority, vii. 29. What must have been the effect of the announcement, You punish the actual deed, I the unlawful passion within! Anger is as deserving as you deem the act of murder; and the oral expressions of it deserve more serious penalty than murder does with you.

Πᾶς ὁ ὀργιζόμενος. Jesus designates the offenses against the command, proceeding from the lower to the higher. Observe the fine touch in calling him "brother," with whom one is angry. This brings to light the gravity of the passion, shows how unbecoming is anger. Tholuck holds that according to Hebrew usage "brother" must mean in general "one's neighbor," but we prefer the original force, denoting the universal brotherhood of man, the fraternal consanguinity of the race, Acts xvii. 26, in connection with the Fatherhood of God, vv. 23, 24; vii. 3-5; xviii. 15, 21. In v. 47 the term denotes a member of the nation.

"His brother." This accentuates the thought, it is your own dear brother whom you hate. Anger is murder. He who is angry with another transgresses this law. He is a murderer. "He

who kills smites his brother with the fist, he who is angry murders him with the heart, in his thought." Thus anger is prohibited throughout the world, says Luther, not only unprovoked anger according to our text, but even when there seems to be ground for it, 1 John iii. 15. Passionate anger, blind unreasoning wrath, is prohibited to Christians as murder, Col. iii. 8; 1 Tim. ii. 8. It devolves on them to bear meekly, patiently and charitably, even as Christ endured the contradiction of sinners. There is a righteous anger, Mk. iii. 5; Eph. iv. 26; a holy anger based on a zeal for God and His truth, an anger which becomes parents and magistrates who are charged with the punishment of evil, but it is to be thus limited. There may be a Christian, brotherly, parental anger, the anger of love that seeks evil to no one, which loves the sinner while it hates the sin. But the subject here is private anger, such as is prone to rise in our hearts against another. Anger has its warrant, like killing, on the part of the authorities, and of course this inner form of it, as well as the outward execution, is excepted. But the anger that sweeps one on to murder is forbidden by Christ. If momentary anger is murder, how much more that wrath which is continuous anger, and that envy which men call cold wrath? Note that Christ denounces "judgment." He is a Judge and a Saviour, neither without the other.

Jesus proceeds to a higher offense. If wrath is suffered to burn in the heart it will break out in some way. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. *Ῥανά*: "a very common word of opprobrium," probably from a Hebrew term=*vacuus cerebro*, imbecile. It is expressive of mild reproach, or mockery—the passion has developed into abusive language. Small importance is said to have been attached to it. It implies one of weak understanding, not sharp. It is evident from the context that it is a more serious offense than unexpressed anger. But the term is not so stinging as *μωρόν*, "fool." *Ἐνοχος τῷ συνεδρίῳ*, liable to the tribunal of the Sanhedrin, a higher court, the highest tribunal of the Jews having jurisdiction of the more serious offenses (idolatry, blasphemy, etc.), and decreeing the penalty of stoning. It inflicted severe penalties on the worst offenses. It consisted of 72 assessors. To be liable to this court was to incur its severer penalties, and to this the one saying "Raca" was exposed.

Jesus is using popular speech, and he takes the different grades of the courts which obtained in Israel, to represent the ascending scale of culpability and punishment. "A literal exposition is not in place, since no human judicatory can draw under its forum the anger roused in the heart, and Jesus did not found a kingdom of

this world." Only the first and second cases have courts. In the third case the punishment only is named, and this is doubtless the chief thing implied in the others.

The anger rises from terms of opprobrium to one of reviling, coarse abuse. This climax existed in common usage.

Μωπέ : Hebrew "expression of condemnation." Others: a Greek vocative. A moral reproach attaches to the term: A godless one. Ps. xiv. 1 shows that it implies atheism of the heart. As the virtuous were regarded wise, so the wicked foolish. "Fool" was used in a spiritual and moral sense, Deut. xxxii. 6; Ps. lxxiv. 18, 22; Josh. vii. 15; 2 Sam. xiii. 12. The "fool" lacks the religious element, vii. 26; xxiii. 17; xxv. 2, 3, 8. There is here, then, a decided gradation in the offense, a gradation in malignity. "His brother" is omitted, having been already given twice. "He who calls his brother a fool designates him as a godless one, a reprobate; it is the vilest reproach or insult one can offer to another. And he who is guilty of this offense subjects himself to the gehenna of fire." Some add "to be cast," which is unnecessary. Some: he deserves to be burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom. Some: he is to be executed and then thrown into Ge-Hinnom. Some: Gehenna is the kingdom of Belial; one speaking thus to his brother is to be excommunicated. Others: such a reviler of his brother belongs to hell. Word and idea are derived from Ge-Hinnom, the valley where formerly human offerings were burnt to Moloch, 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31; xix. 5 ff., etc., and where, later, corpses and refuse generally were thrown and burnt, an accursed spot. *Γέενα* is found only in James and the synoptists. The locality was southwest of Jerusalem. Through its vile use and its perennial fires, it came into such evil repute as to furnish the name for the abode of the damned. The Rabbins, both in the Talmud and the Targum, as well as the New Testament, v. 30; x. 28; xviii. 9; xxiii. 15; Mk. ix. 43, 45; Luke xii. 5; Jas. iii. 6, use the term for this purpose: for a division of hades.

Nebe finds a suitable climax in assuming that he who reviles his brother sins so grievously that no punishment upon earth can expiate his guilt, that he must fall into the hands of God and suffer his punishment in hell. But as this introduces a new range of ideas, some feel compelled to resort to a figurative interpretation: He who in wrath rails against his brother deserves the severest punishment—none on earth is adequate. The three terms "judgment," "council," "gehenna," illustrate simply the different degrees of culpability before God. God's estimate of an offense is presented in a palpable form, analogous to the several civil punish-

ments among men. Inasmuch as the first two cases refer to civil processes and penalties inflicted upon criminals on the earth, this third one ought to be viewed in the same light. Cf. *Is. lxvi.* It is claimed that the Jews knew nothing of burning alive or of cremating corpses, but these were no more unheard of than drowning in the sea, *Matt. xviii. 6.* Death by fire was decreed by Moses, against gross incest. *Lev. xx. 14.* Thus the gradation in punishment corresponds to that of the offense.

There is no reference here to the final judgment, where awards are determined not by individual sins, but by faith or its absence.

Who, after such an interpretation of the law, can boast of having fulfilled its demands? The commandment is not to be taken as a dead letter, but must be spiritually discerned, and applied to the thoughts and intents of the heart. God who gave the law to Moses, and who says, Vengeance is mine, looketh upon the heart.

A mistaken literalness in the prohibition of such terms is to be avoided. Cf. *Jas. ii. 20; Matt. xxiii. 17, 19; Luke xxiv. 25; Gal. iii. 1, 3.*

23, 24. "If . . . offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar . . . first be reconciled to thy brother . . ."

Evidently there is a close connection with the foregoing. This is the counterpart of that. It shows how urgently the disturbance of love must be removed. The Lord Himself further interprets His own words. No greater sin is known than enmity toward a brother, and no more urgent duty ever arises than reconciliation with a brother. Even worship at the altar of God must be interrupted in order that one may be reconciled to a brother aggrieved. It could not be accepted until one has sought to appease a brother's wrath. To the Jews this way of inculcating the removal of anger in a brother must have been very striking. What a thought it contains! Reconciliation with God through an offering must be deferred until we seek reconciliation with man. This is more than nature is capable of.

Εάν, κ. τ. λ., in the event that "thou bringest thy gift," thou who hast occasion for anger or hast wronged another. "Into the house of God, who is love, the words of Jesus conduct us, to preach to us true love to our brother. For all divine worship is vain—yea, utterly hateful to God, when it is not celebrated with right love to the brethren." The FF. and Roman Catholics have referred this to Christian worship and especially to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, where mutual forgiveness was imparted by the members of Christian families before they partook of the Holy Supper. But our

Lord refers to the Jewish mode of worship, vi. 5, 17; x. 41; xviii. 17. Jews were His hearers, and the severance of Jewish believers from the temple service was only to begin at a later time, John iv. 21. This is no reason why a practical application may not be made to the Lord's Supper.

The person addressed is not on the way to the temple, nor still occupied with the preparation of the offering in his house, but he is standing "before" or at the altar. There the remembrance of wrong done to another is more likely to come to mind than in the tumult of business. The solemnity of the service is calculated to awaken serious reflection. The holy stillness produces stillness in our hearts, excitement and bitterness vanish. Just as he is on the point of handing his sacrifice to the priest at the altar—Luther has "upon the altar" (the Vulgate and most "*ad*")—he hears a voice: "*Sursum corda.*" And as we seek the Lord with thanksgiving for His goodness and grace, and with prayer for forgiveness and cleansing, a sense of our sinfulness is awakened, and a confession of our sins is indeed the first offering, and the most acceptable, that we can present unto God. When that is lacking other offerings are vain. Hence the congregation in public worship first of all makes a confession of sin.

This thought which comes upon a man who with his offering has already passed through the court to the altar, shows that he is in earnest with his offering and worship, that he seeks to worship God in spirit and in truth. If thou "there rememberest that thy brother has ought" to charge against thee, namely, if thou hast wronged thy brother. His complaint is just. Some: the brother wronged the offerer, he is maliciously disposed toward the innocent and devout worshipper at the altar. But the context shows that the offerer owes a duty to his brother more imperative than his duty to God. Restitution precedes pardon. If the offerer had been the injured one, it would have sufficed to forgive his brother in his heart and to proceed with his solemn service to God. In fact, if one in the temple keeps thinking of the injury done him by another, he must still be far from the kingdom of God, from the love which forgives and forgets. He who remembers that *he* has done injury to his brother and that his brother is displeased with him, is to let his offering drop from his hand before the altar, cease at all hazards from his purpose, and hasten to find the wronged brother and be reconciled to him. In Mk. xi. 25 the case is the reverse. The command is categorical, imperative, cutting off every possible objection: suspend the worship of God to discharge a duty to man. God will have mercy, not sacrifice. But of a religion of love

to man the Pharisees had not a spark. It would be a striking scene: the offerer in the temple, at the altar-rail which separates the worshipper from the priest, the hand of the priest stretched out to receive his gift, the eyes of the people fixed on him, his heart rejoicing to bring an offering to the Lord, when suddenly he drops it, and flies from the sacred precincts in spite of all the proprieties and prescribed ritual, which forbade the interruption of sacrifice. Another business takes precedence.

Δωρόν, *korban*, used of any kind of sacrifice, viii. 4; xv. 5; xxiii. 18. "Go thy way," this implies that he is to betake himself beyond the temple. Go "first," immediately, the journey to thy brother admits no delay. This is the leading idea. Some find a more distinct antithesis in taking "first" with "be reconciled:" "first," "then," xviii. 15. But *πρῶτον* generally succeeds the word it qualifies, vii. 5; xiii. 30; xxiii. 26. Better: the act and being reconciled are grouped into one scene.

Διαλλάγηθι, Passive with Middle significance, be reconciled, reconcile thyself, deal so as to restore peace. This might prove no easy task—not as easy as offering outward worship. The brother having good cause to be angry, may not readily change, forego his anger, and heartily embrace the penitent offender. It is not easy subjectively, either; men would rather confess their sins to God than confess to a brother that they have wronged him, and ask his forgiveness. It is quite against nature for a man to humble himself thus before a fellow man, who like him has come short of the glory of God. But Christ demands this. It is indispensable if our offering is to be acceptable. ix. 13.

"In this way the act of sacrifice receives the moral foundation of a disposition pleasing to God, by which it is no mere external work, but a reasonable service. "Then come and offer." The language of Jesus is diffuse here and makes the whole procedure more picturesque and impressive. Now, being reconciled by a proper offering to thy brother, come into God's house and present thy offering to God. He looks upon the heart. How does it beat toward thy neighbor? If I love not my brother whom I have seen, how can I love God whom I have not seen? Love to God and love to man are inseparable. God would rather see His worship neglected, than thy neighbor's wrong or need neglected. Luther asks, what kind of service is it to offer God an ox and at the same time murder your brother? And you murder your brother if you are angry with him. That brother is dearer to God than all oxen.

25. "Agree with thine adversary quickly . . . lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge . . . to the officer, and thou be cast into prison."

Another occasion and in another connection is Luk. xii. 58.

Luther: "Jesus now passes to the one who was wronged and believed that he had just cause for anger." He is admonished to forgive freely: hence *ισθι εὐνοῶν*. If you are to be well-disposed toward another, favorably inclined, disposed to reconciliation, it is implied that the one so addressed is to confer a benefit upon another. But Nebe objects that *ἀντιδίκος*, "adversary," offers the true solution. The adversary or accuser lays his hand on you and drags you into court. He has been injured in his rights. It may be a legal question, v. 26; Luke xii. 58. The injured one is a creditor. He has suffered wrong at your hands. Thus Jesus is still addressing the one who did the injury, who transgressed against his brother.

Some: the adversary is conscience, or God, or His law. Some: an example from common life, "a popular symbolical proverb," the previous case again, a mere illustration of the prudential idea, showing the urgency of immediate reconciliation from the brevity of life and the magnitude of the punishment following unrepented anger or injury to a brother. We journey the same road with him whom we have wronged, the way of all flesh, which leads to death and then to judgment. There is only a step betwixt us and death, hence *ταχύ*. The pride of our heart is very tardy in a matter of this kind, to confess and make satisfaction. Be prompt about it as long as thou art yet on the way to the judge before whom accuser and accused personally appear, and when it will be too late for settlement. Meyer: "Let the effort continue till final termination, even until thou art with him on the road to the judge."

There is cause for haste, too, in this; the longer we delay the painful task to seek a brother's forgiveness, the more difficult it will be at last not only to obtain the forgiveness, but also to bring ourselves to this resolution. The sooner one conquers himself, the better. Be not ashamed to confess and regret thine injustice, thine anger, thy wickedness. It is far more shame to thee to persist in wrongdoing, to ignore or to deny it. Be quick, then, to make terms, to undo so far as in thee lies thy wrongdoing. Soon thou wilt be in the hands of the judge, who proceeds to inflict punishment strictly according to law. You will find no opportunity then for grace and pardon. Now, the injured one, it is assumed, will forgive.

The injurer who seeks reconciliation, it is shown, is more acceptable to the eternal throne, than the injured one who refuses

forgiveness. He who denies his brother forgiveness, comes into judgment, falls under the eternal Judge, and the sighs and tears and prayers of him who sought reconciliation will be swift witnesses against him before God's judgment-seat.

To make the scene impressive almost every part of the judicial transaction is presented, although investigation and sentence are omitted. "The officer," Luke xii. 58, the law-officer, representative of the legal act, whose duty it was to enforce execution of sentence, consign to prison, etc.

"Prison." Some: purgatory, assuming that the one having no love will ultimately get out. Others: the *Infernum*, the state of the ungodly anterior to judgment, 1 Pet. iii. 19; 2 Pet. ii. 9. Some: the same as cast into hell for saying "fool."

26. Verily I say unto thee, "Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till . . . the uttermost farthing."

The literal sense : adjust legal difficulties amicably, does not suffice. A ruinous procedure in worldly matters is applied to things internal and spiritual. The great lesson of prudence is inculcated. Luke xiv. 8 ff. Tholuck: "Should you pass from this life with an unforgiving heart, etc., etc., the unrepented evil will be your accuser before God," xii. 42; John v. 45.

And that is the final scene. The import of the declaration is that the possibility suggested by our Lord never comes. *Ἔως* is a terminus never realized. The removal of the guilt of sin in that "prison" is an impossibility, xxv. 41, 46; xviii. 30, 34; cf. 25. Thus while Roman Catholics and Universalists hold that the debt may be eventually paid, Protestants find here the doctrine of eternal damnation confirmed. There is a non-finality of the punishment. With nothing to pay, and no one to pay for you, how can the debt ever be paid? and yet paid exactly, and fully it must be before the gates will open. Those who enter there leave hope behind.

The last *quadrans*, one-fourth of an as, Mk. xii. 42, must be paid. Judgment will be executed according to the utmost rigor of the law. The possibility of escape is under the circumstances inconceivable. The imprisonment must be endless, the punishment eternal. It is decisive against purgatory, that the man is cast into the prison after the judgment, not before.

The counsel given here is not so much intended for earthly relations, as for those pertaining to the kingdom of heaven. Forgive thy brother, lest in withholding mercy from him thou sin most grievously against him.

The most obvious theme of the Pericope is the righteousness

which Christ demands of those who follow His call. This righteousness was from the beginning set forth in the Decalogue, but became obscured through false interpretation. Christ gives the true interpretation.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS DEMANDED BY CHRIST :

1. Not merely of works, but also of the heart.
2. Not merely before God, but also before men.
3. Not merely during worship, but also throughout life.

TRUE AND FALSE RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1. The latter kills the letter, the former quickens the spirit.
2. The latter is content with outward worship, the former seeks to worship in spirit and in truth.
3. The latter is intent only on its rights, the former exercises forgiving love.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS DEMANDED BY CHRIST IS

1. High above our limited understanding.
2. High above our false conscience.
3. High above our self-asserting hearts.

THE WORLD'S JUDGMENT ON CHRIST'S INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW:

1. Towering fanaticism.
2. An unjustifiable depreciation of God.
3. Manifest perversion of the right.

FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW A HOLY DUTY:

1. Towards the Lord, who rightly interprets it for us.
2. Towards God, who will otherwise reject our offering.
3. Towards ourselves, since thus alone do we escape judgment.

CHRIST'S WORK ON THE CONSCIENCE. HE TELLS US

1. That anger brings us into judgment.
2. That enmity makes our offerings void.
3. That irreconcilableness sends us to the prison.

THOU SHALT NOT KILL. THIS

1. Forbids not only murder, but anger.
2. Requires not only that we appease the neighbor's anger, but give up our own.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Mk. viii. 1-9.

THE explanation of this Pericope coming at this period is found in its being a practical fulfillment of Christ's words: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all other things shall be added to you," cf. Matt. xv. 32. "In spiritual aspiration and appropriation we provide also for material things." If we care for the one thing needful, the righteousness which exceeds that of the Pharisees, no want will come to us in earthly things.

Many modern expositors identify the two miracles of feeding the multitude as one, Matthew and Mark simply giving two reports of the same occurrence. They hold this feeding to be "a repetition of the first fact drawn from tradition." How, it is objected, if they had had one experience of this character, could they have asked in unbelief "whence is any one able to buy bread, etc.?" But how strangely and how often the disciples forgot things which it ought to have been impossible for them to forget. Considerable time may have elapsed between the two miracles—and the disciples themselves may have had seasons of hunger, ii. 23, where Jesus did not interpose for their relief. Hence it never entered their minds that He might a second time feed a great multitude. How could Jesus subsequently, v. 19 ff.; Matt. xvi. 9 f., have alluded to an event which rebuked their unbelief, if it never occurred? Cf. Olsh. I., pp. 538 ff.

Nebe finds in *τὸς*, "a man," v. 4, a suggestion from the disciples as to what is to be done. It does not include the Lord Himself; it applies only to the disciples, who are conscious of their impotence under the circumstances, now that Jesus has addressed them on the subject of providing food for the multitude. "Can a man?" Who else but Thou? This implies not that they have forgotten a former miracle, but that they remember one. They recall, too, from the marriage at Cana, that their Lord does not suffer others to determine the time of His intervention, but that He proceeds according to His own judgment.

There is no insurmountable objection to the acceptance of a sec-

ond miracle. The differences between the two are not immaterial. Nebe specifies the external ones regarding locality, time, substratum, persons and results. The first miracle occurred farther north, the second one farther south on the east side of the lake. That one in the springtime before Easter, John vi. 4, 10; Matt. xiv. 15; Mk. vi. 39, the grass being green and abundant. This one, when the grass had dried away, the people sitting on the naked ground, Mk. viii. 6; Matt. xv. 35. The people have now been three days with the Lord, v. 2; Matt. xv. 32, while the first miracle was wrought on the evening of the first day that the people were with Him in the desert. Matt. xiv. 14 f.; Mk. vi. 35; Luke ix. 11 f.; John vi. 5. In regard to the substratum, there were in the first miracle five loaves and two fishes, here there are seven loaves and a few small fishes, cf. v. 5; Matt. xv. 36. The first time there were five thousand men, now there are only four thousand, v. 9; Matt. xv. 39. The result differs in this that from the first miracle there was a surplus of twelve *ἀράβηαι*, from the second, of seven *σπυρίδες*.

Nebe emphasizes also the internal differences. In the first miracle, according to the synoptists, the apostles take the initiative, urging the Lord to dismiss the multitude, Matt. xiv. 15; Mk. vi. 35; Luke ix. 12. Here the Lord takes the initiative. There the apostles hold the meagre supply to be wholly inadequate, John vi. 7; here there is no solicitude on that point. "Their comportment reveals their conviction that he who comes to the Lord and abides with Him will not faint in the way, for He knows how to make a little go very far. This they know, because they once before saw Him feed five thousand."

It is indeed surprising that this miracle should be repeated. It is the only case of such a miracle being repeated. Christ Himself attaches grave importance to the repetition; He is impatient over the disciples' failure to be impressed by the two miracles, and rebukes them for not remembering and understanding them, v. 17 ff.; Matt. x. 8 ff. How could they still have concern about bread?

"We may well conclude that through both these miracles Jesus meant to represent that He takes all our cares upon Himself, if we will but continue with Him." This truth is so hard for flesh and blood to submit to, anxious care is so innate and inveterate, that it was needful for our Lord to repeat the striking object-lesson, in order to move us to obey the Scriptures and cast our cares upon Him who careth for us.

1. "In those days when . . . a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, he called unto his disciples" . . .

Mark connects indefinitely the occurrence with the foregoing. The hostility of the Pharisees had given occasion to our Lord to leave for a while the usual sphere of His activity. He withdrew into the frontier of Tyre and Sidon, where the woman of Canaan sought the Saviour despised by His own people. Thence He journeyed northward, crossing the lake into the region of Decapolis. Among that mixed population, also, He receives a welcome, healing there a deaf-mute, which may account for the presence of so large a crowd, though Luther holds that they were only intent on hearing the Word. Matt. xv. 31; Mk. vii. 37. Had they come merely for the sake of their sick, they would have promptly withdrawn after attaining their end. Those who were in health sought the Physician of souls. Πάλιν, "again," may be connected with μὴ ἔχουσιν κ. τ. λ., "having nothing to eat." It is a favorite term of Mark.

Jesus calls the disciples' attention to their famished condition. The multitude felt such a longing for the bread of life that they themselves were unconscious of their hunger for the bread which perishes. They had nothing to eat, but they did not think of it, so absorbed were they in the Lord's words. "So it is with the righteous; in view of heaven the earth vanishes, before the hunger after righteousness the hunger for earthly bread disappears; if the soul has its fill in God, the body, too, is satisfied. But there is an Eye which watches over them, an Eye from which is hidden no want that overtakes His own, since It beholds their need from afar." "The less thought you give to the earthly, the more thought and care will Jesus give to it for you." Only leave Him to care for thy body; care thou for thy soul.

Jesus sees the distress and summons the disciples. He indeed often sends distress in order to bring His own to Himself and to test their love. He calls them apart, He has a special word for them, He enlists their interests, He prepares them for a service about to devolve upon them.

2. "I have compassion . . . because . . . now three days, and have nothing to eat:"

"I have compassion"—what a glimpse this gives into the heart of Jesus! The destitution of the people moves it in its uttermost depths, so that the effect is felt in the viscera. Nebe: "This is no exaggeration, or extravagance of speech. When Jesus speaks, or the evangelists, of His compassion, this word is almost always used as most expressive of the sympathy of His heart." Matt. ix. 36, xiv. 14; xv. 32; Mk. i. 41; vi. 24; ix. 22, etc. The LXX

never use it. "If Jesus has such feelings for our bodily need, His whole life must have been an uninterrupted sorrow of soul; for our spiritual misery must have rested still more heavily upon His heart."

Why should He thus feel for human woe? He is from heaven, how can earthly things thus affect Him? He holds, besides, in His hand the power to relieve the people, why should His own heart be distressed by their condition? "His life is altogether love, but love has no existence to one who does not feel in his own heart every need of him whom one loves." His unutterable love impelled Him to leave His Father's bosom, and having come in our flesh He is impelled by the power of the same love to enter into sympathy with our slightest sorrow. And, "now to heaven and glory raised," He continues to feel the tenderest human affection, the deepest sympathy for all our infirmities, Heb. v. 2. Powerfully as Jesus was moved, He was not mentally perplexed or disturbed. Under the most vehement emotions He maintains His self-composure, His full control over the feelings which are agitated like the waves of the sea.

"For three days" they have continued with Him. Such devotion was most extraordinary, doubtless without precedent in Israel. The result was that now they had nothing to eat. Not that they had not eaten for three days, but that now all supplies were consumed. Christ's hour always comes when our supply is exhausted, and He knows exactly when this hour strikes. The disciples get from Him the information that their food is exhausted—the people themselves seem not to have realized it. They are sitting contented at His feet, hanging on His mouth, having chosen the good part which shall not be taken from them. And the eyes of Jesus are "over all, not the most indifferent circumstance escapes them, for His great Redeemer's heart embraces all and every one."

3. "And if I send them away fasting . . . they will faint in the way; and some of them are come from far."

He assumes the responsibility for this great throng. It devolves on Him to send them away, as He has indeed been the magnet, that drew them to this place and held them there for three days. He knows not only their famished condition, but also their distance from home. He must see to it that something be done for them. How sober and deliberate His manner—no rash, hasty procedure. To send them home without refreshment is out of the question. Here in the desert a table must be provided, and that very soon. Otherwise they will languish and faint by the way; their strength has been already impaired by the long journey

and the three days' attendance on His preaching—a good part of which time they doubtless went without eating.

How minutely and graphically the whole situation is described by Jesus Himself! The special cause for the supernatural relief required, was the great distance some had traveled over and must now travel back. Had Jesus not brought relief to such, the Good Shepherd must have proved Himself a faithless shepherd; for those who had come from far, and whom for three days He had fed on the green pastures of truth, would soon have fainted from exhaustion and been scattered like sheep having no shepherd, Matt. ix. 36. What, too, would have come of His promise of a hundred-fold gain to those who forsake their all for Him? Luther says strikingly, that if the people had by messengers presented the situation to Christ, they could not have portrayed it so well as He Himself states all the points to His disciples. He Himself thinks of all the circumstances before any one communicates aught to Him—He anticipates all our complaints. He is solicitous for them before they think of seeking His interposition, and He brings their distress before the disciples. “What is all this but simple, living preaching, proof and testimony, how kindly He is disposed toward us, how He sees into our hearts before we can tell Him, sees it better than we can tell Him!”

“I have compassion,” He says to the twelve. Luther: “I have thought it all over, what do you propose, let me hear from you how we are to proceed. He counsels thus with them, in the first instance, that the thoughts of His heart may become manifest, for His compassion and concern for the people must not be kept secret but must come to the light of day, in order that we may learn to believe that we have the same Christ who ever shows in fact and deed these words written in living characters upon His heart: I have compassion upon my poor people.” His heart remains the same in Heaven as here, in glory as in the flesh, Jesus Christ, yesterday, to-day and forever the same. His loving-kindness changes not. The second reason why He begins this discussion and asks for counsel, is “that each one may know how in no way reason and faith go together.”

4. “And his disciples . . . Whence . . . fill these men with bread here in a desert place?”

The words of Jesus are a surprise to the disciples. “He speaks as if He Himself knew not what to do.” They answer quite cleverly: here in the desert we and no other man can devise any help. They comprehend all points of the situation.

Πθεν, whence, from what place? We are away from human

habitation, from stores of food; whence are supplies to be brought? According to Matt. xv. 29 they are on a mountain, "where they have a wide outlook, but nowhere, near or far, is a house in sight, to say nothing of village or town." So there was no prospect whatever of securing bread from any quarter. And then they survey the immense throng standing hungry before them, a multitude swaying to and fro apparently without number. To fill these—with bread here—in the desert! Human resources avail not in a case like this. They are ἐν ἐρημίᾳ, "in a desert place." Not a blade of grass is here, or nutritious root. What if there were? With meager diet these people have hung around the Lord for three days and they are famished. They must be filled with bread before they can start for their remote homes, lest exhausted and fainting they sink by the way. Helpless, at their wit's end, the disciples stand before the Lord. It is ever thus. "We have the sharpest eyes to recognize whatever may cause us care or distress, but on the other hand our eyes are smitten with blindness that they cannot see the help which is already at hand. At a distance and near the disciples look for help, but not in their nearest vicinity. The Helper stands before them, speaks to them, unbosoms His sympathetic heart—and they do not see Him, do not understand Him."

5. "And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? . . . Seven."

He seems not to notice their disconsolate perplexity. Not by word of mouth, but by the work of His hand will He give them a memorable reproof. He proceeds as if everything were on hand to fill all these people with bread.

"How many loaves?" This was hardly asked to make the miracle more notable and resplendent. The Lord did not seek attention for His miracles; He often forbids those witnessing these wonders, to speak of them. He does not ask the multitude—which would have been the way to advertise the miracle—but the disciples, and these not publicly but apart. "So also, He does not appear openly before the people as the miracle-worker, but avails Himself of the twelve as the agents in it."

Doubtless this question was to make the miracle more impressive; the miraculous intervention was to be recognized, but primarily and principally by the disciples. They are to learn effectually that the Lord's hand is never too short to save. The question was to serve another purpose. Once before, on a similar occasion, Jesus had asked the disciples what supply of bread they had. This question must awaken their treacherous memories on the one hand; on the other, it must fill them with confident expectation.

"Seven," is the prompt answer, as if they had made a careful inventory. It is a small number, and yet a sacred one, and it is larger than the number of loaves on the former occasion. If five sufficed then, why not seven now? "The answer has in it something cheerful and assuring. What Jesus will do with the seven loaves they know perfectly well; He will distribute them among the hungry people. They no more ask, what are these among so many? The question of Christ has effectually attained its purpose; unbelief no longer rears its rude and naked head, as in John vi. 9. There is but little in store, but that little is quite sufficient."

6. "And he commanded . . . to sit down on the ground; and . . . having given thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples . . . and they set them before the multitude."

"He commanded." Everywhere he exercises authority, issues orders. He is the Lord. *Ἀναπεσεῖν*, to recline at a meal. What a command! Come to the table. Recline on the ground, four thousand of them, as if to enjoy a feast already prepared—and there is nothing in sight but hunger and want. "Let all flesh keep silence before the Lord, for He is about to work a work." And does He not still speak thus to the husbandman whose sowing groweth "of itself" night and day under God's watchful care? Mk. iv. 26 ff. This command is a trial of faith. It is meant to inspire hope where, humanly speaking, no ground of hope is visible. The people will stand the trial—this could be distinctly assumed beforehand. "They may have had some knowledge of the previous miracle, and even if not, they had now three days of instruction from the Lord, and the faith which comes by hearing must have in this time developed some strength." Where faith is present it is wont to endure a test.

The people being decorously seated Jesus proceeds as host, according to the custom of Israel, taking the seven loaves in His hand, then giving thanks, then breaking the loaf and handing it to His assistants to distribute among the multitude. What an example of order! Prayer at a meal was a general practice among the Israelites. Deut. viii. 10; 1 Sam. ix. 13. To eat something without thanks was to steal it from God, according to the Rabbins. Even the heathen prayed morning and evening and before and after a meal. Christ by His own practice sanctioned and sanctified grace at table. Matt. xiv. 19; xv. 36; Luke xxiv. 30. In Rom. xiv. 6 and 1 Cor. x. 30 it is presupposed. The ground for its necessity is given 1 Tim. iv. 3 ff. Prayer at table was universal in the Ancient Church. Chrysostom says: "That table which begins and closes with prayer will never suffer want—where there is prayer and

thanksgiving there is also the grace of the Holy Spirit and all the powers of evil must disappear." That Father shows, also, how such prayer and thanks would hinder us from speaking anything unseemly while eating, or bring us quickly to repentance if we shall have spoken thus. He likewise urges singing at table as an offset to the bacchanalian behavior at feasts. "Let the Psalm be followed by prayer that our souls and our house may be sanctified." "Up to the last century," says Nebe, "even in the worst times, this holy custom was maintained, though Bogatzky complains that in many households it has ceased. The neglect went from the higher ranks to the lower."

"He gave them to His disciples to set before them." He works through human instrumentalities, He makes men co-laborers, He takes us into glorious fellowship with all His activities. We are to share His loving-kindness and be helpers of His joy. Some of His glory, which with open face they are to behold when they are changed into His image, falls here already upon His weak disciples. Besides, they must be exercised in brotherly love. As He now sends them forth with the broken bread, so in a few months He will send them into all the world, to distribute as His stewards His bread to hungry souls. Christ's work of mercy is mediated through His followers, that thus they may come to possess a heart of mercy toward their neighbor.

"And they set them before" etc. Promptly, strictly, they obey orders—a happy, blessed task, no doubt. "From the thankful glances of the mass, as well as from the eyes of their Lord beaming with merciful love, they could perceive that it is more blessed to give than to receive." They doubtless silently kept repeating the Lord's thanksgiving as they handed the never-failing pieces to one after another. Blessed employ—to take from the Savior's hand and pass it to those who are hungry—in body or soul!

7. "And they had a few small fishes: and having blessed them, . . . these also before them."

An additional blessing was invoked on the "few small fishes," a special consecration given them. In the former case *εὐχαριστεῖν* is used, in the latter *εὐλογεῖν*. The thanksgiving of Jesus consists specially in praise, 1 Cor. xiv. 16; the two terms are doubtless synonymous, cf. John vi. 11; Matt. xiv. 19; Mk. vi. 41; Luke ix. 16; Matt. xv. 36; xxvi. 26 f.; Luke xxii. 19. Not merely bread shall these hungry people enjoy; even in the desert the Lord can provide a feast. Fish will add flavor to the bread. When we ask for our daily bread we well know that He will give beyond our asking and thinking.

They were but small, *ἡθὺδια*, this must not be overlooked, and there were not many of them, *ὀλίγα*. As the consecration and distribution of these few little creatures are specially mentioned, the evangelist doubtless meant to teach us that in the eyes of Jesus nothing is small or insignificant, nothing too small for Him to bless.

Nebe thinks that Jesus gave thanks for the possession of the loaves and fishes; but that as with this little store there were so many to be fed, prayer was blended with the thanksgiving. "The prayer did not, however, come to its full expression, but was changed on the spot to thanksgiving. The Lord about to pray must immediately give thanks. He is one with the Father, hence ever assured of the answer of His petitions." Cf. John xi. 41. Assured beforehand of what was to come, He in joyful faith gives thanks, as if it were already done.

8. "And they did eat . . . they took up, of broken pieces . . . seven baskets."

The seven loaves and the two little fishes sufficed to "fill" the whole multitude. "This is the divine art, to make from nothing something, from little, much." The human art is to make from something nothing, from much, little.

They "were filled." Jesus does nothing by halves. What He begins He carries to glorious completion. He is rich and gives richly. So the people experience here, as Peter did in the draught of fishes and the bridal party at Cana. God's gifts ever transcend our needs. They not only supply our lack, but provision for evil days to come. God's blessing must, however, not be wasted. Every day brings its own need, and to be saving is a part of true thankfulness. Even the smallest earthly good, because proceeding from God's gracious hand, must not go to waste. Jesus does not command the twelve to gather the leavings—they remember the former command, and without orders they now gather up seven baskets.

The smaller number of baskets than in the first miracle, although there had been more loaves and fewer eaters, some explain by the theory that the *spurides* were much larger than the *kophinoi*. We have no proof of this. Others claim that this difference was intended to prevent confounding the two miracles as one, but the difference in the number fed would be sufficient for that. Nebe: "By this surprising difference the Lord would show His disciples that all blessings depend not on the instrumentalities applied, but alone on His good pleasure."

9. "And there were about four thousand . . . and he sent them away."

Nebe holds that the number is important, seeing that we often

count the many hands stretched forth for bread and then can reach no happy conclusion by our calculation. Seven loaves suffice for four thousand, exclusive of the women and children, yea there is even a surplus. Why should not your one, two, three loaves reach for your whole house?

“He sent them away.” He asks for no thankful recognition of the miracle, no resolutions of acknowledgement. He seeketh not His own. He sends them away as if nothing of any consequence had happened. And the people depart—how different from the scene after the first miracle, where they attempt by force to make Jesus king.

“In the practical treatment of the Pericope respect must be had before all to the Church Year; it is also permissible to have regard to the natural year, and to the needs of the household.”

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

CHRIST REWARDS THOSE WHO CONTINUE WITH HIM :

1. By His sympathy.
2. By His help.
3. By the overflow of His bounty.

Or,

1. He considers our bodily need, before we are conscious of it.
2. He helps us wonderfully out of all distress, when we see no help.
3. He blesses us beyond measure, and the reach of all distress.

HAVE FAITH IN THE LORD, WHO HAS

1. An all-seeing eye.
2. A sympathetic heart.
3. An almighty hand.

BEHOLD CHRIST'S OMNIPOTENCE.

1. For three days He holds the people by His word.
2. The wilderness He changes into a banquet-hall.
3. His blessing He transmits through the hands of the disciples.
4. He satisfies all with His good pleasure.

THE LORD BREAKS THE BREAD FOR HIS DISCIPLES:

1. While all eyes wait.
2. With gracious hands.
3. Amid thanksgiving and prayer.
4. Unto full satisfaction.

THIS MIRACLE IS REPEATED TO-DAY.

1. The present supply is consumed.
2. The little which remains is graciously multiplied.
3. The divine blessing is still mediated through the disciples.
4. What remains over is still preserved.

CHRIST THE EXEMPLAR OF THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY.

1. In the care for His own.
2. In His pious trust in God.
3. In His cheerful beneficence toward the poor.
4. In His frugal housekeeping with God's blessing.

GRACE AT MEAT :

1. Practiced by the Lord.
2. Blessed of God.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt. vii. 15-23.

THE sequence of thought is thus explained by Nebe: The Sixth Sunday after Trinity set before us the righteousness which we are to strive after; the Seventh demonstrated that those striving after this righteousness are assured of a most wonderful blessing; this Sunday admonishes us not to miss the goal which has such a promise. We are to beware of the deceits of the false prophets as of the deceitfulness of our own hearts.

15. "Beware of false prophets . . . in sheep's clothing . . . ravening wolves."

Nebe: "As the shadow follows the light, so the light of revelation has its dark accompaniments. The men of God who in evil times are to proclaim and administer God's light and justice, have their counterpart in other men who seek to extinguish the light, and to wrench justice. Moses and Aaron had to contend with the jugglers of Egypt. The army of the prophets whom a gracious God raised up for His people was opposed by a solid phalanx of other prophets commissioned by the father of lies to frustrate the gracious purposes of God." The same phenomenon recurs under the New Testament. Over against the true Christ are the false Christs. Matt. xxiv. 24; Mk. xiii. 22; over against the true apostles, the false apostles. 2 Cor. xi. 13; over against the divinely appointed teachers, false teachers. 2 Pet. ii. 1; over against God's prophets, false prophets. Matt. xxiv. 11, 24; Mk. xiii. 22; 2 Pet. ii. 1; 1 John iv. 1; Rev. xvi. 13; xix. 20; xx. 10.

False prophets are to be distinguished from false teachers. They are men who claim to have been sent for the Messianic period. The false prophets claim a divine commission. The teachers of the law, the Rabbins, never laid claim to any special mission from God. "Only the prophet is awakened and sent forth by the Spirit of God" And deceivers will make their appearance pretending to have been sent from God. Were they to appear among the Jews? Possibly Pharisees? Cf. John x. 8. Reference is made to Judas the Galilean, Acts v. 37, and to Josephus' Reports, Jewish Wars, ii. 13, 4 ff., and the application is by many

wholly restricted to the Jews. The assembly of His hearers at the time consisted, of course, exclusively of Jews. Everything in this discourse relates to the circumstances of the time. It is known, too, that a succession of false prophets continued to deceive the Jews prior to their final overthrow.

Nebe claims that the application of the warning to the Jews does not compel us either in the text or context to limit the horizon to them. In xxiv. 11 Jesus speaks no doubt of false prophets among Christians, cf. 1 John iv. 1, which is interpreted of their going from the church out into the world. Prophets are named among the church functionaries, Eph. iv. 11; Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, where prophecy is described as a gift of the Holy Ghost for the upbuilding of the church. Jesus speaks indeed here to the children of Israel, and He doubtless most emphatically warns them against the Pharisees and scribes, but "this address from the throne sweeps far beyond the limited boundaries of Israel, it rises especially at its close to such a height that the structure of the church, the communion founded and maintained through faith in the name of Jesus, becomes visible."

Some interpret the warning as a reference to Jewish and Christian false prophets. As in vv. 21 ff., immediately following, Jesus shows that these people confess Him, Nebe thinks it best to apply it to false Christian teachers. DeWette holds that those in vv. 21 f., are a different class, but it seems natural to take those there described as included in the deceivers here mentioned. Some: The heretics outside of the church. Others: The false prophets in the bosom of the church. "Men will arise within the church, who not only profess to have come in the name of God, but through their whole demeanor in word and work will endeavor to prove their divine commission. Their preaching is powerful, their enthusiasm is not feigned, they do not contradict the word of God, great truths find in them eloquent witnesses." They are not easily distinguished from the true prophets, they are not open and honest, they come like the enemy who sowed the tares among the wheat covertly, they come concealed, disguised like the wolf who, about to fall on the sheep, arrays himself in the skin of a sheep, so that he may appear as one of the flock. They have the outward semblance of sheep, the same warm, soft, white, woolly clothing. Some interpret sheep's clothing as being especially the dress of the prophets, Heb. xi. 37, but it was by no means their distinguishing garb. The greatest of the prophets wore camel's hair, iii. 4. Others: Sheepskins were the usual shepherds' dress. But the Old Testament makes no reference to this, and the climate of Palestine

would hardly require apparel so warm as that. There is no allusion in the context to the church as a flock, and if there were, the deceiving ones would have to be viewed not as members, but as leaders of the flock; the apparel to be expected then would be the clothing of shepherds, not that of sheep.

The natural symbolism is that the wolves imitate the sheep, clothe themselves in their hides so as to appear like them, innocent, gentle, mild. "The false prophets come mild and gentle, softly stealing in among them, smoothly flattering them. They mean to rule and to impose heavy burdens, but they do not betray this purpose in the beginning." Rom. xvi. 18; Col. ii. 4; Eph. v. 6. "The description immediately given of them shows how diligently they bear the name of the Lord on their lips, how readily they can talk of Him, of His will and of His kingdom, how their mouth overflows with pious phrases and discourses, with unctuous prayers and with soaring hymns of praise. Yea they are at special pains to put on the appearance of a godly life; as a more effectual means of deception they assume the splendid halo of an extraordinary righteousness." Cf. Col. ii. 22 f.; 2 Tim. iii. 5. Jesus characterizes them as doing great works and miracles in His name and in this way creating favorable prepossessions.

"But inwardly." The outward and inward do not always correspond, although they should. The outward is expected to represent the inward. But underneath the exterior, the sheep's clothing, they are in reality not sheep, but wolves, ravening wolves. As language is said to be intended for the concealment of one's thoughts, so with many the outward, be it the body or the life, is only intended to serve as a mask for the inward man. The pseudo-prophet who externally appears like a harmless, quiet, innocent lamb, is a scoundrel within, just the reverse of what he pretends to be. He puts on this mask of innocence and mildness, only so as to be more destructive. It is his dangerous alluring bait. Between sheep and wolves there is a contrast as radical as the opposition of light and darkness. Cf. John x. And such is the contrast between a true prophet proclaiming God's truth and the false prophet who professes to proclaim it, and such the contrast of their work. The one feeds and protects, the other destroys and scatters.

These false prophets are worse than common wolves, they are *ἀρπαγες*, rapacious, ravenous. They are intent on destruction. They not only get the sheep away from the shepherd and for their own selfish purposes destroy them, but they scatter the flock, John x. 12; Ezek. xxii. 27; Acts xx. 29: *βαρύνει*. Whenever the false

prophets arise in the church both these results appear: "the bond of unity and fellowship is dissolved and sects are founded, and, on the other hand, individual souls are deprived of their salvation."

"Beware:" The Lord who sees the prophet with malicious intent approaching does not hold him back, or command him to keep away from the flock He has purchased with His own blood, but He admonishes the exposed, cowering sheep, and warns them to be on the outlook, to protect themselves. According to the divine purpose fierce wolves must come. God's people must be tested and proved. 1 Cor. xi. 19. Luther: "For when He grants us His word, Spirit and gifts He will not have us be lazy, drowsy and idle, but will have thee exercised by His word, and will have His Spirit which He gave to thee, cause thee to learn that God's strength is mightier than all the might and power of this world, which apart from such a struggle thou wouldest not learn. Another reason of it is that God will punish the unthankful, who will not receive the word that they may be converted and saved. John v. 43; 1 Thess. ii. 10-12. His word is so precious that it has stood in the blood of His Son, and we fling it indifferently to the wind. Hence He sends the most terrible calamity, that men may be hardened, blinded and deceived through false prophets, that heaven may be closed to them, and hell opened, and eternal life be forfeited. He that will not hear Christ must hear Satan."

The warning implies that we are without excuse if we fall a prey to the false prophets. We need not be deceived. Luther says again: "If a Christian were diligent, even if he had no more than the Catechism, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the words of the Lord concerning Baptism and the Lord's Supper, he could skilfully defend and maintain himself against heresies. For the Lord Christ commands here and authorizes all Christians to be judges of all doctrines, and bids them to judge what is right and what is not. For you must be as certain of the thing that it is God's word, as that you live, yea and more certain, for on this alone must your conscience maintain itself." He who falls into the hands of the false prophets refused to heed the warning.

Yet the sharp warning implies that there is extraordinary danger of our being deceived by the false prophets. Man is prone to listen to sounds from every quarter, and how general is the belief that stolen waters are sweet! We have a propensity for being deceived, a passion for what is untrue. Thiersch well observes: "He does not say beware of all prophets, but only of false ones — not send away all who claim to be prophets, untried, or after a superficial

trial." Our Lord names among the blessings His people are to expect, the prophets whom He will send among them, Matt. xxiii. 34; Luke xi. 49. "If it is at the peril of our souls that we take up with a false prophet, it is also perilous to reject a prophet sent from God." Everything depends on our detecting the false prophets.

16. "By their fruits . . . know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

Jesus supplies a criterion by which the false prophets can be detected. The word is *ἐπιγινώσκειν*, *i. e.* to know clearly, accurately, thoroughly, 2 Tim. iii. 7. "Ye shall know them," Future. They have marks by which you will be able to recognize them. The figure changes from animals to trees.

Not by the fruits themselves, but "by their fruits" is the proper translation. Luke vi. 44 adds *ἐκ*, "from." The recognition of these false prophets proceeds from their fruits. The question of what is meant by "their fruits" has received different answers, whose history offers "a surprising view of the state of the Christian life in the church and among the sects. Where knowledge, science, has had a one-sided bloom the fruits are regarded as creed and orthodoxy; where Christian life has been especially fostered the fruits are regarded as good works." The FF. generally interpreted the fruits as the word of teaching. So also Calvin, Gerhart, Spener. Cf. Luke vi. 45. The prophets are trees, and fruits are what you take from the prophets: their prophecies. Nebe objects that the critique of doctrine is beyond the plain people, and he thinks experience teaches that very few are capable of recognizing error in doctrine, yet our Lord means to offer a criterion level to the simplest Christian. But Luther shows how easily a man with his catechism may confound a heretic. The prophet's utterance may be measured by what is written, as in the case of the Bereans, Acts xvii, 11. It does not require a logically and scientifically trained mind to distinguish evangelical truth from error. A believing heart, a mind illumined through God's word by the Spirit, is sufficient. John x. 27. The people heard Jesus gladly, for they recognized the voice of heavenly truth in His preaching. Truth has a self-witnessing force for the heart. Besides, it is not the clothing of the pseudo-prophets that is dangerous, but the creed which proceeds from them thus arrayed.

Others find the fruit in the life, in the ethical behavior of the false prophets. We can judge their teachings by their lives. Hence the Future, "shall know." Luther: "A good tree which brings good fruit, one who lives according to God's pure word."

Again: "Thou knowest the commandments. See if they live in accordance with them; for I will guarantee that no factious ring-leaders can turn up without leaving such a stench as to enable us to see that the devil was here." Experience shows, however, that nothing is so hard to detect as a consummate hypocrite who professes to be a messenger of the Lord. He can deceive the very elect by his uncommon sanctity. And it must, on the other hand, be borne in mind that men who have seriously perverted the truth have, like Semler and Channing, been men of extraordinary purity of character. Heretics have often commended their doctrines by their superior lives. Luther also, at times, interpreted the *καρποί* as doctrine. Some: "The fruits which their teachings will produce in the lives of their disciples, the effects of the doctrines. But the figure refers to fruits which the tree bears on its own branches." Nebe supports the theory of the reference to works by the analogous use of "fruits" in other passages where they always mean works, and also by the context. The phrase "by their fruits ye shall know them" is repeated, v. 20, and then in v. 21 f. it is clearly shown that men are excluded from the kingdom of heaven not because of the defects of their creed, prophecy or miracle, but because they failed "to do the will of my Father." Tholuck regards the thought here to be the same as above with a more extended application. Nebe holds that Jesus undoubtedly proceeds upon the basis of the figurative discourse of John, which represented man as a tree and the works of man as the fruits of the tree, iii. 8, 10.

Some refer the "fruits" to both doctrine and life. There is a most intimate connection between doctrine and life. The right faith may be called right doing and the false faith perverted doing. It is claimed, too, that the Christian is known by his life, the prophet by his teaching. If the Lord's warning was for the special benefit of His immediate hearers, they were in the one case to test the life, in the other the teaching. In each case it may be difficult to apply the test, but Jesus assumes the presence of the guiding Spirit, who will give spiritual discernment. See Tholuck, "Sermon on the Mount."

"By their fruits," *ἀπό*, from. *Ἀπό* may be used here because it occurs immediately in connection with *ἀκάνθαι* and *τρίβολοι*, though in a somewhat different sense: "Do men gather grapes from," etc.

The prophets are trees and their fruits are an unmistakable proof of the species. This was no doubt a proverbial expression. Hence in the form of a question. But why "thorns and thistles?" The FF. allegorized that the heretics inflicted serious wounds like

thorns, and were driven by the wind like thistles. One species of *ἄκανθαι* bears small berries very similar to grapes. The *τριβλος* bears a flower which closely resembles a fig in form. It is to be observed, too, that such fruitless plants bear the most beautiful flowers. To this view of the FF. it is objected, that "thorns and thistles" were ever the standing symbols of what is to be deprecated, and to be exterminated, while grapes and figs represent the noblest fruits. "Thorns and thistles" often occur together in the Old Testament; they are the natural fruits of the earth, which in view of man's sin has fallen under the curse. Gen. iii. 18; Heb. vi. 8; Is. v. 6; Hos. x. 8. The vine and the fig *per contra* are the trees which yield their fruit as a blessing to Israel. 1 Kings iv. 25; 2 Kings xviii. 31; Is. xxxvi. 16; Mic. iv. 4. True men of God with the blessed gospel are like the vine and the fig-tree to Israel, whereas false prophets, sent among men by the author of sin, are thorns and thistles by which mankind is cursed. We do not pluck grapes from the thorns, nor figs from the thistles. Jas. iii. 11. Each yieldeth seed after its kind.

17. "Even so every good tree . . . good fruit; but the corrupt tree . . . evil fruit."

"Even so," as these examples from nature show. What is true in the natural domain holds in the spiritual. How the Creator of nature maintained its unity in the material and spiritual sphere! In each case the character of the heart or root reveals itself unmistakably in the outward manifestation.

The connection generally accepted is that Jesus proceeds from the special to the general; these instances are examples of universal truths. But Bleek takes "the corrupt tree" not of an unfruitful tree of another species, but of a decayed, rotten tree of the same species, distinguishing trees by their diseased or their healthy character, the former not so dead as to have no longer shoots nor leaves, (which would render them incapable of deceiving any one), but the organism is decayed, the sap within is corrupted, and their fruits are deteriorating more and more. xiii. 48.

Thus the examples given in v. 16 are only preliminary to the statements in vv. 17, 18. The false prophets are decayed trees, which outwardly appear sound, but can no more produce good fruits than a thorn-bush can produce grapes or a thistle figs. The one case offers a contrast between wild and noble trees, the other between sound and unsound. The thought advances, and this verse has a logical connection with what precedes. The axe against the evil-producing false prophets comes closer to the root of the tree. Nourishing, wholesome fruit is to be found neither in the wild

bushes, nor in the branches of a decayed tree, which hides its inward rottenness; the sap and marrow are tainted, be the exterior never so attractive—and from the sap is generated the fruit. What the tree absorbs from the earth and from the air is converted into its substance, and this substance is concentrated in fruit. When the inward substance, therefore, has become diseased, good fruit is impossible, no matter what the character of the soil or of the air. And so it is with men, with prophets. An inward principle constitutes one what he is, forms his personality. The heart stamps the true value upon a man's actions. Is that good, then the works are good. Is that evil, so are the works. The product reveals the innermost essence. Between the good and the evil there is no neutral position. What is not good is bad.

18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree . . . good fruit."

Some see in this no more than a negative repetition of what had just been positively affirmed. But Jesus meant to inculcate the important truth most effectively, and what He has just uttered as a fact is now declared to be an absolute necessity. It is not by chance that the good tree brings forth good fruit and the converse; this phenomenon has a cause, a rational cause. He adds line upon line to enforce the truth.

No Manichæan view of the world is meant to be taught. The corrupt tree was not created corrupt; it has deteriorated from a sound tree. Nor is there any support here for sinless perfection. Defective fruit will appear on the best of trees, the worm in actions of the holiest men. But Nebe argues: "the worm which injures the fruit does not enter into it from the sap, but it bores its way from without through no fault of the fruit. The evil which attaches to the actions of good men does not proceed properly from the fountain of their personality, but comes to them through outward influences."

The fruit does not render the tree good, but the tree the fruit. The fruit is the same as the works of a tree, the works of a man are the fruit of his will. The ethical life of a man is not the play of chance, but the development of a definite principle, the expansion of a distinct seed-corn. You cannot change so that in this hour you are a good head of grain, and the next a bitter wild-berry. Everything in the natural world and in the spiritual world has its permanent stamp and species.

19. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

Some hold this to be the comment of the writer, not a part of Jesus' discourse. It contains really the dictum of John the Bap-

tist, iii. 10. Others see in it an important proof that what was said of the corrupt tree is so; it stands fast; it serves a logical connection. Still others see in it a threat against the false prophets, repeating to them the warning John had given the impenitent, the prospect of terrible judgment. Two things shall befall them: they will be hewn down and they will be cast into the fire, cf. Luke xiii. 7. They shall be cut down out of the land of the living, xv. 14. An evil death awaits them, and after death eternal fire. Nebe: "The announcement of judgment does not in the least interrupt Jesus' train of thought, which indeed (cf. xx.) does not dwell as yet upon the judgment, cf. xxvi. 27, but on the discovery of the corrupt tree." The fruits offer a criterion for this, but perhaps we do not care to know that they are false prophets. Men are prone to follow every wind of doctrine, fond of being deceived, Eph. iv. 14. Nebe thinks the repetition, v. 20, "Therefore by their fruits ye shall know, etc." is intended to stir up our will to know them. Judgment will most certainly overtake them and all who have taken refuge under their shadow. The fire of hell awaits the false prophets. What Jesus had simply affirmed above, He now repeats emphatically as a demonstrated truth. It follows—this is the force of ἀπαγε, "therefore"—that beyond a doubt false prophets may be known by their fruits. The similitude cited puts it beyond question. Hence this verse sums up for emphasis' sake, what precedes. The repetition of the declaration not only establishes it as a truth, but shows also its necessity. "It is an indispensable duty of Christians to test the spirits whether they be of God."

21. "Not every one . . . Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom . . . but he that doeth the will of my Father . . ."

Figurative speech gives place now to literal terms. The problem is whether *πᾶς*, "everyone," applies to all Christians, or only to the prophets, further unfolding their punishment. Some: Jesus now passes to the totality of His disciples. His warning was previously directed against those who teach falsely, now against those who teach correctly, but who do not walk correctly. Tholuck: "The former were false Jewish prophets, now He deals distinctly with Christian prophets belonging to the same category." But later the same commentator says: "The warning about doctrine henceforth falls into the background, and the contrast between confession and life comes into the foreground." The admonition refers not so much to teaching as to life. It contrasts profession with practice; vv. 15–20 treat of those who teach what is pernicious (wolves, thorns, thistles); v. 21 treats of those—not merely teach-

ers, but also others—who are content with the outward confession, while they lack the corresponding inward state; finally v. 22 by way of climax applies this threatening event to prophets and miracle-workers, who did not inwardly work the righteousness acceptable before God.

Those whom the Lord had in mind here are Christians, they confess Jesus Christ as Lord, they have long believed in His name, and in His name done marvelous things. But it is very obvious, too, that they were favored Christians, prophets, men mighty in word and deed. Of course, whatever is true of the prophets holds also of their disciples, cf. Luke vi. 39 f.

Κύριε, κύριε: the term of honor applied to the Messiah. The following verse shows that not the thoughtless or superstitious repetition of Lord, Lord, is meant. There they say, Lord, Lord in the greatest anguish of soul, in the awful hour of their rejection, cf. xxv. 11; Luke viii. 24. It is repeated to give the strengthened form. Earnestly they confess the Lord, zealously and deliberately they worship His name, but all is merely external, without heart or inward reality. The confession of the Lord is indeed most important, an indispensable condition of His favor. John xiii. 13; Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8. This is fundamental. The early Church baptized in His name. But the confession of the lips must express the confession of the heart, and be joined with that of the hands. With the honor thus outwardly shown to Christ, must correspond our absolute obedience to the will of His Father, to His own teachings, 24–26; Luke vi. 46; to the moral requirements of God. John vii. 17; xii. 50. An external service has no value in the sight of the Searcher of hearts. Mere lip-service admits no one into the kingdom, nor martyrdom for orthodoxy. Nebe: The Lord recognizes His own, not in words but in the obedience they offer to His Father. Confession must be converted into life.

He who saith “Lord, Lord,” and then “doeth,” that is, conformeth to, what this confession implies, will enter into the kingdom. Some: “practically carry out my teachings.” Chap. v. 20. Faith is neither excluded nor expressly included here—the stage of advancement had not been reached where its relation to a full obedience could be understood.

The will of “my Father” is here God’s will with reference to our moral behavior—that will which Jesus came to teach, hence the title by which they address Him. This “Lord, Lord,” implies that they will offer such obedience; it is the outward form of the obedience. But Christ demands a confession in action, and **not in**

words only, the works of our hands, not the calves of our lips—fruits not blossoms. Confession is the bloom, conformity of life the fruit—which shows how indispensable is the confession. “While yet young in faith our mouth overflows with professions; the older faith becomes in us, the more zealous it is to testify with all the activity of life that Jesus is its Alpha and Omega.” “He who confesses Christ sees the Lord yet before him, but he who lives Christ transfigures himself into the image of the Lord, so that the Lord lives in him.”

The doing of the will is, of course, not a single act, but our constant behavior. The Present participle is used, implying what is continuous. He that endureth to the end shall be saved. He “shall enter in”—that is Future. The reference is not to the kingdom in its earthly form, but in its glory. The day of judgment is in Christ’s mind, v. 22; the standard of judgment, works, is held up as the decisive feature.

“My Father which is in heaven.” Those who would enter heaven must be in accord with the will of Him who is enthroned in heaven.

22. Many will say to me . . . Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and . . . cast out devils, and . . . do many miracles?”

“By thy name” corresponds here to “Lord, Lord,” v. 21. What the last verse intimated is sharply accented here. At the close of the sermon Jesus throws aside the prophet’s garb. He is more, He is the Son of God, enforcing the will of His Father; He is the Judge of the world, on Him and on the relation to Him is suspended the fate of all. Olshausen: “The situation here so vividly portrayed is the language of fact;” the representation is drastically concrete, as in Matt. xxv. 41 ff. Those connected with Christ but not sincerely, are now introduced as speaking, in order to confirm what is said of them v. 21.

“In that day,” the last of all days, the day toward which all move and in which all culminate, which stood before His hearers as the great and terrible day soon to break, Luke x. 12; 2 Tim. i. 12, 18; iv. 8. “That day,” doubtless so designated because it was the most notable of all days. Even the Old Testament speaks of it often, Is. ii. 12, 13; vi. ff.; Joel i. 15; ii. 1, 11.

On that awful day, before the final exclusion, but when they have a premonition of it and see the sword suspended over them, they will cry “Lord, Lord.” The dialogue form is more vivid and forcible. Matt. xxv. 12 ff. They would escape their doom, they cry in their extreme distress, yet not for grace, but in view of their works, which make their exclusion unjust. This shows that death

does not strip men of their delusions, and make them recognize fully the truth. Such is the strength of self-delusion that even death cannot disenchant men. Death does not interrupt moral degeneration. The longer, the worse. The hypocrite at first holds sin in his hand, then sin holds him in its hand. He first deceives others, finally himself. Thiersch: "By hypocrites is usually understood those who knowingly lie and deceive in God's name, who profess to be disciples of Jesus, when they are thoroughly conscious that they are the servants of sin." This is the beginning. When he continues to stifle the voice of conscience, the hypocrite changes into one of a different character, so that he no longer knows himself to be a hypocrite, and considers himself in a good state, because from long custom he says "Lord, Lord." In this awful self-delusion he may continue till he stands before the judgment-seat. "To me in that day" — day of judgment. xi. 24; Luke x. 12. That the Messiah is the Judge on whose award the absolute destiny of men depends, was both a Jewish and a Christian dogma. John xii. 48; iii. 36; Rom. ii. 16; Acts xvii. 31.

The first plea is that they "prophesied," *i. e.*, proclaimed the word of God, testified to His holy and gracious will. The prophet's message is an inspired discourse, Acts xi. 27; xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10; xiv. 1, 6. Prophecy comes first also in 1 Cor. xii. 23. A person became a prophet only through faith, Rom. xii. 6, but this might be of the intellect and not of the heart, and therefore united with an ungodly life, 1 Cor. xii. 2, as the gift of tongues among the Corinthians. A man may be a gifted preacher, while his own will and character are not influenced by his preaching.

The second plea is that they "cast out demons." By the virtue of His name they constrained the demons to depart, xii. 27, iv. 24; 1 Cor. xii. 10.

The third, that they "wrought miracles." What kind of miracles is not said. Some: miracles of healing. Calvin: every exercise of special divine powers. Splendid achievements did these men have to show. Outwardly they had been most active, and that, too, for the Lord. At least, so they profess. They did all "by His name," as His confessors, His servants, by His authority, in virtue of, or by means of, His name "as a condition and instrument." The omission of *ev* which generally occurs in such a connection is surprising. Evidently we have here the Dative of instrument. By means of the power of His name: in the consciousness that to the Lord was given the name above every name they undertook their works, calling upon His name. This is the confession they now make to Him seated on the judgment throne. His

name "filled their faith consciousness." DeWette: "The name of Jesus is that which one believes and professes, vi. 9, of His Messianic dignity, power and might." They claim reality for their professions by the effects of their charisms. Acts iii. 6; xix. 13; Luke ix. 49; x. 17. He replies:

23. "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

There is no denial of the truth of their prophesying or of the reality of their miracles. Their extraordinary relation to Christ in this respect is admitted. Matt. x. 8; Mk. ix. 38; Luke ix. 49; Acts xix. 13 ff.; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. They even base their plea upon the intimacy of their relation—there is self-glorying and boasting on that score—a claim set up of their deserts, xxv. 24, by which they seek to shield themselves from rejection, Luke xiii. 25 f.

But all is without avail. Christ never knew them, never stood in communion with them, never sustained a saving relation to them. Ἐγνων has the gracious pregnant sense of a life-relation, a fellowship, not a theoretical knowledge merely, but a heart knowledge, including activity: *nosse cum affectu et effectu*, "knowledge of experience founded on the possession of a common life." My name you may have used, and it served you in the exertion of great power, but you were not my own, never. Ps. i. 6; John x. 14; 1 Cor. viii. 3; xiii. 12; Prov. xii. 10; xxvii. 23; Job ix. 21; Ps. xxxvii. 18; cxliv. 3; Nah. i. 7; Amos iii. 2; Matt. xxv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 19. The answer is terrific, crushing. "Then," just when they put forward these high and plausible claims, which would preëminently entitle them to enter the kingdom, just as they are in the act of reaching for the crown they had so richly deserved, Christ having all along so highly favored them with results, all of a sudden, at the last moment, they are disillusioned, and surprised by an overwhelming fate. Ὁμολογήσω. Conscious of being the Judge of quick and dead, Jesus repeats the sentence which will then fall from His lips. I will declare openly, speak out freely, with no dissemblance. Like a thunder-bolt this sentence falls upon those who have not saving faith: "I never knew you, depart from me." In spite of the proofs they enjoyed of Christ's majesty and power, they were workers of unrighteousness, ἀνομία vs. δικαιοσύνη, xiii. 41; 2 Cor. vi. 14; Heb. i. 9. The great utterance in 17, 18 continues to echo to the last and to bear the impress of the final judgment. Rom. ii. 13; cf. Ps. vi. 8; v. 6; xiv. 4; xxviii. 3 ff.; Matt. xxv. 41. Much as they had His name on their lips and great as were the good deeds wrought through it, they remained strangers to Him. They have no part in Him.

The true righteousness they have not attained, but unrighteousness they have been doing.

Notice the force of "never." Nothing they have ever done has commanded His approval. They have only taxed His patience and long-suffering. "Depart from me." What can the workers of iniquity have in common with the righteous Judge? How can those who are ever doing unrighteousness have any part with Him who fulfilled all righteousness?

Ἐργαζόμενοι, Present. Their working of iniquity continues. They are prosecuting it in the very claim they present for admission. They would enter heaven by fraud. Death has not changed them. Their standing before the judgment-seat does not change them. *Ἀνομία*, "iniquity," has become their habitus. "Sin personifies itself in the sinner."

The solemn truth is here set forth that there are men of noble gifts, who use them in promoting the cause of Christ, who are honored with transcendent success and an exalted career in His service, who are nevertheless disowned by Him as members of His kingdom, because their motives were not pure and they were not impelled by love to God and their brethren, but by selfishness and pride. The warning is applicable to men of all ages, who forget the supreme purpose of the Gospel to bring the will into obedience to God. Cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 2; Luke x. 20. Doubtless Paul had in mind this warning, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

At the time when miracles were an every-day occurrence men aspired to and often attained to extraordinary endowments and manifestations, such as accompanied apostolic preaching, ex gr., Simon Magus and the Corinthians. Mark ix. 39; Acts xix; 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 39.

The keynote of the Pericope is that of warning.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

BEWARE:

1. Of false prophets.
2. Of false hearts.

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS.

1. Precaution is indispensable, for they come in sheep's clothing.
2. Precaution is possible, for by their fruits you will know them.
3. Precaution is necessary, for the Lord will say to them, "I never knew you."

THIS WARNING CANNOT BE TOO MUCH EMPHASIZED.

1. The outward appearance of false prophets is very captivating.
2. Our hearts are prone to be deceived by them.
3. The judgment of the Lord is inexorable against all.

THE CHRISTIANITY DEMANDED BY CHRIST.

1. Not a Christianity of words, but of works.
2. Not a Christianity of works, but of the heart.

THE END OF THE HYPOCRITE.

1. He becomes known in his life, notwithstanding his dissimulation.
2. He is rejected by the Lord, notwithstanding his boasted record.

THE FALSE PROPHETS.

1. How they come.
2. How they are known.
3. How they are rejected.

THE NEED OF CAUTION.

1. Not every prophet is a true prophet.
2. Not every professor is a true professor.
3. Not every worker is a true worker.

WHO DOES NOT DO THE WILL OF THE FATHER ?

1. He who feigns to be different from what he is.
2. He who merely says, Lord, Lord.
3. He who boasts of his works.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke xvi. 1-9.

THE subject of this Lesson is true prudence. Between this and the last Lesson there obtains accordingly "a beautiful progress of thought." Nebe: "There has been held up to the view of the called the object of their endeavor, the better righteousness, the reward of their labor and a great, imminent danger; now they are admonished to use all manner of means wisely to redeem time and opportunity in order to attain to the goal toward which they are running."

From the wilderness of interpretations of this parable we follow in the main that of Meyer: "After Jesus has replied to the murmuring of the Pharisees and scribes because of His association with publicans and sinners, He now turns also (*ὁ δὲ καὶ*) to His disciples with the parabolic discussion of the doctrine how they were to use earthly possessions in order to come into the Messiah's kingdom. For, according to v. 9, nothing else is the teaching of this parable, which consequently is, even in its vocabulary, similar to the parable at xii. 16 ff. The "rich man" is mammon, v. 13, the *οἰκονόμος*, "steward," represents the "disciples." Just as (1) the steward was denounced for squandering the property of his Lord, so also the "disciples," maintaining in Christ an entirely different interest and a different purpose of life from that of collecting earthly wealth, Matt. vi. 19 f.; Luke xii. 33; xviii. 22, must needs appear to the enemies—the rather that these were themselves covetous, v. 14—as wasteful managers of the riches of mammon, Matt. vi. 24, and as such must be decried by them, v. 1. As, further (2), the steward came into the position of having his dismissal from his service announced to him by the rich man, so also it would come upon the "disciples" that mammon would withdraw from them the stewardship of his goods, *i. e.*, that they would come into poverty, vv. 2 f. As, however (3), the steward was prudent enough before his dismissal, while he still had the disposal of his lord's wealth, to make use of the latter for his subsequent provision by making for himself friends therewith, who would receive him into their houses—which prudence the rich man

praised in spite of the dishonesty of the measure; so also should the "disciples" by liberal expenditure of the goods of mammon, which were still at their disposal, provide for themselves friends, so as subsequently to attain in their impoverishment provision for eternity, the reception into the Messiah's kingdom."

The foregoing chapter was addressed to the Pharisees. Our Pericope Jesus addresses to His disciples, who came near to Him, not with murmurs but with yearnings for salvation. Some hold that He addresses the Pharisees, and the disciples also. Meyer denies "any definite connection with what has preceded." "Jesus very naturally comes direct to the treatment of this theme, because just at that time there were many publicans among His disciples (xv. 1) on whom, after their decision in His favor, devolved as their first duty the application of the goods of mammon in the way mentioned (xii. 33)." The contrast with the Pharisees, just before so humiliatingly rebuked, "those covetous ones, v. 14, to whom making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness was so extremely foreign, xi. 41; xx. 47, naturally helped to urge His theme." Nebe admits that nothing in the context is at variance with Meyer's view, and that as the parable was especially directed to the disciples, there were extraordinary grounds for an earnest word concerning the mammon of unrighteousness to the publicans and sinners—who for the most part had acquired great riches by unrighteous methods—but he insists that the exposition of the individual passages cannot be harmonized with it. The conduct of the steward cannot be commended to the imitation of a Christian. It is, however, not his unrighteousness that is the subject of praise, but his prudence, his practical wisdom, as shown from the analogy of v. 9. In spite of his dishonesty, he had to be commended for dealing prudently, for hitting on a device that secured his earthly well-being. His course was well advised and to the purpose, even though from a moral point of view his prudence was only the wisdom of the serpent, Matt. x. 16, so that he was not the faithful and wise steward, xii. 42, but only wise. He had resorted to a shrewd practical expedient, had acted *σπουδαίως*, "wisely." We have to do not so much with the procedure in its material aspect, as in its formal character. Luther: "Just as the apostle compares Adam with Christ, so the Lord compares the unrighteous with the righteous, in order that as the unrighteous one deals wisely with unrighteousness and knavery, so we should act wisely with righteousness and honesty." The children of this world, says Jesus, are wiser than the children of light. The latter can learn from them. As they are wise, dis-

creet, practical in their conduct, so the children of light should learn to be in theirs, in their generation. "The knaves and rogues of this world far surpass in this generation you Christians." Bleek: "In the administration of earthly possessions committed to us we are to proceed prudently, and not allow the children of this world to outdo us in this respect, and to show this by applying them in such a way that they may lead us into the everlasting habitations, so that likewise in the administration of earthly goods we strive for the goal, which we should have before us in all our conduct, the securing of salvation, eternal life."

Even in the administration of earthly affairs this goal is to be kept before our eyes. To secure the very highest end we are to employ the same zeal and wisdom which the carnally-minded employ in securing what to their mind is the highest good. This is the conclusion which Jesus Himself draws from the parable. That all unrighteousness in the acquisition and use of earthly goods is to be avoided is to the disciples self-evident.

The parable is thus to be classed with those which are of the nature of a contrast, cf. Luke xi. 5 ff.; xviii. 2 ff. The unjust judge in the latter is a vital point. Had he been just, he would have given no occasion for the widow's persistence with her plea. Nebe: "His unrighteousness was calculated, on the one hand, to impress the widow with the fruitlessness of her petitions, on the other hand, also, to provoke her to her unblushing and intolerable annoyance. That we are to continue in prayer is without any meaning if God would at once hear us, hence He must compare Himself to an unrighteous judge, that our prayer may be tested and strengthened in its perseverance. The unjust judge is therefore the counterpart of God. Luke xi. presents a similar contrast." A very good occasion was offered in our lesson for such a contrast.

The virtue of prudence which carefully adapts means to the end has been too much overlooked and discarded in the church. It is a virtue left to the world and its children, although the Lord has said, "Be ye wise as serpents," Matt. x. 16. It is indeed a virtue pre-eminently fitted for the sphere of this world, but the Christian must not forget that his lot is still cast in this sphere. His mission is here, his work has to be done here. The worldly-minded has in every way the advantage of him in knowing and utilizing the world's resources and its various relations; he is of the world, and hence his projects and calculations are wont to be more successful. When, therefore, the Lord would encourage the practice of prudence, He could only select from the children of this world an exemplar of it. The lower animals are made our teach-

ers in the book of fables, and the children of darkness are examples in practical sense to the children of light.

Both Julian the Apostate and Porphyry charged Jesus with inculcating deception and fraud; but prudence is only a formal virtue, looking to the end, not a material virtue, dealing only with means. Luther offers this parallel: "Suppose I want to urge some one to watch, to pray, to study, and would say, Think how murderers and thieves watch at night that they may rob and steal, why will not you watch that you may pray and study? In this I do not praise the murderers and thieves for their crimes, but for the sagacity with which they compass their iniquity. In like manner if I should say 'a dissolute woman bedecks herself with gold and silk that she may allure young men, why should not you adorn yourself in faith so as to please Christ?' I do not here praise the prostitute, but the diligence which she misapplies."

1. "And he said . . . There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused . . . he was wasting his goods."

Christ's discourse proceeds from the periphery to the centre. In xv. 3 He clearly addresses Himself to the Pharisees. Having finished with these, having related three parables, each of which sent a thorn into their hearts, He now turns to those to whom His apologetic discourse had brought rest from their oppressors. The claim that *kai* is to be rendered "also," "unto his disciples," *i. e.*, besides to the Pharisees He also addressed Himself to them, is answered by the rendering, "besides" those parables which were directed to the Pharisees, He related also to the disciples what now follows. The "disciples" are not restricted here to the twelve and the seventy. Every one was called a disciple who had attached himself for a longer or shorter time to Jesus. John vi. 60; Matt. viii. 12; Luke vi. 13; vii. 11; xix. 37. The disciples who had just come to Jesus, the publicans, are especially meant here—"not inclusive of those twelve who had left their all." "Accordingly the Lord now speaks more weightily and sternly to the disciples who had been publicans than He had spoken in their behalf to others." "The prodigal son restored to his father is not to have daily music (xv. 25), but is here taught to return to duty." These publicans were for the most part rich, as may have been the case also with other disciples. Hence the Lord illustrates to them the prudent use of money.

"A certain rich man:" The Roman nation, the Emperor, the Prince of this world, God, Plutus, mammon. In xii. 16 and xvi. 19 Luke uses "rich man" for a very unholy person, a typical representation of the service of mammon and of the belly. Meyer

objects to the rendering "God," that v. 8 conflicts with this notion, "as well as the circumstance that actually the dismissal from the service of the rich man brings with it, the same shelter to which in the application, v. 9 corresponds, the reception into the everlasting habitations."

It is the disciples' relation to temporal wealth that is to be understood, hence mammon. "He has the significance of a definite person feigned, who however as such was well known to the hearers, Matt. vi. 24, and also at v. 13 is expressly named. "The concluding words of v. 13 are the key to the parable."

Nebe denies that the dismissal from his lord's service corresponds to the entrance into the eternal habitations, but the entrance into the earthly has its counterpart in the entrance into the heavenly.

The *οἰκονόμος* was the house-steward who had the supervision of the domestics, the stewardship of the household, the rental of the property, etc., cf. xii. 42. Such were usually slaves, but it is evident from vv. 3, 4, that this one was a freeman. In the interpretation he neither represents men in general, nor the rich, nor the people of Israel, nor sinners, nor Pharisees, nor the publicans, "but the 'disciples,' as is plain from v. 9, where the conduct analogous to the behavior of the 'steward' is enjoined upon them." "Those who were publicans before they passed over to Christ were concerned with temporal wealth, and were therefore stewards, not of God but of mammon." Every man is indeed a steward of God. To every one God has entrusted goods, talents, possessions. Not as to slaves has He committed to us His goods, but with the right of free disposal of them, on the assumption of course that we administer the trust faithfully.

For a time everything prospered with the steward. Apparently he was a real steward. But appearances deceive. He was now accused to his master of wasting his property. "This one," emphatic, this fellow whom a gracious lord had raised so high, in whom he had imposed the greatest confidence, etc., carried on in a fashion that led to his being denounced as a culprit. *Διαβάλλω* is mostly used of groundless, false accusations. It "expresses—even where a corresponding matter of fact lies at the foundation, Num. xxii. 22; Dan. iii. 8; vi. 25, etc., hostile denunciation, accusation." Luther: "He was ill-spoken of." Vulgate: *Diffamatus est*. "There was some foundation in fact (he makes no defense), but the manner in which he was denounced manifested a hostile purpose." He was not a faithful steward who was simply the victim of a slander, but as it is obvious that his dismissal burst upon him

like a thunderbolt from the clear sky, the accusation could not have been spread abroad, but was lodged secretly with his lord. Meyer applies the charge to the relation of the disciples to temporal wealth, as the unfaithful stewards of which they manifested themselves in the eyes of the Pharisees by their conversion, and at the foundation of this lay the fact that they had no further interest in mammon. Cf. Zaccheus, xix.

The steward was represented as squandering, xv. 13, dissipating, the property of his lord. *ὧς* has been interpreted as showing the charge to be unfounded. It may also be used in case of a well-founded charge, and hence "in itself decides nothing at all." Nebe: "It suggests that the informer had nothing definite, but sought to excite suspicion against the steward." He brought to the lord a rumor.

2. "And he called him . . . What . . . I hear of thee? render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward."

Meyer justifies this rendering in preference to "wherefore do I hear, etc."—"a well-known contraction of a relative clause with an interrogative clause."

The lord is so rich that he has not felt the loss caused by the reckless mismanagement of the steward, but he determines to put a stop to his methods, to dismiss him altogether. In brief, curt terms, as the rich are wont to speak to employees, he demands a rendering of his accounts. He wants the state of affairs cleared up. He does not propose any contention or discussion, but a prompt settlement, sheer business. He is more surprised than indignant at the steward's reported abuse of his trust. He had reposed entire confidence in him. Bengel: "He speaks as if something had happened which he was not expecting. This implies that God puts trust in man."

Ἀπόδος τὸν λόγον, Matt. xii. 36; Acts xix. 40; Rom. xiv. 12, not turn over your ledgers, but render the account of your stewardship that "the lord may revise the account and strike the balance." This may be done with the object of having the steward justify himself and with honor continue in his position, or of having it made clear before he is dismissed, that the whole inventory is correct. The next clause makes it evident that the master's mind was made up already by what he had heard, regarding it as already established. The reckoning is but preliminary to his dismissal. Some: he would not have a steward concerning whom such reports circulated. Others: he wants the reckoning so as to know himself the condition of his affairs. The steward did not by words admit his guilt, he made no open confession, but he could

not stand the piercing eye of the master, and his whole behavior betrayed his guilt. Hence he also made no denial. The master, as if knowing very well what will be the outcome for his servant, along with the requirement of the accounts notifies him of the termination of his stewardship. "The dismissal is, indeed, not yet irrevocably expressed—it does not precede the reckoning, but it will undoubtedly follow a conscientious investigation." Certainly the steward does not yet consider himself discharged, but his reflection shows that he undoubtedly expects to be.

3. "And the steward . . . What shall I do, . . . taketh away the stewardship from me? I have not strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed."

The near and certain result of the rendering of the account, his conscience tells him, is his dismissal. Hence the Present tense. Were he to be represented as innocent "the parable must needs have placed in his mouth a justification." But he is surprised and overwhelmed by the sudden revelation that his master knows all about his crooked transactions. If he had had any premonitions of it he would have gotten under cover. But as his lord had been apparently unsuspecting and allowed things to run on with indifference, he had deluded himself with the idea that there was no danger of detection. Surprised as he is and certain of his fate, he is not disconcerted or rattled. His head keeps cool. His caution does not forsake him. This is the great virtue which the parable was designed to inculcate. Prudence manifests itself in the crisis. He staggers a moment, but he soon recovers himself and calmly faces the situation. As he leaves his master to go for the books he is occupied with the problem what to do. Without seeking counsel from others, his prudence is quick to recognize his extremity, and he realizes that if all is not to be lost, prompt and decisive action must be taken. Every moment is precious, for the clock is striking. My lord is taking away the stewardship—that is inevitable. The pending inventory and his own conscience put his dismissal beyond a doubt. In prosperity the voice of conscience can be stifled, but it takes its revenge when calamity overtakes the evil doer. And here it took charge of matters, and before the accounts could be examined or the lord see what justice required, conscience had settled everything. The steward must pronounce judgment on himself.

Ordinarily when conscience lays hold of a man it disturbs and unnerves him and makes him irresolute in all his affairs, but the steward does not lose his balance; he has no time to reckon with his own conscience; he must better his situation. About to be

dismissed from office, he must look somewhere for support. Two ways stand open: To eat his bread in the sweat of his face, or to beg it at the hands of the rich. But he cannot reconcile himself to either. The change is too great. "To dig" in fields, gardens, vineyards, was represented by Greek writers also as the last resource of the impoverished, and, besides, having never been accustomed to such labor he feels that his strength is not equal to it. One having enjoyed a snug and easy berth like his, would naturally shrink from low menial toil; and his pride would not let him resort to the disgraceful practice of begging. If the man had been conscious of a virtuous shame he would have made a confession.

These reflections are not for interpretation, but "for depicting the crisis." There is an utter failure of resources unless he can secure for himself a refuge with the debtors of his lord. The one thought of his mind is not his wrong-doing, but the loss of his place and of his bread. His sorrow is not of a godly kind.

4. "I am resolved . . . that, when I am put out . . . they may receive me into their houses."

Ἐγὼν "without any connecting particle depicts in a lively manner what is passing in his mind, and is true to nature." It is in the Aorist, expressing the moment of occurrence: "I have come to the knowledge." His fertility of resources suddenly hit upon a plan, a shrewd device. He'll find means for his end. His dismissal is a foregone conclusion against which he must provide. The blow he cannot avert, but he may lessen its force and escape utter destruction. And this is the one objective point toward which all his energies are bent, to provide the necessities of life. Being thrust out by his lord, what he is momentarily expecting, he provides for being taken into other homes by his master's debtors.

Ὅταν implies that the die is not yet actually cast. His thoughts so chase each other amid the haste under which he acts, that he does not take time to say who they are that will receive him in the impending exigency. He does not stop to make good resolutions. The situation is urgent, and he thinks and acts quickly and decisively. No sooner spoken than done. What an approved remedy he has found.

5. "And calling . . . his lord's debtors, he said to the first, How much owest thou . . ."

"Every one" he called, "that he might put as many as possible under obligations to him." The two instances subjoined are simply examples.

"Debtors." Meyer holds that the original implies that they were not tenants, but men who had borrowed the natural products

named from the stores of the rich man." Some: They were merchants who had not made payment for their goods, vii. 41. In spite of the emergency the steward prudently avoids publicity. Like a man of position he has all his lord's debtors come to him. *Ἐαυτὸν*, emphatic, "with his own master's debtors he could help himself." His lord may cast the steward out, yet by his perfidious subtlety he will accomplish that *volens nolens* he has to provide for him. He will draw his support after all from his wealthy lord. Mammon must serve him to good purpose, provide shelter for him.

It is not said that he had them all come together, nor the opposite. Bengel holds that the conjunction *καί*, v. 7, indicates that the steward did not transact business separately with every debtor. Likely, he hastened from one to the other. "The ground under his feet was on fire, hence he proceeded as summarily as Jesus does in narrating the parable."

The question "how much" is not one of ignorance. To make sure work he asks for their own acknowledgment of obligations, which must agree with the contents of the bond. Nebe: "He does not know the amount from memory and has not time to examine into each individual account." Others: "That the magnitude of their indebtedness as confessed by themselves may frighten them."

6. "And he said, a hundred measures of oil. And he . . . Take thy bond . . . quickly and write fifty."

A bath (Heb.) was the largest liquid measure, equal to an attimetrete, nearly nine English gallons.

Τὰ γράμματα: What is written, in the plural used even of one document. Gal. vi. 11.

Λέξαι. Meyer: "Take away." Expositors are divided on the question whether the old bonds, which were, of course, in the steward's possession, were altered or exchanged for new ones. Most: "That he may write a new bond with the smaller amount." Nebe: "He could not take time to pick out each debtor's paper, he hands over to them the whole bundle, allowing each one to take out his own." Some: The figures of the old bonds were simply altered, otherwise we should expect to read of their destruction when the new ones were substituted. But why should the old ones have been brought forth at all, and not at once thrown into the fire, if new ones were to take their place? This required time, and there must be not a moment's delay. An alteration of the figures might be easily detected, but so could new certificates of indebtedness. The alteration, too, might be accounted for on the score

that the debtors had in part canceled their obligations. "Sit down" is pictorial, and "quickly" should be taken with "write," as corresponding with the haste to which the carrying out of an injustice urges." Bengel: "stealthily."

7. "Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? . . . A hundred measures of wheat . . . He saith unto him . . . write four score."

"To another," xix. 20. *Κόρος*, (Heb. : "*kor*."), equal to 10 ephas or baths, called also homer, the largest dry measure, about 14 bushels. "The diversity of the deduction, vv. 6, 7, is merely the change of the concrete picturing without any special purpose in view." B. Crusius: "More is deducted from the oil, simply because it is more costly than the wheat, and is better adapted to wastefulness." But the steward's action now is not wastefulness, but is aimed simply at securing shelter in the dark prospect before him. Nebe suggests that the steward knew his men, he knew how much he must deduct from each one's indebtedness to secure his friendship. A small gift of the kind would obligate one man to any measure of service, while another one requires double the reduction as the price of his friendship. The difference in his gifts is a proof of his knowledge of human nature, and therefore another proof of his prudence. "He calculates the degree of liberality which he must apply to each one, in order to attain the same end, namely his hospitable reception under their roof, until he obtain another appointment."

As the steward dealt with these two, so he doubtless proceeded with all his lord's debtors. Jesus hastens to the conclusion, and does not say that after he had completed his fraudulent transactions, he returned to his lord in order to render his accounts. He doubtless followed the course usually taken by swindlers; knowing that he could not maintain himself, he secretly absconded. Vainly his lord waited for his appearance. But he soon knew all.

8. "And his lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely: for the sons of this world are . . . wiser" . . .

Κύριος, "lord," not Jesus, but the master of the steward, vv. 3, 5 (cf. 9, *ἐγώ*), to whom the measures taken by the latter had become known.

"Steward of unrighteousness," Hebrew for "unrighteous steward." "The steward is called unjust, not merely on account of the original squandering away of his master's goods, but also on account of his newly-adopted trick, whereby he intercepted fifty measures of oil and twenty of wheat, and bestowed them on the debtors, though the property did not belong to him, but to another

(to his master), in order that he might provide for himself." "Unrighteous" contains the judgment of Jesus on the conduct of the steward, which, nevertheless, the master praised with reference to the prudence employed." Not the *ἀδίκια*, "unrighteousness," but the prudence, of the steward is the subject of praise, the prudence is praised in spite of the *ἀδίκια*, cf. vv. 4, 9, in both of which *ὡς ἵνα*, "in order that, when," occur and mutually correspond. Bengel: "From this injustice of the steward the mammon of injustice himself takes his denomination." Meyer: "It is used here in contradiction with the parallel expression, v. 9; cf. xviii. 6."

The steward's smartness, shrewdness, his prudence and quick decision, are admired by his master, "since in spite of what the steward has squandered for him, enough remains for him to put up with the loss." He is so situated that he need not worry. Ewald: "Since the matter cannot be altered, and according to his own worldly-mindedness, he must admit that if he had been in the steward's place he would have pursued the same course." His prudence approves and commends itself. It attained the end sought. His cancellation of indebtedness cannot be annulled, since he possessed the authority to transact his master's business, and, as he had nothing, there was no way for his lord to reimburse himself. The matter must pass. The sole concern of the steward was to make friends of those debtors of his lord who were in complicity with his fraudulent transaction. In this he would succeed. For of course his lord would grant no more advances to debtors capable of such dishonesty, and they would soon have need of the services of so shrewd and clever a member of their household. One who knew so well how to help himself could help his friends. "For the sons," etc. Meyer: "Immediately after the words 'had done wisely,' Jesus adds a general maxim in justification of the predicate used (*φρονιμως*)." "The children of this world could only be those to whom the steward belonged, by virtue of his unrighteous dealing." "Wisely" and "wiser" are correlatives. Prudence is the characteristic of the children of this world, represented by the steward, and contrasted with the sons of light.

"Sons of this world," *αἱῶν*, **xx.** 34; cf. Matt. viii. 12; xii. 32; those who belong in their moral nature and endeavor to the period of the world prior to the Messianic times, "the worldlings whose whole thought and action connect them with this world, who wish to know of nothing higher or more enduring."

These are more prudent than the "sons of light"—a sublime designation, "those who, withdrawn from temporal interests have

devoted themselves wholly to the divine light brought by Christ and are enlightened and governed by it, John xii. 36; 1 Thess. v. 5; Eph. v. 8." They are more prudent—not absolutely, but in reference to their own generation. This clause is "a qualifying limitation, *i. e.*, in relation to their own kindred, if they have to do with those who, like themselves, are children of this world, as that steward was so prudent in reference to the debtors. The whole body of them—a category of like-minded men—is described as a generation, a clan of connections; and how appropriately, since they appear precisely as sons." It is with reference to "their own," which includes the contrasted saying that this higher degree of prudence is not exercised, if they have to deal with those not of their kind. "With unerring sagacity they know, in their relations to companions of their own stamp, how to turn the advantage of the latter to their own advantage; but in their relation to the children of light, they cannot practice such measures of prudence, because these are not pliable for their immoral purposes, as were those debtors, who by their own dishonesty were serviceable to the dishonest sagacity of the steward by the falsification of their bonds."

ἰπτερ is superfluous, but it presents most emphatically the incomparable prudence of the sons of this age. They are in this respect vastly superior to the sons of light. "For their own generation"—is not properly referred to both classes, only to the sons of this age, so the words themselves require as well as the sense; "for the prudence of the children of light in general, (not merely in their relation to those like them), is surpassed by that prudence which the sons of the world apply to their own." On such wisdom they concentrate their efforts, "whereas the children of light can pursue only holy purposes with moral means, and consequently must necessarily fall behind in the worldly prudence, in which morality is of no account."

Mark, that this lauded prudence applied only to this world. The steward was wise only for the few days which remained for him on earth. He had no eye to the eternal world. He was of the earth, earthy. The wisdom of the sons of this world is confined to their own sphere, this world. This is their element, here they seek their transitory advantage by prudence. The sons of light cannot compete with them, their citizenship is in heaven. They aim at another goal. Yet he who is the Light requires of his own also the exercise of prudence.

9. "And I say . . . Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they . . . into the eternal tabernacles."

Jesus now applies the parable by an earnest admonition, to the disciples. The words are repeated from v. 4. As the rich lord commended the steward for his prudence, so Jesus commends to them an analogous prudence of conduct, but in how much higher a sense. *Καὶ* is accordingly not adversative, but copulative. It corresponds to *κύριος*, v. 8, and "you" to the "unrighteous steward." "Make friends," provide for yourselves friends, a plenty of them. Meyer infers from the final sentence "that they may receive you," that these friends are the angels. Matt. xxiv. 31; Mark xiii. 27. The reception into the Messiah's kingdom is the duty of the ministering spirits, ix. 26. Such as have been made friends by the beneficent application of riches, are, by others, regarded as God; God and Christ; God, Christ and the Angels; Christ and the pious; the saints. The cause is common to all. Nebe: "Only those can be the subject whom the rich aided by their mammon, their fellowmen, those in need, the poor." Gratitude, as in the case of the debtors, will prompt them to receive, etc. How can these receive? "Those on whom benefits were conferred in love, receive us, not as if of right they opened or closed the door of heaven to this or that one of their own pleasure, but they receive in the same way as for example, Matt. xii. 42; Luke xi. 31, the queen of the South will judge on that day the contemporaries of our Lord. As she judges, they will receive; standing before God who alone can receive, they testify to their fitness for being received." They will attest our faith manifested to them, on account of which God opens to us the eternal tabernacles, cf. Matt. xxv. 40. No merit of works is meant to be taught.

"For yourselves:" "The analogy of an application for their own use, as in the case of the steward is to be admitted." 'Εκ, "out of." "The result proceeds from making use of mammon." "Mammon:" A Hellenized Aramaic term, gain, riches, treasures—found also in the Targums and Rabbins. There is no proof that there was an idol of this name. Meyer takes "mammon" here not personally as at v. 13, but neuter, as at v. 11, wealth. "The unrighteous mammon." This predicate, "unrighteous," is attached to the steward, because he had acted unrighteously toward his lord. Here it is attached to wealth, because it serves according to the usual experience, xviii. 24 f., as an instrument of unrighteous dealing. The moral characteristic of its *use* is represented as adhering to *itself*. It is wont to be unjustly acquired and unjustly employed. It is the use of wealth that is discussed.

“Out of that wealth which, as in the case of the steward, is only too often used for unrighteousness, the disciples are to make themselves friends,” in order that when it shall fail, xxii. 32; Heb. i. 12, they may receive you. Before riches take their departure, let them be so employed that we shall, by a wise use of them, make sure of an eternal habitation, cf. 4.

Meyer finds here the catastrophe of the Parousia, at the appearance of which the temporal riches come to an end and cease to exist, vi. 24; Jas. v. 1 ff.; Luke xvii. 26 ff.; whereas then the treasures laid up in heaven, Matt. vi. 20; Luke xii. 23; xviii. 22, occupy their place (cf. 1 Tim. vi. 19), and the complete deceitfulness of riches is revealed.” He claims that this reference to the Parousia is required in the context by the “eternal tabernacles,” whereby the setting up of the kingdom is referred to. But the usual reference of this is to heaven, regarding which Meyer says: “Jesus could not refer His disciples to the condition after their death, since, according to the synoptic Gospels (cf. John xiv. 3), he had placed the Parousia and the setting up of the kingdom in the lifetime even of that generation,” xxi. 32; ix. 27. “The everlasting tabernacles correspond to the houses, v. 4, and typically denote, probably in reference to the moveable tabernacle in the wilderness, cf. Hos. xii. 10; Zech. xiv. 16; Ps. cxviii. 15, the kingdom of Messiah in respect of its everlasting duration. 4 Esdras ii. 11.”

By the wise use of God’s gifts let us advance our interests in the kingdom of heaven, “with a noble exercise of the discretion given us. Christ would have us blend with the consideration of His interest a regard to our own interest.” Let the temporal things be used with a wise reference to the eternal. Unfaithfulness towards mammon is the condition of faithfulness towards God. This is not only prudence but duty.

The practical treatment of the Pericope is determined by the purpose of the parable. This concerns not in the first instance the Christian’s relation to earthly possessions, but the exercise of prudence. Christian prudence in relation to the unrighteous mammon is doubtless one of the secondary lessons.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THAT THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD ARE WISER THAN THOSE OF
LIGHT IS,

1. A very common,
2. A very explicable,
3. A very humiliating, experience.

HOW WARY THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD!

1. In considering the future.
2. In using the past.
3. In commanding the present.

THE MASTERFUL PRUDENCE OF A CHILD OF THIS WORLD.

1. He takes in the whole situation.
2. He keenly estimates the value of a moment.
3. He quickly finds the right means.
4. He applies himself resolutely to the work.
5. He provides carefully for the future.

THE PRUDENCE TO BE LEARNED FROM THE CHILDREN OF THIS
WORLD RESPECTING,

1. Our responsibility.
2. The means at our disposal.
3. The lot which we provide for ourselves.

THE UNJUST STEWARD OFFERS THREE ENIGMAS.

1. In the child of this world being an example for us.
2. In the praise of deception.
3. In the reception to our eternal home by good friends.

TRUE CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE.

1. Consider thyself a steward of God.
2. Think of the account of thy stewardship.
3. Redeem time and opportunity.
4. Seek the eternal tabernacles.

THE PARABLE TEACHES US THAT WE ARE

1. All unjust stewards.
2. That we must give an account of our stewardship.
3. That only by the greatest prudence can we escape the wrath of God.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke xix. 41-48.

NEBE: "The last Pericope inculcated prudence, reminding us of our end; this one goes a step further on the same road. Woe to him, this Gospel calls to us, who is wanting in true prudence! Who does not redeem the time of His visitation! Jerusalem offers an awful example. Destruction came, swift, inevitable, frightful, upon those who did not consider, who exercised no prudence."

41. "And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, saying,"

Jesus is on His way to the last Easter Festival, as portrayed in the Gospel for the first Sunday in Advent. Nebe: "He offers Himself to His nation as the promised King; they recognize His kingly majesty and pay Him their homage with palms and psalms. Joy and jubilee surround Him; the kingdom of heaven appears to be coming with power and sweeping away all hindrances. The people, long infatuated and blinded by their leaders, appear to have come to clear convictions. The catastrophe seems imminent when the people shall as a body renounce their high-priests."

But Christ is not deceived. Behind the hosannas He hears the clamor, "crucify Him, crucify Him." He sees His last effort to speak to the heart of Jerusalem unavailing. "He who is so wont to rejoice with them who rejoice, cannot join in the universal jubilation around Him; His heart is pierced by it, His soul is torn and the tears are forced from His eyes, tears not for Himself, but for the city which as He descends from the Mount of Olives lies before Him in all its splendor." *κλαίειν*, cf. xxiii. 28, the audible weeping; cf. *δακρύειν*, John xi. 35, the silent shedding of tears. Here there was a loud outburst, a cry of lamentation, a bitter wailing, cf. 2 Kings viii. 11. Some of the ancients staggered at these tears, and this clause disappeared from a number of Mss.,—"a precious pearl was cast away." Augustine: "Emotions like these are not in conflict with the view that Christ is the Son of God, but must be presupposed in the case of one who truly became man," De Civ. Dei, XIV. 9.

Nebe: "Jesus weeps over Jerusalem. His tears are tears of com-

passion, of mercy, of the zeal of His unutterable love. Impressive are all the words of Jesus; His silence before Pilate is more eloquent than His words, but His tears over Jerusalem are more eloquent than His speech and His silence combined." But Jerusalem does not understand these tears. And as He is intent on the salvation of His people by all means, and His tears do not fall burning on their hearts, He seeks once more to move those hearts by His words.

42. "O that thou hadst known . . . even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now . . . hid from thine eyes."

Meyer: "If only thou hadst known." These are not words of threatening; they offer a model for preaching repentance. "Pour out before the lost the entire fullness of thy love, and see if he can withstand the power and fullness of thy love." The abrupt breaking off of this outcry shows the powerful commotion and the bitter anguish of His heart. "A broken heart, broken utterance." Meyer: "Pathetic aposiopesis, and consequently an expression of the fruitlessness of the wish." Various suggestions of an apodosis have been offered—"how happy thou wouldst be," "thou wouldst not perish," etc., but it is best to take *Ei* in the sense of "*utinam*," "O that, would that!"

What Jerusalem failed to apprehend He explicitly states: "The things concerning peace." "*Thou* also" places the unbelieving inhabitants of Jerusalem in opposition to the disciples, who had really considered "the things concerning peace," after the example given, v. 37—"perhaps a delicate allusion to what the name of Jerusalem as City of Peace signifies." In v. 44, "the time of thy visitation," corresponds to "the things concerning peace." "*Thou*" is emphatic. The disciples had come to know the day of visitation; the despised Galileans had embraced the opportunity rejected by the favored citizens of the capital. "Thou favored one, O if thou hast known," etc. What offers of grace had Jerusalem enjoyed for centuries! How deep the love of Jesus for the city of the great king! Behold its temple with courts and altars, its psaltery and harp, its priests and Levites, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord, where are the set thrones of judgment. Cf. Ps. cxxii.

Here ruled the most blest of kings, David, Solomon, Josiah. Here wrought the greatest prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah. The Holy City, how often the hand of God rescued it as a brand from the fire! How abounding has been the grace of God to Jerusalem, and it is not even yet exhausted. "His horn of plenty contains

yet one favor, before which pale all others." How often was heard the shout in the Temple, "This is the day the Lord hath made!" Now for the first time this psalm may be sung on the highest key, for now is the day of Jerusalem. Now lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.

The significance of this day Jesus accented in the words, "In this thy day," the day of visitation, 44; cf. i. 68. "The whole time of his public activity in Jerusalem was a respite of two years which had been prepared for more than twenty centuries, and now, as it were, concentrated itself in the one day on which the Lord entered as King into Jerusalem—" "this day given to thee for thy deliverance," Ps. cxviii. 24. Nebe: "As there comes in the life of the individual a crisis, in which the saving grace of God is brought specially near, so in the life of nations, there is a special hour of grace, in which the Holy Ghost like a mighty rushing wind comes upon them for the renewal of all things." This day on which the Lord enters Jerusalem was in God's gracious counsel designated "as the great marriage day, in which the heavenly Bridegroom was to be joined with his earthly bride in grace and truth for all time. The day which after so many acceptable days was decisive for Jerusalem, and, because it was the capital, for the whole nation, has now appeared, the day of days. To-day all its guilt heaped up from time immemorial may be expiated; to-day it may escape the punishment for all its iniquities. There yet remaineth rest and grace for Jerusalem, a peculiar, extraordinary day. To-day if thou wilt hear His voice, harden not thy heart. Consider, know the things pertaining to peace." Soon thine enemies will make war, v. 43. This is the day of thy salvation, because Jesus comes to thee as Thy King. Offer now thy homage to the Lord's Anointed, approach Him in humble submission and penitence. As His peculiar people zealous for His service, hail and welcome Him. Salvation, grace—what grace, stands at thy door!

But Jerusalem rejects its heaven-sent King. His own received Him not. The Jews did not recognize their gracious, glorious King. "But now:" "as, however, now the circumstances actually are." "It was hidden from their eyes, who He was and what a salvation He would bestow, and that according to the righteous counsel of God, Matt. xi. 25 f.; by divine decree, John xii. 37 ff.; Rom. xi. 7 ff., but not without their own personal guilt." Now when thou wouldst, thou canst not. "The things pertaining to peace," is what was now hidden from their eyes. Some take the following verses as expressing what is hidden.

How frightful the darkness with which sin smites its servants! They do not see the sun which has healing in its wings, even though it shines warm and full in their face. The nearer the judgment, the greater the blindness and security.

43, 44. "For days shall come . . . when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee . . . and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children . . . and they shall not leave . . . one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

"Such an announcement must have sounded like the trump of doom. All things have their limit and goal. The day of grace passes away and the day of judgment comes." *οτι*, "for," gives the reason for the Savior's wish, it brings a prophetic confirmation of what has just been said: there shall come and not tarry. The certainty of this awful future proves that what serves for thy salvation has become veiled from thine eyes. "The days which are now threatened are the terrible consequences of the fact that the day, v. 42, has hastened by in vain." It is now too late; His merciful heart could indeed wish otherwise, but judgment impends. Nebe connects *οτι* with the previous clause, "if thou knewest," for days shall come . . .

In broad and clear outlines Jesus now solemnly depicts the destruction of Jerusalem, the abomination of desolation which shall stand in the holy place. Meyer calls attention to the "solemn five-fold repetition of *και* in the affecting unperiodic discourse. The first one takes the place of *δε*. xvii. 22; xxiii. 44; Rom. ii. 16. Bengel sees in them the "degree of the straits to which they would be reduced."

"Days," contrasted with the one day, "this day." The misuse or neglect of a fleeting moment forfeits eternal salvation and is followed by an eternity of woe. Nebe: "The judgment over Jerusalem will not be executed in one day, by one terrible blow, but gradually, step by step, its ruin will advance. The most terrible death is when one by one the members decay, when one sees the end approaching slowly but inevitably, and can calculate the hour of dissolution. Such a wretched; miserable death awaits Jerusalem; one member of its body will perish after the other; the death struggle will last for days, weeks, even months."

Jesus, not only in general, foretells the fate of Jerusalem, but He also, in particular, describes the manner and successive stages of its destruction, There will be a formal siege in which the enemy will "avail themselves of all the then usual auxiliaries, and permit themselves all the atrocities which victors have at any time exercised against the vanquished."

Xάραξ: “a camp strengthened with palisades and line of circumvallation,” a rampart such as was actually thrown up against Jerusalem, but burned by the Jews, and then replaced by Titus with a wall. Cf. Josephus, whose detailed account shows the marvelous and minute fulfillment of Christ’s prediction. The Roman legions built this wall around the entire city. Thereupon, in order to prevent all ingress, they built yet another wall around the city, Jews having at various points succeeded in breaking through or burning the first one. Hence they compassed the city round and kept it closed on every side. As this wall extended thirty stadia, and was guarded at various points by thirteen fortresses, the Romans secured their object completely. No attempt from without was made to break these double lines, and the besieged could have no hope of making a breach. The Romans sheltered themselves behind the wall and left the city to its horrible fate. Thus while for many weeks no Jews perished by the sword of the Romans, death swept them away in great numbers, the meager provisions being granted only to those under arms. It is estimated that from the first day of the siege, the 14th of April—the Pascha on which Jesus Christ thirty-seven years before had been crucified—till July, one hundred and fifteen thousand, eight hundred and eighty perished in Jerusalem from hunger. There probably never was such distress, such suffering, such wretchedness. The misery within the city rose beyond all bounds, and yet whoever sought to escape was slit open by the Roman soldiers in order to find treasures or jewels which had been swallowed. There were fearful contentions within the city, excepting only in times of greatest peril. And the fury of the assailants had been inflamed by the length of the siege and their great losses.

The desolation now breaking in becomes general. *Ἐδαφὸν σίιν*, “level thee, *i. e.*, make thee like the ground,” cf. Amos ix. 14. It also means to dash to the ground, Ps. cxxxvii. 9; Hos. xiv. 1; Nah. iii. 10, their blood and brains being sprinkled over the smoking heaps.

“And thy children.” “The first [“dash thee”] prophesies the fate of the city, the other that of her inhabitants, both being here zeugmatically connected.” The siege became an actual razing of the city. House after house, street after street had to be taken by force, and the Jews did not give way until the house began to fall to pieces under their feet or over their heads. “Jerusalem, the cradle of Israel, was to be so completely destroyed that its cradle should become its grave.”

The ruin, the annihilation of the nation is impending. “The

children of a city are its inhabitants, Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34; Gal. iv. 25, the city being figuratively regarded as a mother." *Τέκνα* is not to be understood of actual children, infants, whether those who were such at the time of the siege, or at the time Jesus spoke, but simply, according to the Hebrew, the population.

Since Jerusalem was the capital of the nation, Nebe holds that all the children of Israel are to be viewed as children of Jerusalem. The city threw open its gates at the time of the siege in order to admit all Israelites, and they gathered there in multitudes, "as the children are wont to collect around the mother in times of greatest danger." Every Jew came to the Passover in the Holy City, and, from the Passover lambs slain, it is estimated that in those years about three millions appeared at every Easter feast. Tacitus gives the number of the besieged at six hundred thousand, but this was probably the number of permanent residents. As the end could be foreseen, many may have stayed away from this Passover, while many refugees and warlike characters had crowded into the city.

Finally, "they shall not leave . . . one stone upon another." All previous wars had stopped short of razing the city and its walls. The foundations remained undisturbed, and soon, phoenix-like, a new city arose from the ruins. But now the hands of its enemies shall be laid on every structure and bulwark, and wipe the city from the face of the earth. The Jerusalem which now lay in its glory before His eyes, Jesus says, shall be so completely razed as not to leave a stone upon a stone, "even in the very temple of the city." "This last part of the prophecy was fulfilled after the resurrection of Bar-Cochba under the Emperor Hadrian."

This indescribable catastrophe will Jerusalem experience because of her strange blindness, "because she knew not the time of the solicitude concerning her," "when God interested Himself for thee by means of the offer of the Messianic salvation through me." Cf. 1 Pet. ii. 12; Prov. xxix. 13; Job xxiv. 4; Wisd. ii. 10; iii. 7. *Ἐπισκοπή* in itself is a *vox media*, and in the LXX. and Apocrypha, Wisd. xiv. 11; xix. 15, is frequently used with reference to punishment. The term does not occur in the classics. Theophylact: "the time of my advent, when I came to visit and to save thee." Not for a moment did Jesus with his grace visit Jerusalem but for a *καιρός*: God made visitations by precepts, by chastisements, by miracles. In Matt. xxiii. 37, Jesus avows His concern for Jerusalem and there, too, it is seen that their blindness was a matter of their own guilt. "Ye would not," was the wail of eternal truth.

"Because thou knewest not"—the refrain of "O that thou hadst

known." Did not Israel know? Rom. x. 19, or even wish to know? chap. xiii. 34. The Jews have assigned various causes, drawn from various sins, for their city being overthrown. Here we have the true cause, the failure to accept God's marvellous grace. "Thou hast not known nor received thy gracious God, and my fatherly faithful visitation thou hast despised and derided." God meant to help thee, by the prophets and kings, by John the Baptist and myself, and after me through my apostles. God gave thee His Word, and His worship and temple; He would fain have helped and saved thee. But thou wouldst not hear, thou hast set at naught everything. Ye have seen the miracles, wrought by me and my apostles, and ye have yourselves cried out that God has visited His people, yet have ye not known, *i. e.*, ye would not receive it.

And now the children according to the law which connects one generation with another, will expiate the sins of their parents. The judgments of God do not slumber. The longer they tarry, the more fearfully will they break in on the wicked at last, like a storm that has slowly been gathering.

45. "And he entered into the temple, and . . . cast out them that sold,"

The evangelist proceeds to a second incident. The Lord who entered the city with tears now enters the temple and undertakes its purification. Matt. xxi. 12 ff. and Mk. xi. 15 f. mention the same occurrence in connection with the triumphal entry. But John ii. 14 ff. places a similar occurrence at the first Passover. In favor of the identity of the occurrence, men argue the great similarity of the narratives, and claim also that the first purification would have rendered a second superfluous. Yet although the incident is made by all to occur at a Passover, and the general outline is the same in all the evangelists, there are some material differences. According to John, Jesus made a scourge of cords, a circumstance not mentioned by the synoptists. Matthew and Mark mention his overturning the seats of the dove-merchants, John tells of His command to take them hence. Luke is silent on this point. In John Jesus calls the temple His Father's house, and charges them with converting it into a house of merchandise. In the synoptists He calls it *His* house, and declares that they have made out of it a den of robbers.

These variations are sufficient to support the theory of two purifications, and we see no cogent reason why such an occurrence should not be repeated at successive paschal feasts, the time when the temple was especially defiled by such abominations. Jesus

may have repeated the act as often as the greedy traffickers gave occasion for it.

"It agrees entirely with the typical and symbolical character of this transaction, that our Lord began as well as concluded His life therewith." Hengstenberg gives each occurrence a distinct symbolical character. "Every external cleansing, without a previous internal one, would be futile and unworthy of Christ." Those abuses in the temple come into view simply as representations of the sin of the covenant people. Mal. iii. 1, it is claimed, predicts under the figure of a double temple-cleansing a double cleansing of the theocracy. "First comes the messenger of the Lord to prepare the way before Him—the way to and in the temple, as subsequently the Lord comes to His temple—then comes suddenly the Lord Himself and the Angel of the Covenant, purifying the sons of Levi and coming near to sinners for judgment." In the first cleansing Jesus taught that "the idea represented by John has appeared in Him in the highest reality, the grace of God calling sinners to repentance." In the second, "He unfolds the other side of His being; He proceeds no longer as Prophet, but as Lord and Angel of the Covenant, to destroy hardened sinners." According to John, Jesus acts as a prophet, with the manner and authority of a zealot in Israel; according to the synoptists, as Messianic King. At the first Passover the people did not recognize Him as the attested Son of God, but at most as a teacher sent from God; but now He entered the temple as the Lord and Mediator of the Covenant, the people having offered solemn homage to Him as the Son of David, as "the Coming One," while the children greeted Him with their hosannas, Matt. xxi. 15.

The relation of this temple cleansing to the tears of Jesus is variously explained. Nebe: "Jesus here no longer preaches repentance and reformation. Neither the passage from Jeremiah to which He refers, nor the discourse connected with this cleansing, treats of the pardoning grace of God, but of the wrath of a righteous God. Jesus enters the temple as the Judge, the Mediator of the Covenant."

His cleansing shows that what is hidden from Jerusalem concerns its peace, that the judgment of God will inevitably break in upon it. The very necessity of this cleansing after a previous one just two years ago, shows that the heart of this people is irredeemably hardened.

"Into the temple," the stronghold of religion—not the temple-structure, but the site and courts of the temple. Doubtless the court of the Gentiles is meant, for here alone the dealers in all kinds of

sacrificial animals were to be found. Luke does not mention the brokers, who set up their banks there to exchange on commission the current money of different countries for the sacred shekel or *drachma*, which was required for the temple offerings and the payment of the temple tax. They may also have advanced money on security.

These animals were needed for the sacrifices required at the festivals. In Deut. xiv. 24 ff., the people were authorized, if the distance was "too long for them" to carry their tithes and their firstlings to the place chosen by the Lord, to convert them into money and with that buy oxen, sheep or whatever was needed. And thus was offered to the Jew an occasion for traffic—his proverbial weakness—in the courts of the sanctuary. The vast multitude who at the feasts thronged from every country into Jerusalem, required an immense quantity of animals for the offerings. "The priests undertook to meet this want; for, that they were chiefly interested in this traffic, is clear from the fact that they allowed it in the courts of the Lord's house." And this has a plausible aspect. How could the many thousand strangers otherwise have procured their offerings? How easily, if ordinary cattle dealers had controlled the market, they might have been defrauded, and perchance brought offerings which had to be rejected because they did not meet the requirements of the law. But on the other hand, by means of this clerical traffic the people were left wholly to the mercy of the priests. For who would venture to take his own sheep or ox for the prescribed offering, since the priests could easily discover some blemish in it and thrust it away from the altar? Thus with a free hand they could practice extortion and rob the people in the name of religion, making a market of holy things, gain out of godliness.

This nuisance and sacrilege the Lord cannot allow. He "began to cast out." Meyer: "He began therewith His Messianic ministry in the temple." But Nebe objects that He had previously done this, and renders, "to enter upon, or proceed with a work."

Not with a whip here, but with the rod of His mouth, does the Lord drive out those polluting the sanctuary. Neither His sudden appearance would ordinarily affect them, nor their awakened conscience, but the majesty of His look overawed them into submission, as they flew panic-stricken from the sacred precincts, which they had defiled by their huckstering and their lucre. "The acquiescence of the astonished multitude is all the more intelligible on this occasion, that the indignant Reformer had just celebrated His triumphal march into the city in the character of Messiah."

Some account for their sudden disappearance by a miracle, one of the greatest miracles. It was due to the majesty of His personality. The Messiah, in the fulfillment of prophecy, suddenly enters into His house—"and who may abide the day of His coming?"

46. "Saying . . . It is written, . . . a house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of robbers."

"As Jesus had explained His tears, so now He explains His purification of the temple." It was not the work of a fiery zealot. His course was determined by God and His Word. Not at His own instance did this extraordinary transaction take place, God's Word required it of Him. "It is written." Some: "It is written and it shall be." But *ἔστα* is part of the quotation. The quotation is a "free combination of Isa. lvi. 7 and Jer. vii. 11, and is taken from the LXX." You have wholly perverted the purpose of this house, wholly changed it from the object for which it was intended. God's house was in the old covenant not only a place of prayer, but also of offerings; but what are offerings if not symbols of prayer? And God will not have sacrifices, but the prayer of a contrite heart, Ps. 1. "Prayer is the soul of all worship, of the innermost, spiritual worship." This seat of prayer is now most shamelessly desecrated and profaned—and that not by heathen, but by those to whom God had graciously given His house, those who had been called to seek God here, because here, according to His gracious promise, He would meet with them.

"Ye:" not the priests and Levites *in specie*, but the people in their totality. "A den of robbers" *vs.* a house of prayer. What a contrast! There violence is done to man, here the divine blessing is supplicated for him. Meyer holds the distinctive point to be the robbery—not their carrying their money and animals into the temple, as the robbers carry their booty into a cave. Avarice, the robbery of their fellow-men, had taken up its abode in God's holy place.

Thieves held sway where God's servants were to mediate blessings for men. But some hold that the temple has become a nest for the thieves, *i. e.*, the thieves do not carry on, but concoct their plundering and robbery there. Under the shadow, yea under the mask of, divine worship, they proceed to fall upon the stranger and to bring their booty into this hiding place, as the thieves go out from their hiding place and bring back to it their prey. The temple has become an instrument of crime, a *σπήλαιον*, cave, the light has been removed, the place is one of darkness. There men shelter themselves who covet wealth, who would serve God for

filthy lucre, who would appropriate everything to themselves under the pretense of serving God. The priests are intent on making gain out of godliness. "Not God-worship, but mammon-worship, they conduct in God's house. They pray not to the Holy One of Israel, but to the golden calf set up in the desert." Elsewhere also Jesus castigated these robbers in the sanctuary: they rob the parents by their *corban*, "gift," taken from the children, Matt. xv. 4 ff., Mk. vii. 9 ff.; by their long prayers they consume widow's houses, Matt. xxiii. 14.

Nebe: "The tears of Jesus over Jerusalem have their last ground in this, that the temple has become a den of robbers; the first destruction of the temple under Nebuchadnezzar was occasioned by the idolatry to which it was desecrated." Ezek. viii. 3 ff. As the Judge he pronounces a righteous sentence, and in a manner that inspires terror, that makes every one acknowledge the justice of His cause. The spiritually imposing character of His person and bearing paralyzes all resistance. The language as quoted from the prophet is strong, but it is in keeping with the powerful emotion which had been awakened in Jesus.

47. "And he was teaching daily . . . But the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men . . . sought to destroy him:"

The dark cave becomes a temple once more. True doctrine, the pure Word of God, lightens up the dark place. The Sun with all its splendor illumines it once more. Though Jerusalem is beyond recovery, Christ is so concerned for the salvation of souls that in these last hours He still seeks to pluck here and there a brand from the burning. "He was teaching," periphrastic, not once only, not in passing merely, but continuously, day by day, as had never before been the case.

But the more the grace of God is offered, the more determined are the leaders of the people to compass His destruction. *Οἱ πρῶτοι*, most likely the elders. As the priests and scribes were the spiritual leaders, these were the worldly aristocracy. The clause has special emphasis. Not alarmed by the power He had exercised as Lord of the temple, they are devising ways and means to kill Him. "The robbers want to become murderers, and that in God's house."

48. "And they could not find what they might do; for the people all . . . listening."

They do not propose open violence. They are proper, respectable characters; they must at least save good appearances. But their machinations are blocked. These demagogues fear the people if they fear nothing else, and the people surround Jesus like

an insurmountable wall. "The assiduity of the people obstructed the approach of His enemies." He had the masses back of Him.

"The people hung about him"—a peculiar form not found elsewhere in the New Testament, strikingly expressing the people's attachment to Him, their clinging to Him that they might receive the pure milk of the Gospel. They hang on Him as bees on the flowers on which they seek honey. Since the people were still accessible to the Word of the Lord what a judgment must at last come upon "the leaders of this people," who drag them remorselessly into utter perdition!

Neither part of the Pericope should be overlooked in the practical treatment. We should consider the things which belong unto our peace. To this we are admonished by the tears of Jesus, by the judgment threatening the Holy City, by the corruption which has planted its feet within the sanctuary.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE TEARS OF JESUS OVER JERUSALEM ARE

1. Jerusalem's honor and Jerusalem's shame.
2. Jerusalem's hope and Jerusalem's damnation.

THE TEARS OF JESUS ARE

1. Tears of love.
2. Tears of holy wrath.
3. Tears of the final effort.

HOW THE LORD LOVES HIS PEOPLE.

1. He weeps over their blindness.
2. He purifies their sanctuary.
3. He labors unto death for their conversion.

What a warning for us in:

1. Jerusalem's time of grace.
2. Jerusalem's hardening.
3. Jerusalem's fall.

THE TEMPLE CLEANSING A TYPE OF THE REFORMATION. IT REMINDS

1. Of the History of the Reformation.
 2. Of the Glory of the Reformation.
 3. Of the Admonitions of the Reformation.
- (See Lange for the complete skeleton.)

CONSIDER WHAT BELONGS TO THY PEACE.

1. The time of visitation is rapidly passing.
2. The dreadful day of wrath is at hand.
3. Judgment has already begun at the house of God.
4. But the Lord still earnestly offers His grace.

SIN BLINDS US TO

1. The time of visitation.
2. The threatenings of judgment.
3. To the only means of salvation.

JERUSALEM'S FRIGHTFUL BLINDNESS:

1. The end is coming, but Jesus alone weeps.
2. The temple is a den of robbers, but Jesus alone interferes.
3. The Saviour is present, but they are seeking His life.

O THAT THOU KNEWEST!

1. You may know it.
2. You must know it.
3. But you will not know it.

BE SAVED BY JESUS:

1. By His look of tears.
2. By His cleansing power.
3. By His word of grace.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke xviii. 9-14.

THIS Sunday closes the second cycle of the Trinity Period. The first cycle has to do with the call, the second with the righteousness to which we are called of the Lord. Beginning with the Sixth Sunday after Trinity the order of thought is as follows: Our righteousness must surpass that of the scribes; the reward even here of seeking such righteousness; the warning against false prophets in our striving after righteousness; the need of prudence; the importance of knowing the day of our visitation. "This Eleventh Sunday after Trinity connects with the one preceding in this, that the temple appears here as the house of prayer which had been converted into a den of robbers, and it looks back to the Pericope of the Sunday beginning this series, the Sixth after Trinity, for here a Pharisee appears who justifies himself."

"The solemn doctrine taught is that all righteousness loses its value before God when combined with pride; only the humble penitent is justified before God."

9. "And he spake also this parable unto certain which . . . that they were righteous, and set all others at nought."

Δὲ indicates some connection with what precedes, where importunate prayer is inculcated by the example of the widow who came unto the unjust judge. Here Jesus would deter certain ones from rashness and self-confidence. By way of exception, the object of the parable is in this instance given in advance.

Πρός, with reference to, or to whom the Lord turned with His word as "He spake." Those so placing trust in themselves were *τινες*, "certain." Meyer: "The historical connection is not more closely to be indicated than is pointed out by the *τινες* as "trusting in themselves." "These men must in some way or other have made manifest their disposition, and thereby have given occasion to Jesus to deliver the following discourse as far as v. 14." The phrase "designates the persons in the quality in question specifically." It characterizes them according to a specific attribute. Evidently they had few enviable traits. They believed themselves to be righteous, therefore not sinners, needing justifica-

tion, v. 14. *Ἐπι*. They put on themselves the confidence that they were righteous, that is, they were self-righteous men, who sought not the grace of God.

Meyer thinks that the people now addressed were not Pharisees, since it is actually a Pharisee that Jesus presents as a warning example. Possibly they were conceited self-righteous followers of Jesus, who despised such as were formerly great sinners—the devil of self-righteousness is very firmly lodged in human hearts—but, more probably, Jews of a Pharisaic disposition were in Jesus' eye.

While they cherished this conceit of righteousness for themselves, for all others (v. 11) "they did not entertain this confidence, but assumed the contrary, and despised them," accounting them unrighteous. Certainly one who renders not to God what is due to Him, will not render to his neighbor what is due to him. The deeper a valley the higher the mountain, and he who would exalt himself can accomplish it most easily by lowering and degrading his neighbor. The more you depress him the more of course you rise above him.

"A parable," properly an example, which corresponds to the classic use of the term. "An example presents an image which stands on the same line with the truth which is to be represented, but the parable descends from a higher to a lower sphere in order to derive thence an earthly counterpart for a heavenly truth."

10. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; . . . a Pharisee" . . .

Two men representing two radically distinct classes. Of both the same thing is predicated: at the same time, in the same place, and for the same purpose, "they went up into the temple to pray." The temple was upon an eminence. The Israelites were wont to pray mostly in the secret chamber, especially in the "upper chamber," Dan. vi. 11; Jud. viii. 5; Tob. iii. 12; Acts i. 13; x. 9, also in the open air on hilltops, 1 Kings xviii. 42; Exod. ii. 9 ff.; Matt. xiv. 23; Luke vi. 12. Wherever the locality for prayer, the face was always turned toward Jerusalem, toward the temple, Dan. vi. 11; 2 Chron. vi. 34. "By this attitude it was indicated that properly it was only a matter of favor that an Israelite could pray outside of the temple." That was the house of prayer. Hence if a man was in the vicinity of the temple, he betook himself thither and prayed there in its courts, 1 Sam. i. 12; Is. lvi. 7; Acts iii. 1, his face being turned toward the most holy place, Ps. v. 8; 1 Kings viii. 38.

It is not said at what hour these two went up. Pious Jews were wont at three different hours to come before God with praise,

thanksgiving and supplication, Ps. lv. 18; Dan. vi. 11, morning, Acts ii. 15, noon, Acts x. 9, and at the hour of the evening sacrifice, Dan. ix. 21; Acts iii. 1.

11. "The Pharisee stood . . . God, I thank thee . . . not as the rest of men . . . or even as this publican."

The Pharisee has of course the precedence. He probably did not come in contact with the publican, or enter the sacred precincts with him, since that would have touched his honor. As this self-righteous class sought the first seats at a feast, so they sought also precedence in worship.

Σταθεῖς, "stood." He took his stand, struck an attitude, "a trait of assurance," xix. 8: Acts ii. 14, in contrast with the publican, who μακρόθεν ἐστῶς, just where he happened to be he stood still and prayed. The Jews generally stood in prayer, 1 Sam. i. 26; 1 Kings viii. 22; Neh. viii. 5 ff.; Matt. vi. 5, yet often they fell on their knees, Dan. vi. 11; Luke xxii. 41, etc. "With himself" is not to be connected with "stood," Is. lxxv. 5, but with prayed," by himself," "to himself," *apud animum suum*, 2 Macc. xi. 13, to speak in thought. "Naturally he would not allow such a prayer to be heard. The publican is otherwise," v. 13.

Bengel: "As one dependent on himself," *penes se ipsum*, giving ear to himself, cf. v. 9, "who trusted in themselves." Nebe, who connects by himself with "stood," observes: "As the one righteous one in a crowd of wicked ones he separates himself from all and seeks to keep up this distinction in the house of the Lord. He was sorry enough that just as he went, this publican also went. He feared that his own prayer might thus be defiled." He picks out a special place, from which he could easily be seen, doubtless as near as possible to the stone balustrade which surrounded the altar of burnt-offering.

"I thank thee." The beginning sounds well, although Nebe objects that the bare unqualified "God," shows that no personal communion obtains between the Pharisee and God. In spite of his oft-repeated devotions, God is still a stranger to him. It is not his heart that impels him to prayer. This is simply a religious performance. A dear child does not address its parent so coldly. Had he known God, he would at least have addressed Him "my God." It is quite proper to offer thanksgiving for the blessings by which we are distinguished, it being done with sincerity and humility, but in reality he prides himself on his felicity. Significantly thanks come first. "He who gives thanks has what his soul desires; he who supplicates is lacking something." The

Pharisee would say serenely, What lack I yet? Yet his apparent thankfulness is only praiseworthy. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord." But it should be accompanied by praise to the name of the Most High. Of this there is not a word. The praise all accrues to the Pharisee himself. His so-called prayer is nothing but self-praise. Under the guise of prayer he is parading his virtues. First he tells what he is not, then he recounts what he is, but in neither case does he give God the glory which belongs alone to Him.

The first ostensible ground for thanks is that he is unlike "the rest of men." He divides the human race into two classes, himself and the rest of men. He constitutes the exception of his species. He is a class by himself, a society of one. All the others are grouped together as one class.

The man has some virtues, at all events he is free from criminality and scandalous vice. Give him his due. His portrait of himself is to be accepted as faithful and correct. He is better than many others. He is, for instance, no "extortioner," not rapacious, he does not seek to possess himself of his neighbor's property by force. He assumes that "the first and foremost class of sinners is that under which the publican is included, in order that he may stigmatize him both in general with the rest of the class, and also individually." An old poet said: "All publicans are extortioners."

Nor "unjust." He does not resort to fraud to acquire his neighbor's property. He is chargeable with neither violence, nor injustice in his business relations.

Nor "adulterer." He has not defiled his soul and body with impurity, with the filth of adultery. It is right enough for him to rejoice that he is not stained with such sins. It is not well to imagine or pretend that we are guilty of anything, and then to parade our confession of such affected sins. Happy the man who can before God say, I am not guilty of extortion, injustice or adultery. But the manner of this claim is reprehensible. It is preceded by the boast, "I am not as the rest;" it is followed by the contemptuous allusion to "this publican," as if pointing self-righteously and superciliously to the poor sinner. Is. lviii. 9. This setting of the three terms casts a bad light upon him. How does he know himself to be better than the publican? Is he warranted in passing an ethical judgment on him at first sight and according to outward appearance? Is it likely that so rash a judgment on another was accompanied by a strict self-examination? All men are a mass of perdition, condemned to hell; one alone stands

out from this mass, one free from sin! This betrays the pride, the blindness, the hardness of his heart. Evidently he had never prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me." He was self-satisfied with what is merely external. He thought only of outward righteousness. "Outwardly he was neither, extortioner, unjust, or adulterer, inwardly he was all three." "He is a robber, not indeed a confessed one. He says, 'I thank thee,' but does he really thank God in his heart that he is neither of these? If the word *εὐχαριστῶ* did not stand here no one would think of his being thankful, for he is simply boasting before God, and in no way indicates that it is of the grace of God that he is what he is." He is unjust. *Suum cuique*, is the motto of justice. Does he allow to the publican what is due to him on the score of justice, and for God's sake? We are to love one another, but he clearly shows contempt for his fellow-worshipper. Nebe calls him also an adulterer, since in making His covenant with Israel God betrothed Himself to every individual soul. "As the God of the covenant is, so is the member of the covenant to be. Has he kept this covenant?"

12. "I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all. . ."

He proceeds to show that he is not only free from wrong and guilt, but exceedingly righteous and strictly pious. "He magnifies his good works and would have God think that he is really doing much more than is required." The Pharisees laid very great stress upon fasting. Matt. vi. 16; ix. 14; Luke v. 33. "Fasting is doubtless a good thing in order to keep the body under the control of the spirit, but it is only an outward bodily exercise." Moses prescribed but a single public fast, on the great day of Atonement. Lev. xvi. 29 ff; xxiii. 27 ff. Subsequently, fasts were ordained on the occasion of severe calamities. Judg. xx. 26; 1 Sam. vii. 6; 2 Chron. xx. 3; Joel i. 14; ii. 12; Jon. iii. 7. After the Exile it was deemed a mark of piety to fast twice a week, on the second and fifth days, Moses having on the fifth day ascended to the top of Sinai and on the second descended.

Σαββάρον. The Vulgate renders "twice on the Sabbath." But the Jews had only two meals a day, and, besides, the Pharisees were so far from fasting on the Sabbath, that they spread their feasts on that day, Luke xiv. 1, and, "indeed would have regarded fasting on the Sabbath as a desecration of the holy day." *Σαββάρον* is literally the week, cf. Mk. xvi. 9; 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Where the term is applied to the seventh day, it is by synecdoche, a part of the week for the whole.

"Tithes of all things I get." He is a paragon of piety. The Law did not require tithes of everything men acquired; but only of the products of the field and of the flock. Lev. xxvii. 30; Num. xviii. 21; Deut. xiv. 22. The Pharisees were strict constructionists. Vegetables, herbs, eggs, milk, etc., were once exempt, but the Pharisees ignored this, and as proofs of their extraordinary righteousness and piety tithed mint, anise and cummin, Luke xi. 42; Matt. xxiii. 23. Doubtless the Pharisee means even more than this. The Jews had at that time already been extensively engaged in trade. At the time of the giving of the Law this was not contemplated, and hence gains of this character were not tithed. But this man voluntarily tithed all his gains of whatever character, without exception.

Yet how little fruit was borne by these good works! Fasting is to prepare the way for right prayer, but the whole prayer shows that no such effect had been produced. It consists in the self-complaisant recounting of his own excellencies. The tithe was to keep alive the consciousness that it is God who blesses field and flock, that, strictly speaking, all that they produce belongs to God. But all this tithing by the Pharisee was only a dead work, no proper thought being connected with it. H. Müller renders the prayer thus: "I am, O God, the best of all; if Thou didst not have me, Thou wouldst not have a holy one in the world; if I should die all piety would die with me."

The reason that he details all his virtues to God, and joins no petitions with his thanksgiving, is because he trusts in himself; he relies upon his own righteousness. He knows of nothing to ask for. His works are in his eyes perfect, and entitle him to much laudation. Truly he is one of those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set all others at nought.

13. "But the publican, standing afar off, would not even raise his eyes . . . but kept smiting . . . saying, God be propitiated to me, the sinner."

Here is the exact counterpart of the proud, self-righteous Pharisee. *Μακρόθεν*, from a distance, in the background, not presuming to draw near, to advance further into the sanctuary. He feels that the place is holy, and knows what a sinner he is. Hence he remains "standing afar off." Not that he prayed out in the court of the Gentiles, far away from the sanctuary, but he stopped far back of the Pharisee, in order to offer in some corner his pious prayer. His heart draws him to God and His courts, but He fears to draw nearer lest the fire from the altar of the Most Holy One should seize and consume him: xv. 18, 21; Ezek. xvi. 52, 63. The awakened consciousness of sin held him back.

"He would not even raise his eyes." He ventured not so much as to raise his eyes, much less his whole head and his arms to heaven. He cast his eyes down. His sins stood before him. They would not let him look up. Expositors differ as to whether fear or shame predominated in the publican. Calvin says, shame always accompanies penitence. From shame his eyes fell to the ground. Cf. *Dejectis in terram oculis, velut pœnitentia*. Ezra ix. 6.

Instead of coming confidently and joyfully before God, he "kept smiting his breast from shame and grief." "Where there is grief there is a hand to smite one's self in self-reproach." Jer. xxxi. 19; Luke viii. 52; xxiii. 27. "Breast:" the seat of conscience. These features and gestures lead us to anticipate a prayer very different from that of the Pharisee. It is brief and concise. H. Müller says: "Few words, much heart; many words, little heart." Long prayers have no commendation anywhere in the Scriptures. "This prayer is but a pious ejaculation, a cry out of the depths," forced from his heart by the burden of his sin and guilt. The Pharisee had only a proud thanksgiving, the publican only a humble petition. He, too, addresses himself simply to God. "How gladly he would have added 'my,' but dare he, the great sinner, venture to designate the Holy God of Israel as his God?" Has the light fellowship with the darkness, God with Belial? Is this God his God? His soul longs, his heart thirsts for his God, but will God, will the heart of God move toward him? He prays: *ἰλασθήρι μοι*, be propitious, propitiated toward me, be reconciled to me, be placated or appeased, be gracious unto me. The verb is derived from an adjective meaning serene, cheerful, placid; when one is angry his face lowers, but when his anger ceases his forehead becomes smooth, his countenance placid.

The Middle Voice has its force here. God determines Himself. Nebe: "This is the prayer of the poor publican that God will of His own accord change the feeling, which in the consciousness of his sins the suppliant assumes to exist in Him, that He will change from an ungracious to a gracious God. In Heb. ii. 17 the term is used transitively, expressing an action by which sin comes to an end. The heathen conception of the word differed from this as their conception of the divinities differed from Christian theology. The light-minded Greek flattered himself that it was a small matter to change by some pious performance the wrath of his gods into kindness and benevolence."

"Me" is more closely defined, "the sinner"—which was *per se* not necessary, for if God is to be propitious to him it is understood that he has sinned. But his consciousness of sin impels him to

add this—"me, who am the sinner." He thinks of nothing but his sins, he desires nothing but the forgiveness of his sins. His prayer is a faith-testimony. "For the two," says Luther, "sin and grace, are opposed to each other, like fire and water. Grace does not belong where sin is, but wrath and punishment. It may seem an easy task to say this, but not every one knows how, and no one understands better how difficult it is than the few who try to learn it, in order that they may follow the publican in believing and praying." Grotius died uttering this prayer.

14. "I say . . . This man went down . . . justified rather than the other : for every one that exalteth himself . . . but he that humbleth himself" . . .

"Went down," etc., a lively picture of the result, wherever his home may be supposed to have been located. Aug.: *de Pharisaeo et publicano accepisti controversiam, audi sententiam. Audisti superbum accusatorem, audisti reum humilem, audi nunc iudicem*.

Nebe: "He who is appointed of God to be judge of the living and the dead pronounces the sentence: This man was justified, *i. e.*, made righteous, cf. v. 9." Some have taken the view that he was justified more than the Pharisee. Erasmus: *Prae illo*. Not all righteousness is denied to the Pharisee, but because he exalted himself above the publican he is now placed beneath him. Thiersch: "It is not said that the Pharisee was rejected, but that the publican with his prayer received abundant grace, the Pharisee with his, but little."

But God does not give little grace, and to such a heart as the Pharisee's he gives none at all. He "resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble." Luther: "the Pharisee went home not justified but condemned." Euthymius: "Not *ἐκείνος*, 'the other.' For having justified (*δικαίωσας*) himself he was condemned (*κατεδικάσθη*) by God." The Pharisee was not justified at all; he was abased. The texts vary, but in either case *μᾶλλον* is to be understood as in xv. 7; 1 Cor. xiv. 19. Meyer: "The reading *παρ' ἐκείνον* is in the sense of the comparison: *Prae illo*, in respect of which the context decides whether what is declared is applicable to the other one in question, only in a lesser degree, as (xiii. 2, 4), or not at all (as here,) whether therefore the expressed preference is relative or absolute." Cf. Matt. xxi. 31; Jno. iii. 19; 1 Tim. i. 4. Nebe: "a relative advantage cannot be meant, for the subject is a *δικαιῶνσθαι*. He who becomes a *δικαίος* has not a part of his sins but all forgiven, the *δικαίος* is washed from all his sins."

Justification is to be taken here in the Pauline sense, *i. e.*, accepted by God as righteous. "The publican was not inwardly transformed into a righteous man, but was declared by God to be

righteous." The reason for his justification is given: "because every one who exalteth himself, etc." The pride of the Pharisee was fatal to him, the humility of the publican gained him salvation. "God offers his justifying grace to all men without distinction; but he who holds himself high and exalted above sin, as righteous and pious, rejects the grace which is offered him through the gospel, and closes the door of grace to himself; but he that humbles himself, and acknowledges that he is a poor, lost and condemned man, reaches out in faith to the offered grace and is accepted of God as his dear child." A complete commentary on this historic occurrence is found in the Epistle to the Romans.

For practical treatment of the Pericope we may take as subject the righteousness before God, or humility.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

WE ARE MADE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD:

1. Not through the merit of our own works.
2. But alone by the grace of God through faith.

WHO WILL BE JUSTIFIED?

1. He who is conscious of his own sins.
2. And has deep sorrow for his sins.
3. And openly confesses his sins.
4. And believingly casts himself on the grace of God.

THE PHARISEE CONTRASTED WITH THE PUBLICAN.

1. He only pretends to pray, the other prays in truth.
2. He boasts of his righteousness, the other confesses his sins.
3. He claims a reward from God, the other seeks God's grace.

THREE GROUNDS FOR THE PHARISEE'S REJECTION.

1. His self-sufficiency, because of having a few virtues.
2. His self-sufficiency, because of his external religious observances.
3. His self-sufficiency, because of his favorable comparison with others.

GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME THE SINNER:

1. A deep cry of distress.
2. A mighty cry of faith.
3. A blessed sign of life.

THE JUSTIFIED SINNER:

1. An abomination to the self-righteous.
2. A wonder to himself.
3. An honor to God.

THE WICKED PRIDE OF THE PHARISEE

1. Robs God of His honor.
2. Despises his brethren.
3. Forfeits the true righteousness.

TRUE AND FALSE PIETY.

1. Hypocrisy and truth.
2. Proud condemnation of one's neighbor and humble smiting of one's own breast.
3. Dead work-righteousness and living righteousness of faith.

THE HOUSE OF GOD A HOUSE OF BLESSING.

1. We go up to pray.
2. We go down to our house justified.

CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION REGARDING PRAYER.

1. Where shall we pray.
2. How shall we pray.
3. Why shall we pray.
4. With what results shall we pray.

See Homiletical Review, Feb., 1886, and Sept., 1886.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Mark vii. 31-37.

NEBE gives the connection with the previous Sunday thus: There two are speaking, the Pharisee improperly, the publican alone properly. This difference was not due to their culture respectively, but proper speech is given from above. The Lord must loose the bond of the tongue. "But we cannot speak right unless we hear right speaking; hence the Lord must beforehand open our ears." Joined with the next Pericope, the subject of which is the good Samaritan, it may be said that in the latter we are admonished to right action pleasing to God, here to right speech acceptable to God. "The deaf-mute spoke right, the people praised the Lord. Following the cycle which was occupied with the superior righteousness, the goal of our life, we have now another cycle which portrays the life in righteousness, the Christian life in its manifestation."

31. "And again he went out . . . and came through Sidon . . . through the midst of the borders of Decapolis."

Because of persecutions Jesus had withdrawn across the Tyrian frontier, following in the way of the two prophets, Elijah and Elisha. But the excitement soon aroused by His presence led Him to make His stay brief. The course of His journey was northward through Sidonian territory, perhaps in order that He might return thence to the east side of the lake. It was certainly a circuitous route, possibly from prudential considerations. Because of the opposing Pharisees, "it is too early to return to Galilee." Hence He journeys from the heathen boundaries of western Palestine around the lake to the extreme eastern frontier, the region known as Decapolis, where the population was such a mixture of Jews and heathen, that in comparison with it Galilee might be regarded as a pure Jewish country. The names of these ten cities vary in Pliny and Ptolemæus. Josephus calls Scythopolis the most important. The other places were doubtless small. Some of them lay close together, others were scattered far. All were east of the Jordan. The Romans annexed Decapolis to Syria. The fame of Jesus penetrated this region as early as Matt. iv. 25. There, too,

the demoniac of Gadara who called himself Legion, proclaimed the glad tidings, cf. v. 19, 20. Then the people begged Him to withdraw, and He did not obtrude Himself upon an unwilling community. Now the rejected One seeks again a place of sojourn there, showing not only that divine love forgives and forgets, but also that the Lord will receive the heathen into His kingdom.

32. "And they bring unto him one . . . deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and . . . to lay his hand upon him."

As in the heathen border land in the west, human misery in the woman of Canaan pressed to the Saviour, so in this eastern heathen border land He is confronted with human distress in the most pitiable form. Distress and misery are found the world over, and there is only one name among men by which they must be saved. *There* help was sought for one "grievously vexed with a devil," *here* for one who had lost the power of hearing and of speech. A minute and circumstantial account of the healing is given.

"They bring him," not that he had lost also the power of motion. It is not likely that he was carried lying on a bed, but as the Vulgate has it, *adducunt*, they led, conducted him. Deprived of hearing and speech, he could not well undertake the journey alone in pursuit of Jesus. Others came nobly to his aid, and brought him to the Healer, asking for mercy in his behalf. He was κωφός, "deaf," but misfortune seldom comes singly, and deafness is generally accompanied by the loss of speech. The acquisition and the retention of speech appear to depend on the hearing of speech.

Μογιῶλος, speaking with difficulty. It was hard for him to articulate. Olshausen: "Because he did not hear his own voice, he got to speaking unintelligibly." Meyer thinks he was dumb, a deaf mute, which is confirmed by ἀλάλοος v. 37, and not refuted by ἐλάλει ὁρθῶς, "he spake plain," v. 35. The word is not found again in the New Testament. According to its usage by the LXX. it may mean either being a mute, or having difficult articulation. Cf. Exod. iv. 11. Lange reminds us that to restore this man's speech Jesus loosed the bond of his tongue, implying an organic defect, but not necessarily that he could not produce sounds. He could not articulate. "The term expresses a relative, but not an absolute inability."

"They beseech him to lay his hands." Calvin: "The imposition of hands was a solemn symbol of consecration, by which also were conferred the gifts of the Holy Spirit."

He claims that Jesus frequently had recourse to this rite, but Nebe thinks that in cases of healing there is no frequent mention

of it, vi. 5; viii. 23, 25; Luke iv. 40; xiii. 30. The action was often solicited, Matt. ix. 18 (Jairus); xix. 13. Nebe: "He would so far as possible avoid everything which might give to His miracles the appearance of magical performance; they were to become manifest as the glorious effects of His Word. He who had experienced the power of His Word did not ask for the laying on of hands. Jairus was no hero of faith. He regarded help from Christ as conditioned on immediate contact. Those pious mothers who sought this favor for their infants desired a visible sign, a holy pledge."

The laying on of hands was a very ancient custom in Israel. The idea sought to be expressed was that through this, what is most completely one's own is conveyed to another. What is good and what is evil may be thus conveyed. Thus Jacob conveyed the hereditary blessing on the two sons of Joseph, Gen. xlviii. 14 f., and Moses his office upon Joshua, Num. xxvii. 18; Deut. xxxiv. 9. So the laying on of the hand on the sin-offering is interpreted by many as indicating that the offerer lays upon the victim "that which at the moment takes hold of his entire being," his iniquity, Lev. iv, 15, 24, 29. Thus in the New Testament, the laying on of hands is also the symbol of transferring or conferring aught. That which is imparted varies: with Jairus it was the life of his daughter; in our lesson it was the use of his organs by the deaf-mute; with the mothers it was a blessing for their children.

Jesus, who is Love itself, will not fall behind the love of these neighbors of the poor man. And the faith and prayers of these avail for him, not only his own faith and prayers. Nothing is said of the man's entreaty. It is not intimated that he was more than passive. Luther: "One can never be saved through the faith of another, but it may readily happen that one may through another's faith be brought to faith himself. Even though all angels and the mercy of God itself would plead for you, it would not avail unless you depended on it by your own faith; but it may do this, namely, beget a faith that will avail for thee. So Christ, although He has died for us, cannot help thee unless thou believe in Him." Our will must coincide with the will of the Lord if there is to be a miracle, the faith of the needy must correlate the will of the Miracle-worker. This faith, says Nebe, was yet wanting to the deaf-mute. The fame of the Lord, the reports of His miracles of power and grace, had indeed resounded through that remote region; but his ear was sealed, and as faith is wrought through the hearing of God's Word, there was no (ordinary) possibility of him attaining to saving faith.

"The ear is, indeed, the noblest sense with reference to the mysteries of the kingdom of God." Its superiority to the eye is obvious even in the sensuous sphere. You can close the eye if you wish, it is specially adapted to closing, and in sleep it closes of itself. But the ear can be closed only by mechanical, unnatural violence. Even in sleep it remains open, and serves always as a present medium for alarm. It is yet more obvious that spiritual perception is mediated rather through the ear than through the eye. The gospel is addressed to the ear. Blessed are those who hear the Word of God. Where there is no hearing, there is also no salvation, for faith comes through, is excited through, hearing. In order, then, that Jesus may work the deliverance plead for by those who brought the man, He must first awaken faith in him. This He does.

33. "And he took him . . . privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue;" . . .

The detailed graphic narrative of this cure has a parallel in the account of the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, viii. 22 ff. Some have explained the successive details as being due to the desperate character of the evil to be removed. The cure could only be effected step by step with the utmost exertion (?). How can we speak of the Almighty power of the Lord, as if to execute some great work required His utmost endeavor? "If by the finger of God He casts out demons, why should He not by a motion of His finger remove the maladies of this man? Can anything be easier or harder to Omnipotence? To God there is neither large nor small, easy or hard." Strauss finds here "a masterpiece of a miraculous healing according to the style of the second evangelist." Nebe claims that the conditions required that the Lord proceed with the greatest precaution, prudence and circumstantiality. He cannot deal with the case through the medium of speech, He must condescend to make use of sign language. Bengel: "The many outward actions which Jesus employed in this place, and the looks of others who were healed, stood in the place of words to this deaf man until he began to hear."

First, Jesus "takes him aside from the multitude privately." Cf. viii. 23. Such a course was exceptional. A vast crowd was doubtless present with all manner of sick and wretched people, and this one Jesus takes aside in order to cure him. Some: So that all might witness the miracle. But this conflicts with v. 36. Meyer: "He would have an undisturbed relation with the sick man." Lange: "As it was not a purely Jewish country it was necessary, especially at this crisis, that He should avoid a publicity

which might bring together the Gentiles in crowds, excite superstition as much as faith, and create in the minds of the Jews a prejudice against Him." But doubtless the people, when they saw Him take the poor man away, easily divined the result, and the recourse to secrecy only heightened their curiosity. Some: So as to avoid the appearance of ostentation. Jesus was ever meek and humble. The miracles were not epideiktic, but psychiatric. Some: To avoid being disturbed while performing the cure, and to avoid interference with the impressions of faith He sought to produce. But in no other cases is the intrusion and crowding of the multitude hinted at as interfering with a miracle.

It is entirely in accord with the mind of Jesus to come to the relief of this man, and that with as much seclusion as possible. "The stupid and suspicious patient is taken aside, that he may recognize that special and exclusive attention is about to be given him, that he is about to be the subject of an extraordinary action." Away from the multitude! Let everything else for the time vanish from his eyes and his thoughts, let his mind be wholly fixed on his Deliverer, let his eyes and his heart and all his faculties be concentrated upon Him. We can imagine how he would be affected by looking into the beaming eyes of Jesus, by seeing none but Jesus only. He could never have heard of Him, at most he had his mind directed to Him through signs and gestures; perchance, when conducted into His presence he may with his own eyes have seen Him extend help to others. "But even if he has seen nothing, now that the Lord fixes His eyes upon his own, that the eye of the Savior, like the genial sun, rests upon him, light and warmth must enter his heart and a confident expectation must fill his soul." The moral healing was the ultimate end of the physical cure. Hence everything connected with the miracle was adapted to produce this end. Privacy is suited for religious impressions. In the case of the blind man, chap. viii., as here, we must remember "that it was susceptibility of faith which was to be gradually awakened."

"Put his fingers into his ears." As a true physician Jesus begins the healing at the source of the malady. Placing his fingers into his ears was a proof that Jesus knew the seat of the trouble, as well as a proof that He would remove it, that the closed passage was about to be opened. By an external sign he makes the invisible efficacy visible.

"And having spat he touched his tongue." Meyer: "As in chap. viii., He spits into the eyes of the blind man, so here upon the tongue of the patient." The general view is that He

spat first on His own fingers and applied thus His spittle to the tongue of the sick man. It is hard to conceive that Jesus should spit upon his tongue, unless we imagine that the patient stretched it out. *Ἀπρεσθαι* would hardly be used to express the former. The text strictly does not even say that his tongue was touched by the spittle of Jesus, only that He spat and touched his tongue. But other occurrences in the New Testament show that Jesus applied spittle to the diseased member, viii. 23; John ix. 6. Otherwise we might render, before He touched the tongue with his hand He spat upon the ground, repeating the action upon the ear now upon the tongue.

The application of the spittle is certainly surprising. It was anciently regarded as medicinal for the eyes, but Christ is not a practicing physician, and the use of spittle for mutism was never heard of. However, He was wont to use the natural as a basis for the supernatural. In the case of a momentary cure it must have been without effect, as doubtless the oil was merely used by the disciples, vi. 13, as a conductor of divine power. Only in exceptional cases did Jesus dispense with visible means of communication in healing. So this spittle and this touch are regarded as the medium for conveying healing virtue, and also for assisting the patient's weak faith.

Nebe objects that if the spittle was the conductor of divine power, then the bond of the tongue must have been loosed when it was touched by the spittle, but this did not take place until the Lord uttered His mighty "Ephphatha," v. 34. Not the spittle, but the word is here the medium and conductor of healing power.

The FF. saw in it a profound mystery: *divina sapientia, quae solvit vinculum*, etc.; the mystery of the Incarnation, etc. H. Müller: "He would teach that through despicable means He can accomplish great things." Others: "He would show that all His members are consecrated to divine power." Nebe: "The Lord can make Himself intelligible to the man only through outward signs; laying the finger into the ear has not yet indicated how the healing is to take place, now it is revealed to him that from the mouth of the Lord Jesus will proceed that which restores hearing and speech."

34. "And looking up . . . he sighed . . . Ephphatha, that is, Be opened."

"Looking up to heaven," undoubtedly a look of prayer, vi. 41; xi. 41. In other cures this look to heaven is not mentioned. Lange joins the sighing with the prayer, the earnest sighing of prayer, and assumes (1) that in this half-heathen district the more

imperfect and disturbed forms of faith made the healing on His part more of a conflict; (2) that in view of their belief in demigods and magic He would make more prominent His own dependence on God. For the same reason He cried aloud to His Father at the grave of Lazarus, the Pharisees having blasphemed the source of His power; (3) it would be an impressive and effective sign, calculated to further assist his faith and move him to join in the prayer. "The deaf-mute knows that Jesus can and will relieve him; it becomes him now, with the unutterable groaning which remains to the bound creation, to pray to God for help." Evidently faith is not our work, but God's work in us.

His sighing, which accompanied the look to heaven, was an actual sigh, not a prayer breathed in a low tone, viii. 12. Lange: "A heavy weight oppressed His soul. In the deaf-mute He encountered unbelief in a form almost invincible." Nebe thinks that as the lifting of the eyes suggested to the deaf-mute that fervent prayer was required, so the sigh teaches him that prayer must proceed from a contrite and broken heart. But its significance, he holds, is not in the first instance didactic. Much more is it an expression of Jesus' state of mind, an expression forced from His heart. Some: a sigh over human misery, a sigh of painful sympathy. It may have been caused by the awful responsibility involved in the gift of speech.

Steinmeyer: "The groaning is not that of sympathy, but of the most intensive arraignment," Jas. v. 9. "The sighing refers to the image symbolically presented to the eye of Jesus in the appearance of this *καρφός*. That image speaks most forcibly, not of human misery, but of man's persistence in misery, loving its chains, rejecting Him who would free them from it, an image accordingly of that resistance which the Lord found in His labors, a lack of receptivity for His gifts and for the aims of His appearance on earth. It is certainly noteworthy that Jesus, who often sighed and even wept, should be reported as sighing before a cure only in this instance. "Hence He must have encountered something which in this form had not before approached Him." Nebe holds that the deaf man who was brought to Jesus, Matt. ix. 32, and the blind man who was dumb, Matt. xii. 22, and the deaf man in Mk. ix. 25, were all possessed, while our man did not come by his affliction through supernatural influence.

He represents, therefore, "the condition of the natural man," the whole human race. Luther: "This was a sigh over all tongues and ears, yea over all hearts, bodies and souls, and all men from Adam to the last one, seeing as Jesus did in him how

the devil accomplished his murderous work in Paradise, made humanity mute and dumb and thrust them into death and hell-fire. This illustration Christ had before His eyes, and this Gospel accordingly paints Him as the Man who interests Himself for you and me, as He Himself stood in the sin and misery in which we stand, and sighs over the abominable devil who has caused all this wretchedness." Thus the deaf-mute is especially the picture of the nation that has become incapable of the hearing of faith and of the language of confession.

After these impressive preparatory steps, "for it is a work of extraordinary difficulty to enable the deaf one to hear in matters of religion and to open the mouth of a mute to the praise of the Most High," he saith, "Ephphatha." This passage and chap. v. 41 show that Jesus spoke ordinarily the language of the country, Aramaic. The word is somewhat modified by its expression in Greek. The Greek translation is, "Be opened," open thyself, the command being addressed to the closed ear and the bound tongue. Some: The Imperative is addressed to the man; he shall be open, open himself in respect of his hearing. Undoubtedly the loosing or opening of the tongue as well as that of the ear is included. "But as the Lord had not yet wakened the maiden, when He spoke: 'Maiden, I say unto thee arise,' but called her back to life by the medium of His Word, so we are not justified in concluding from this Imperative that the deaf-mute already heard when Jesus uttered this command." He spoke to one not hearing as though he heard. Rom. iv. 17. This was the authoritative summons, the omnipotent fiat of the divine will, of which, having looked into heaven, He was fully assured. As this command of Him who made the ear, fell upon the ear of the deaf one, its closed passages instantly opened, and he understood every syllable of the healing word.

35. "And straightway his ears were opened, and . . . his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain."

Behold the miraculous, instantaneous result of Christ's Word! As in the creation, "He spake and it was done," so in this renewal of creation the fulfillment follows immediately upon the command. The miracle appears to be threefold: 1. His ears were opened, *ἀκούει*. He had before laid His finger *ἐπὶ τὰ ὦτα*. The faculty of hearing was restored. The deafness had its seat not in some outward injury, but in some defect in the inward passages. 2. "The bond of his tongue was loosed." The latter term may be taken figuratively. The tongue with which one cannot speak, which cannot perform its ordinary functions, is conceived as bound—so in

the classics—hence Meyer: “the expression does not justify the supposition of any other cause of the dumbness beside the deafness.” The tongue may, however, have been paralyzed, or it may have become thick, or the ligament of the tongue have grown forward. 3. He spake ῥηθώς, normally, rightly, no longer with defective, unintelligible articulation. This is the climax of the miracle. Instantly the man who had perhaps for years neither heard nor uttered a word gives normal expression to his thoughts, without any stammering, hitch or hesitation. Nebe gives two senses to this word: “He spake plain” in that his utterance was not unintelligible, broken, difficult; he used the right words in grammatical sentences. He thinks that if he had been a deaf-mute from birth this would give the miracle the character of a magical act; also that at one time he could speak, and that he had reached a certain stage of culture. He compares him to a sailor who having for years not trod the earth walks with difficulty, and to a sick man who having been prostrate on a bed for months finds locomotion by no means easy, even though he has regained his strength. “The speech of one who had long been deaf and dumb would at first be a very uncertain attempt to produce sounds, a murdering of language rather than real speech.” But here the healed man spoke at once easily, fluently, perfectly.

It is not said what he spoke. Nebe believes that the people simply continued the strain to which he offered the key. Through their chant of praise his voice rang mightily, giving the keynote and holding it. “In a moment, and by a word, the Lord knows how to open ear, mouth and heart.” The day of Pentecost repeats the miracle on a wider scale. Then, too, heart, mouth and ear were together opened to the disciples of the Lord.

36. “And he charged . . . tell no man: but . . . so much the more a great deal they published it;”

He who opened the mouth forbids it being opened in spreading abroad and celebrating the miracle, viii. 14. Αἰρῶντες, “them,” those who had brought the man. Bengel: “It was rather the part of spectators to publish it abroad; and yet the former also published the fame of it, v. 37.” Others: All those present to whom our Lord now returned with the cured man. Some have claimed that the cured man was exempted from the prohibition. Nebe: “Here Jesus commands silence concerning the work, because to these Decapolitans He would reveal Himself not as miracle-worker but as Saviour.” According to Matt. xv. 29 ff., they brought to him there the lame, blind, dumb, maimed and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet. Shall He now yet further have His presence noised abroad, and the fact of His powers? The vast multitude

of the sick brought to Him probably interfered with His specific mission to preach the gospel. He would fain have a respite from that, so as to proceed with the care of souls. Again, as He sought retirement in Tyre and Sidon, He may still wish to be measurably in seclusion. And the bringing of all manner of sick to Him, was a proof that this half-heathen territory was steeped in carnal Messianic expectations, and rendered it critical for Him to allow any encouragement of these. The variety of reasons suggested for the prohibition may be found in the Lesson on the Third Sunday after Epiphany.

They were so infatuated with the thought of having a miracle-worker, that His injunction passed for naught, that, "however much He enjoined still far more they published." *Μᾶλλον* strengthens the comparative, "only all the more," yet much more, they published. The degree of prohibition was exceeded by a yet greater degree of publication. They were so carried away by the miracle that the injunction only heightened their zeal, and they published it much more than if He had not forbidden it. Some commend their course, claiming that it is proper to laud benefactors even against their protest. They may be excused. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The grace which has befallen their neighbor, the glory of the Lord which their own eyes have beheld, will not permit them to keep silent. Yet is the heart subject to control, and particularly must it give heed when the Lord speaks. Obedience is better than sacrifice. When Christ commands us to make no noise over the salvation His mercy has vouchsafed us, we have to obey, however hard or incomprehensible His command may appear. True thankfulness to God shows itself in strictly doing His will and most conscientiously keeping His commandments.

37. "And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear . . ."

This explains their intemperate zeal. Silence was impossible. Their astonishment was boundless and uncontrollable. "We have an example of the impression which His works must make upon every unprejudiced and impartial spectator. His person is overpowering. His work transcends all that was ever seen, or heard, or entered into the heart of man. Men are astonished, carried from one stage of amazement to another, until their boundless wonder vents itself in the plaudit, "well hath He done all things." Like the choir of morning stars at the completion of creation, so they praise, as it were, a new creation. Only good can be said of His work. Excellently has He done all things."

Πεποίηκε must be distinguished from the following ποιῇ. Meyer: "The former relates to the miraculous cure at that time, which has taken place and is now accomplished; the latter, 'He makes even the deaf,' etc., is the general judgment deduced from this concrete case." Nebe: "The Perfect points to the accomplished cure; from this the Present draws a conclusion with reference to the future." Others: "The Perfect accentuates the accomplished miracle, the Present the condition of the cured man caused by the miracle and reaching to the present."

Ἀλάλως. From this and the loosing of the ligature of the tongue many infer that the man had been really speechless, and not simply troubled with an impediment. The plurals do not necessarily imply that several cures of this character had occurred at the time.

Nebe suggests as the proper theme, the right use of speech; or, Christ as the true Physician, and His marvelous mode of saving, may be considered.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

TRUE SPEECH.

1. Is not man's by nature.
2. Since he lacks true hearing.
3. Wrought by the Lord through signs and word.
4. And manifesting itself through the praise of God.

Or,

1. Begins with proper hearing.
2. Advances to heartfelt sighs.
3. Concludes with God's praise.

Or,

1. A difficult art.
2. A precious gift of grace.
3. An occasion of glory to God.

THE GIFT OF SPEECH.

1. Universally desired.
2. Given by the Lord alone.
3. Largely misused.
4. Rightly applied only in the praise of God.

EPHPHATHA, BE OPENED:

1. Thou eye, and behold thy Savior.
2. Thou ear, and hear His Word.
3. Thou mouth, and extol His glory.
4. Thou heart, and become His abode.

THE LORD DOETH ALL THINGS WELL WITH US:

1. When we suffer ourselves to be brought to Him.
2. When we suffer ourselves to be led by Him aside from the people.
3. When we suffer our ears to be opened by Him.
4. When we suffer the bond of our tongue to be loosed by Him.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke x. 23-37.

THE closing words of the Pericope show dealing rightly with our fellow-men to be the subject. Nebe: "The new life of the Christian must manifest itself in word and work. The progress of thought is obvious. The new life in action is viewed here in its relation to the neighbor; the duty of loving one's neighbor is enforced and presented in its highest form, that, namely, of mercy. The sum of the Christian life is love. The essence of love is mercy."

23. "And turning to the disciples, he said privately, Blessed . . . which see the things . . ."

Matt. xiii. 16 f. is parallel, and from the similarity of expression and especially the identity of the last clauses, some have inferred that both passages refer to the same utterance. . But the historical connection is different, and there is a difference also in the content. "The significant beatitude may have been spoken on different occasions, especially with a different reference of the meaning."

The occasion for the extraordinary language is given here minutely. Not often in the synoptists do utterances so exalted flow from the Lord's mouth. He is wont to conceal His unique glory, allowing the sun only now and then to break through the clouds, when we behold depths such as we anticipate only in John. The passage here is a proof that although the portrait of Christ was sketched by the evangelists from different points of view, there lay at the basis essentially the same fundamental view of Him.

Nebe: "The Seventy had just returned from their missionary tour. They had experienced and wrought great things. In great joy they report their success. He who had sent them out shares their joy, yea His joy transcends theirs. He sees in them not the Seventy themselves, but the representatives of His evangelists; their success is a pledge of the result of all later messengers. He already sees Satan judged and overthrown; the victory is won; all the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of God and his Christ. He is seized with joyous emotion, with the exaltation of triumph," vv. 21, 22. Jesus had prayed to the

Father, then spoken concerning Him; now He directs His discourse to the disciples apart. "Luke is wont to note accurately the pauses and turns in the Lord's discourses." "This turning to the disciples, which excluded the others who were present, cf. v. 25, is to be regarded as perceptible by the movement and gesture of the speaker."

We are not to infer that Jesus had a two-fold doctrine, one for the mass, and one for those peculiarly near Him, that what He is about to communicate to them shall be kept hidden in their hearts. What He speaks to them in the ear they shall proclaim from the housetops. But the people are not prepared for these words. They could not have borne these truths. John xvi. 12. He deposits the treasure with the disciples, that through them it may come ultimately to all.

"Blessed the eyes which see." Language like this would have sounded like self-praise to the people and caused them to stumble. Jesus does not say the eyes which see me, yet this thought is undoubtedly included. Meyer: "The mysteries of the kingdom." Heb. xi. 13, 39. "He would not call their attention to His fleshly bodily appearance, but exclusively to that which He brings and does." Not bodily vision is meant, but the vision with the eye of the spirit. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed. Luther: "This is a blessed time; an acceptable year; a day of grace; what is now here is so precious that very properly the eyes which behold it may be called blessed. For, till now the gospel was not preached publicly and so clearly to every one; the Holy Ghost had not yet been publicly given, but was still concealed. But Christ began the office of the Holy Ghost, and the apostles later carried it on with great zeal, hence it is said here, Blessed are those who behold such grace." Meyer: "Your intellect, as regards the apprehension of divine truth, is not unreceptive and obtuse, but susceptible and active. A blessed time it is when men recognize Jesus as the Son to whom all things are given by the Father, whom no one knows save the Father, but who is now revealed to such babes as the Seventy and those who had received their testimony." "As the rising of the sun extinguishes all the other lights of heaven, so the blessedness diffused by the presence of the Lord transcends all other blessedness. And as everything waits for the dayspring from on high; so all things waited patiently for this blessedness."

24. "For . . . many prophets and kings desired to see . . . and saw them not; and to hear the things . . . and heard them not."

Τάρ justifies the congratulation on account of the importance

of the matter in question. So also λέγω, "I say," implies that there is something astounding in the announcement. It adds emphasis.

Nebe: "The joy of the least in the kingdom towers high above that of the greatest in the old covenant. The blessedness of the Old Testament is not to be compared with that of the New Testament. The Christian, the eyes of whose understanding are enlightened, is more blessed than the greatest prophet, than the most pious kings of Israel." Prophets and kings otherwise highly favored did not enjoy this blessing. "Many prophets," not all. Πολλοί belongs not only to βασιλῆς, but also to προφῆται. There was among the prophets a great difference in respect to their longing for the day of the Lord, still all true prophets must have beheld the day with the eye of faith. But not all prophets were true ones sent from God, just as not all kings were pious and faithful, only a few indeed, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah. There was a great number of false prophets. These had no such longings.

The prophets hold the first place in the Old Testament according to the spirit, the kings according to the flesh. Those were God's mouth-pieces proclaiming His word, these His officials ruling over His people. Abraham was both prince and prophet, so was David. The blessedness enjoyed by Christ's disciples far surpasses all that was deemed blessed and glorious among the ancients. A new era has dawned. The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest in the old covenant. Not only is their Lord greater than Solomon and Jonah, but they themselves in God's sight are greater than the prophets and the kings of old, greater than David, and Isaiah, and Daniel.

It is all of grace. Our blessedness does not consist in our merit, but in our seeing Him who calls us blessed. And, in a sense, it may be said, even those ancient believers saw the day of the Lord. Isaiah beheld Him as a sheep led to the slaughter. David called his Son his Lord. But it was only in passing, puzzling visions and typical foreshadowings—a spiritual assurance. The vision of Abraham, John viii. 56, is foreign to this passage. It relates to a sight from heaven. Only the disciples saw Him fully, substantially, only they could lay their hands on the Word which was from the beginning, for only in the fulness of time had He become man. But the longing of the Old Testament fathers must not be restricted to the seeing of the Messiah.

Blessed are they that hear the word and keep it. "Only he sees the Lord truly who truly hears Him." What did many priests and scribes and people have in their sight of Jesus? Those are not the blessed who once looked into the face of Jesus, or who

have eaten and drunk in His presence. "He would be seen so that one may hear and believe His gospel."

The time for which the fathers longed is now fulfilled. The day is here. Jesus calls the disciples "blessed." Why do they not call themselves blessed? Why must they be told by Him how blessed a thing it is to see and hear Him? This word of the Lord resounds through all ages. And all Christians add their yea and amen to it. Luther: "Jesus would hereby reprove the shameful ingratitude and neglect of His gospel, which cleave to our hearts. As if He would say, 'Could the prophets have heard and seen what you do, how they would have leaped for joy! Alas! my teaching, my works and miracles are before the eyes and ears of those to whom I was promised and sent, yet all passes for nothing.' And this is true not only of the low crowd of scoffers and persecutors, but also of the little body of Christians who desire to hear and to see. For even the disciples saw it with scarcely half their eyes and heard it with hardly half their ears. The prophets looked for it in the future with eager eyes and listened with attentive ears, and said, O, blessed day of the Lord! But now that it has come we sleep and snore, for the flesh is mighty and lightly esteems such grace."

25. "And, behold, a certain lawyer . . . tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life."

Ἰδοὺ is meant to excite attention. The scene following presents the sharpest contrast to the scene just passed. The disciples rejoice that the spirits were subject to them, but here a spirit offers resistance, not to them, but to their Lord. Evidently not all who see what is now to be seen can be praised as blessed, but only those who see by faith.

A similar scene is presented in Matt. xxii. 35 ff.; Mk. xii. 28 ff., and some claim that both form one and the same occurrence, especially as Matthew, like Luke, calls a scribe a νομικός, "a lawyer," and the second commandment is almost identical in all three. But though the occurrences harmonize on certain points, there are important differences in the three reports. Meyer: "The fact that the same passages of the law are quoted cannot outweigh the difference of time and place, of the point of the question, of the person quoting the passages, and of the further course of the conference." In Mark the scribe receives the recognition, "thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Here, we seek in vain for any commendation.

"A lawyer," or a scribe, as Luther translates. There was probably no distinction between νομικός, one versed in the νόμος, law,

γραμματεὺς, one versed in the γράμμα, Scripture. The Jews knew of no culture or learning outside of theology, the mastery of the Scriptures. The latter was a more general and comprehensive term. Neither the Scriptures, nor Josephus, give us the distinction between the two terms. Nebe thinks that the scribe was versed in the whole of the Scriptures, whereas the lawyer made the study of the law his specialty. Some identify νομικός and νομοδιδάσκαλος, others distinguish them.

This man of the law "stood up," on purpose that he might question Him. Some hold that there is an immediate connection with what precedes; but there Jesus was alone, here there is a company around Him.

"Tempted," undertook to sound Him, to try thoroughly. Bleek holds that the compound *εκπαιράζειν*, like the simple verb, Matt. xxii. 35, means that he sounded Him to see what answer He would give to the following question, but whether maliciously to draw from Him a compromising answer in relation to the law, or to gain wisdom and insight in divine things, cannot be determined. Some: He asked only from curiosity, or from love of disputation he sought to puzzle the famous Teacher. The compound is everywhere in the New Testament used in an evil sense, iv. 12; Matt. iv. 7; 1 Cor. x. 9. The "lawyer" hoped for an answer which would betray hostility to the law. Luther: "You teach no more than Moses. Hence not only those are blessed who hear thee, but all those who hear and keep the law of Moses." According to this rendering the man of the law must have heard this beatitude.

"Doing what shall I inherit," etc.? Bengel: "It is just the same as if he were to say, By doing what shall I see the Sun of Righteousness? Nay it is not by doing but by seeing, that He is to be seen, v. 23." It is to this "doing" that "do" in vv. 28, 37, has reference; just as "shalt live," v. 28, refers to "life" in this verse.

The question contains a contradiction. By doing something the inquirer thinks he may come into the inheritance of eternal life. The verb *κληρονομεῖν*, "inherit," points directly to the division of the land of promise, the type and pledge of the heavenly Canaan. The former did not come into the possession of the different tribes according to their works, but every tribe received its portion according to lot. Casting lots was called *κλήρος*. Hence *κληρονομεῖν* to receive something by lot, excludes coöperation on the part of the recipient. Whether the lot is cast thus, or thus, is not contingent upon any work; whether I receive this or that inheritance, depends not upon me but upon him who disposes of his possessions.

Hence, says Nebe, when the Old Testament speaks of the obtaining of eternal life [?] as "an inheritance," it is self-evident that we secure eternal life, not through merit, but alone through God's grace.

This lawyer seems to ask the way to eternal life through impure motives. As the man did not come to seek for light but to tempt the Lord, Jesus does not Himself instruct him, but He draws him out so as to make him answer his own question.

26. "And he said . . . What is written in the law? how readeest thou?"

"In the law." You are a student of the law. What does the law say? Clearly and distinctly it teaches how to obtain eternal life. "How readeest thou?" "A customary rabbinical formula to give occasion to a Scriptural citation." It is so well known that it is superfluous to cite a passage. "In the law" is placed first for the sake of emphasis. "The doubled expression of the question indicates the urgency of the questioner; one respondent question would have sufficed." The lawyer received a very different answer from what he expected. He hears no new anti-canonical doctrine. Jesus does not abolish the law and the prophets, but puts His seal to their authority, and pronounces the Scriptures of the Old Testament sufficient on the question concerning eternal life. The Jews repeated daily, morning and evening, the subsequent text, found in Deut. vi. 5, together with Deut. xi. 13 ff.; cf. Mk. xii. 29. It appeared also on the phylacteries.

27. "And he . . . Thou shalt love . . . with all thy heart . . . soul . . . strength . . . mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

The latter clause is from Lev. xix. 18. This was not included in the daily rehearsal nor on the phylacteries. The lawyer might have cited only one command had he possessed the deep insight of Luther, who saw how all the other commandments proceed from this one, and are included in it.

He presents both tables and coördinates the sum of both tables. Nebe: "The promptness and the accuracy of his answer offer a splendid testimony to his knowledge; but an evil will is joined with this knowing." Love, the lawyer declares, is the chief command, the essence of the whole law, that love which extends both arms, the one to embrace God, the other the neighbor. Meyer gives as the reason why he answered entirely in the meaning of Jesus, and added the passage from Leviticus, the fact "that his attention was directed to the problem, who is my neighbor? and that he asked 'doing what?' v. 25, only as an introduction thereto. To this question he must have expected an answer in which the

duty of the love of one's neighbor was not wanting, and thereto he would then attach the special question meant to tempt Him, viz., Who is my neighbor? But since the dialogue takes such turn that he himself becomes the respondent, he gives the answer which he had expected from Jesus; and now for his own justification he adds the problem under cover of which the temptation was to be brought in." Unexpectedly made to play the part of the respondent, his presence of mind and craftiness keep his object in view.

The love of God is the foremost and greatest commandment. The accumulation of the predicates more precisely defining the nature of love is striking; as if the lawyer could not find words enough wherewith to express and accentuate the entire, undivided, perfect love we owe to God. According to the revised text, *ἐν*, "with," takes the place of *ἐκ*, "from," in all but the first predicate. These different terms are not tautological. "Every word has spirit and life." Gerhard makes *καρδία* *voluntas*, *ψυχὴ* *appetitus sensitivus*, *διάνοια* *ratio*. We are to love God *ardenter*, *constanter et sapienter*. Others: *καρδία*, the heart, *ψυχὴ*, the sensibilities, *λογικὴ*, the will, *διάνοια*, the understanding. The heart comes first. "The love we give to God must burst forth from the whole full heart." This is the seat of life, the physiological and spiritual centre of man. From the heart proceed the thoughts, the inclinations and the resolves. See Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*. "The soul is not only the organ by which we receive impressions; within the soul is inward motion. But not all its emotions bring an act to maturity; many a motion of the soul vanishes because it is wanting either in "strength" or "understanding." The love to God so deeply felt and so vitally moving us must become manifest; for this there is need of energy and strength as well as understanding and insight.

Out of the love of God the lawyer declares proceeds the love of one's neighbor. A causal relation unites the two. He who loves God must love his neighbor, for the neighbor is not only the creature of God, but is likewise the image of God.

28. "And he said . . . Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

"Do this." Jesus in turn rightly tries, puts to proof, and tests the man who had tempted him with a wrong motive. In attempting to fulfill perfectly these requirements, he might experience what was lacking in his obedience. "This" has the emphasis, corresponding to "what," v. 25.

The answer of Jesus is the crux of some expositors. Is not faith the *conditio sine qua non* of eternal life? The answer is not

one given to a soul that has been justified through faith, as if He said, faith is to exercise itself in works, faith worketh by love. This lawyer had not been justified. He who is justified has eternal life in himself, for he has the living and quickening faith in his heart, cf. Apology, Art. III. The answer corresponds to the man's question. He did not ask how one was to inherit eternal life, but what a man must do who would obtain eternal life. Hence Jesus shows him what works he has to perform. He who truly fulfills this command, which is the sum of the law, has eternal life. This is the sum of the divine retribution, Rom. ii. 13. Nebe: "If God, the Fountain of life, is love, then no one can come to this Fountain of life who has not beforehand opened his heart to love. Man's relation to God is not a natural, but an ethical one; out of this life in God flows the life with God, eternal life. Paul himself, the apostle of justification through faith alone, recognizes most decisively the sufficiency of the law for eternal life, Rom. vii. 10 ff.; viii. 2 ff.; Gal. iii. 21. But whether that which is adequate, *per se*, to bring us unto eternal life is adequate under the circumstances is another question." To this the answer must be an emphatic no. For all flesh is concluded under sin. The inability to secure eternal life does not inhere in the law, but in our weakness. We have not the power to render a complete obedience. By our natural powers this love to God and man cannot be called forth. "Even if this way does not lead directly to the goal, it leads toward it indirectly. A man does not enter upon the way open to him by saving grace until he has convinced himself that he cannot merit eternal life by his works." Meyer: "As to the manner in which this moral fundamental law leads to the necessity of the righteousness of faith, there was no occasion for Him to explain further in the presence of the legal tempter."

29. "But he, desiring to justify himself, said . . . and who is my neighbor?"

Θελων, desiring. His heart is not broken nor indeed humble, but he prides himself in his one reply. Assuming himself to be righteous through his obedience to the law, he is verily seeking subterfuges to escape from the obligations of the law.

Meyer takes "justify" in reference to his question, to prove that he had put it with reason and justice. Nebe finds here a proof that he made his original inquiry with evil intent. Had he been concerned for his salvation he would have acquiesced. But he seeks honor among men and not with God. Calvin thought the man was afraid of an examination into his love, and so tried to change the subject. Others: "If the answer was so simple as

it appeared to be from the words of our Saviour, there might be need of an excuse that he had approached Jesus with so trifling a question. He wishes, therefore, now to give the Saviour to feel that precisely this is the great question, namely, whom he is to regard as his neighbor." Meyer believes that having anticipated Jesus' answer, he had in advance resolved to propose this further question, but the lawyer had no idea of being referred to the law.

"And who?" "This particle approves of the immediately preceding speech of the Lord, and yet adds something to it; it expresses the feeling of the speaker." The exposition of the scribes greatly circumscribed the concept of neighbor. Only a member of the theocracy could be regarded as such, cf. Matt. v. 43. Literally, Who is neighbor to me? Who is near me? v. 30. Meyer recognizes the element of temptation to be, that he expected Jesus to give some sort of heterodox reply, "which should deviate from the rabbinical definition that the Jew's nearest neighbor is his fellow-Jew."

We might think that even if the Old Testament was not specific on this point, one's own human heart would guide him as to the scope of the word "neighbor." But self-seeking has extinguished the love to the neighbor; and the Old Testament cannot be understood without the New Testament. Ambrose: *Qui Christum nescit, nescit et legem.*

30. "Jesus . . . said, A certain man was going . . . and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him . . . leaving him half dead."

Jesus does not vouchsafe a direct answer to his legal questioner. Ὑπολαβὼν, "taking up another's discourse by way of reply," is often used by the LXX. and the classics as applied to a full reply, but occurs only here in New Testament.

"A certain man," without any more definite limitation as to race, etc. It is self-evident from the context that a Jew is meant, "in virtue of the contrast between Jew and Samaritan." Bengel: "He is called by the common designation, man, to express the common tie of humanity which connected even the Jews with foreigners." Every man as man is worthy the regard of others. Seneca: *Homo sacra res homini.* Some regard this narrative as a parable. Others: It was an actual occurrence, just then in everybody's mouth. But had this been so it would have been quite an insult to the lawyer, to find an application of the disgraceful incident made to him and those of his class.

"Jericho." A wild region, which was unsafe because of robbers, intervened between the two cities. The road passing through deserts and mountains was a wretched, tedious and dangerous one,

the distance being one hundred and fifty stadia, or eighteen Roman miles. Travelers were wont to avoid it and take a more circuitous route by way of Bethlehem. Over that dangerous, ill-reputed road our traveler took his journey. "Going down," referring not only to the geographical descent, but recognizing also that Jerusalem was the theocratic summit of the Holy Land.

"Fell among," encountered, a band of robbers which infested that district. DeWette proposes changing the sequence of the two participles, but Meyer maintains that they give the correct sequence of what actually occurred. "They took his clothes off him in order to rob him of them, and while doing so they beat him, because he resisted them." Having thus brutally beaten him they left him in this miserable condition just as he was, lying half-dead on the ground. Jesus pictures the hapless condition of the unfortunate traveler: robbed of his property, stripped of his clothing, beaten and bruised, the blood flowing from his wounds, helpless, in despair. He cannot drag his body away to some human abode. And no one may soon come that way, but hungry beasts of prey may scent him and fall upon him. Wounded to death, his condition is frightful. Moments must appear like hours and every hour an eternity.

31. "And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and . . . he passed by on the other side."

"By chance." There is chance when things are regarded from a human point of view, but there is no chance when they are viewed from a higher point. What man may not intend, God does; what humanly speaking is chance, is the counsel and pre-determination of God. Things which seem to be matters of chance are divinely ordained opportunities. "Scripture describes nothing at random, as if a matter of chance; in this place it is opposed to what is inevitable."

"A priest" travels down the same way which the half-dead man had trodden. He, too, was accordingly going away from Jerusalem. Otherwise he might have excused himself on the ground of Levitical considerations and ceremonial requirements. The services at the sanctuary took precedence, and he must hasten to his solemn official duties; the condition, too, of the unfortunate man was so like death, that he might have been regarded as good as dead, or he might die in the priest's hands, and thus render him unclean and for the time incapable of serving at the altar. No such consideration, however, excused this heartless neglect of a brother man lying helpless and dying, since he was going away from the temple. His official functions were for the time ended.

He was on his way home, residing like many other priests at Jericho.

"He saw him." He could not plead ignorance. Yet this priest of God, fresh from the worship of God in his temple, and knowing the law of God, turns away from a brother man, who lay weltering in his blood, beaten, naked—a condition which piteously appealed to him for instantaneous relief. But the heart of man can look upon the direst distress without one motion of pity, even the heart of a man who serves God in His sanctuary. *Ἀντιπαρήλθεν*. He not only passed by as if unmoved by one touch of sympathy, but "on the opposite side," intentionally keeping as far away as possible from the suffering, groaning, dying man. "The *ἀντί* gives a clear idea of the cold behavior of the hard-hearted passer-by."

32. "And . . . a Levite also, when he . . . saw him, passed by on the other side."

"A Levite," another servant of God, tramples down the opportunity of serving his needy and afflicted brother.

All through the narrative is seen the divorce which men make between the first and second commandments, which God has joined together, the hypocritical assumption that the service of God may dispense with the service to one's brother. God, who cares for men, sends another of His servants to the spot where a suffering fellow-man needed assistance. As God's servant one would expect to see him hasten with alacrity to render this service to God in the person of one of His creatures. He was making the same journey as the priest, and his behavior was "in like manner." They were two of a kind. As soon as he got a glance of the wretched man, the latter likewise hastened across the road away from him. Instead of running to him, as a merciful heart prompts, he kept away from him, took the other side. Meyer notes the climax: "Having reached the place, he went, when he had come (approached) and seen (his condition), by on the other side."

The Levite keeps his master company on that well-beaten side of the road. Both, devoid of heart and conscience, make a circuit around the wretched sufferer. They disregard alike the voice of God, who commands that we love our neighbor as ourselves, and the cry for aid from one of their own flesh. They really love neither God nor man, for he that loveth God will keep His commandments.

33. "But a certain Samaritan . . . came . . . and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion" . . .

What a contrast in these persons! On the one hand, not a Jew merely, but a priest, and an assistant priest, men who were holy

unto the Lord; on the other hand, a Samaritan, a semi-heathen, from whom a Jew would not accept a cup of water. Then contrast their conduct. The children of the kingdom, who have the oracles of God, who are like this "lawyer" versed in the law, are put to shame by those incomparably beneath them in privilege. Christians are even now put to shame by the heathen.

The half-dead man is not left to perish, even though God's servants turn away from him. Help comes from a quarter where it was least to be expected. A bitter hatred separated Jews and Samaritans. Though priest and Levite coldly pass by their countryman, the Samaritan foe, who might take a malicious joy over the misfortune of his enemy, is moved to compassion at his plight.

"Compassion." That this was more than the natural impulse felt in the heart on seeing one in great misery, is shown by the fact that it was wanting to the priest and the Levite, and also by what follows. "A natural emotion turns quickly into service even to the point of sacrifice, but it does not last. The heart of the Samaritan is profoundly moved by the condition of the wretched man. He cannot resist its impulse. By invisible cords he feels drawn to him." It is marvelous compassion, extinguishing all race-hatred, expelling all fear, making him quite oblivious of the danger from the robbers to which he is himself exposed. They would have found in him a more profitable victim, since he was evidently a man in good circumstances, riding instead of walking, and having with him considerable supplies. He was in danger, too, of being himself suspected, had a Jew discovered him in that locality. But love becomes unconscious of danger; it leaves all to God who is love itself. Listen now to love's ministrations.

34. "And came . . . and bound up his wounds . . . and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

Quickly and thoroughly the good-hearted man goes to work. Life is not extinct, and he proceeds to bind up the bleeding wounds. But these wounds had already been made for some time, and they have become hardened and encrusted. It was necessary to soften them and to wash them from the dirt and dust, which had become intermingled with the clotted blood. Meyer: "As he was binding them up, he poured on them oil and wine, the ordinary remedy in case of wounds, Is. i. 6, which he carried with him for any casual need." Love always finds something at hand with which to relieve a neighbor's distress.

But this measure of relief does not exhaust his neighbor-love. Love is not satisfied till the neighbor's distress is fully removed. He does not abandon the wounded man to his fate in that horrible

place; that might have simply prolonged his misery. Nor is love content to help only while it costs nothing. "True love imposes on itself privation and sacrifice." The more a kindness involves self-sacrifice, the greater it is in the sight of God and man. The Samaritan has not reached his journey's end, but to relieve his neighbor he interrupts his journey. And he gives up his own beast to his use, while he goes afoot. With great labor he takes him in his arms and lifts him on his beast, not simply "has him mount" it. A half-dead man could neither raise himself to the saddle of an ass nor hold himself up when seated thereon. The Samaritan must walk by his side to hold him.

ἰδίον, "his own," which he had used, emphasizes his foregoing his own comfort and tramping slowly the road alongside the burden-bearing ass. Safely he reaches the inn, the caravansarie, over which presided a host, an ordinary landlord. But not even this terminated his loving service. He watched over his charge with a nurse's care all through the night. This "inn" stood on Jewish territory, and the unfortunate man was doubtless a Jew. One would think, says Nebe, that the Jewish host, especially in view of the bitterness between the two nations, would now take his countryman, his neighbor in charge, take him out of the hands of the hated alien, and show him a brother's sympathy. But far from it. He shows no concern for his unfortunate brother. He leaves the Samaritan enemy to take care of him alone, but this does not affect the latter. Perhaps in his unselfish devotion to his patient, the landlord's cold indifference does not occur to him. Possibly the kind man might have declined his assistance, if tendered.

35. "And on the morrow he took out twopence, and gave . . . and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I . . . will repay thee."

Ἐπί, towards the morrow, when it was about to dawn, Mk. xv. 1; Acts iii. 1. He cannot longer protract his stay. And his patient, too, shows the happy effect of the kind nursing. He now commends him to the host's care, assuming himself the total expense. Hotels are never charity hospitals. He draws, therefore, two pence from his girdle, which might pay for his keeping and nursing two days; but he means to provide on his return—he might then have more money—for whatever costs the full recovery of the man might involve, however long it might require, and however large the expense, no pains are to be spared, no cost to be considered. The host is to render him the same attention which he himself has shown him. The same word is used as in v. 34, and whatever further expense may be incurred, he will stand good for. *Ἐγώ*, emphatic: I expect to hasten back as soon as possible and take personal charge of him.

36. "Which of these three, . . . proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?"

Application of the parable: Which of the three, Priest, Levite or Samaritan?

"Became neighbor," by the exercise of helpful love, regardless of nationality or religion. Flacius: "*Omnes quidam tres erant jure, sed, unicus facto aut officio*. In doing a benefit to his national enemy, the Samaritan was his neighbor. The lawyer had asked concerning the neighbor to whom love was to be exhibited, Christ answers concerning the neighbor who was to exhibit love to another. The two are correlated. The answer is fully adapted to the lawyer's question. The relation of neighbor is always reciprocal. If the Samaritan by his conduct toward the Jew proved himself his neighbor, it is self-evident that he recognized in this alien and national enemy his neighbor, to whom he owed the duty of loving one's neighbor as one's self. And this was the lesson the lawyer needed: that this command to show love to the neighbor relates not only to those who stand in close personal, or national, or ecclesiastical relation to us, but to our fellow men in general, even though there are no other bonds of sympathy. "Every one, without distinction of people and faith, to whom analogous circumstances direct thee to exercise helpful love in order thereby to become his neighbor, thou hast to regard as thy neighbor." Thus the questioner, in being dismissed with the direction, "and do thou likewise," has therein indirectly the answer to his question, Who is my neighbor? The proper question always is not, Who is my neighbor? but, to whom am I a neighbor? "The lawyer might some day want the help of a Samaritan, the very person whom he did not account as his neighbor."

37. "And he said . . . He that showed mercy . . . And Jesus . . . Go, and do thou likewise."

Wonderful, how Jesus extorts the truth even from the unwilling! The parable is a complete commentary on the command to love thy neighbor. The lawyer carefully refrains from naming the Samaritan. He is so wrapped up in his Jewish conceits, and so possessed of the national hatred to others, that he is unwilling to render such credit to a hated Samaritan, but he is forced to render honor to the truth.

Ποιῖν ἔλεος is the equivalent of *σπλαγχνίζεσθαι*, v. 33, and expresses in the abstract what the Samaritan did. He had and he showed compassion, that holy fire on the altar which the Lord kindles in our hearts, grief for other's woes. For the form in Greek cf. i. 72; 2 Sam. ix. 1. *Σὺ* is to be joined only with *ποιῖ* which corresponds with *ποιήσας* and v. 25.

In this concluding admonition Jesus pierces his conscience.
 For allegorical and mystical interpretations see Nebe and Meyer.
 The homiletical treatment should include the beatitude of mercy,
 as well as the merciful Samaritan.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE LOVE OF ONE'S NEIGHBOR, A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE.

1. It proceeds from faith in Christ, and not from the letter of the Law.
2. Its exercise is due not to the precept of the Law, but to the impulse of the Spirit of God.

THE TRUE FRIEND OF MAN, IS

1. Born out of faith.
2. Knows the sum of the Law.
3. Is neighbor to every one.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

1. The Law does not say, because thine own heart ought to say.
2. The Lord does not say, for you should ask, to whom am I neighbor?

HOW WONDERFUL IS MERCY!

1. It feels the need of others as its own.
2. It finds in the desert ready means of assistance.
3. It hazards its own life.
4. It rescues the neighbor from death.

HOW WE INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE.

1. When we bless ourselves that we see and hear the Lord.
2. When we go with the Samaritan, and do likewise.

Or,

1. By looking in faith upon Him whom prophets and kings desired to see.
2. By manifesting faith in love toward our neighbor.

HOW BLEST THE CHRISTIAN IN THIS LIFE!

1. What blessedness he may enjoy in faith!
2. What blessedness he may diffuse in love!

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke xvii. 11-19.

THE Pericope of the good Samaritan is followed by that of the thankful Samaritan. "The work of mercy was unfolded before our wondering eyes, but not the fruit which mercy ripens in the hearts of the wretched." That is supplied by the present text. The curse of ingratitude is exhibited in the nine, but gratitude has not become extinct upon earth, at least one appears who is thankful, "one in whom gratitude is the animating and beatifying principle." In every Christian the new life which is to unfold itself in word and work, roots in thankfulness, for it is "the necessary consequence of that salvation which in Christ was manifested for us."

11. "And . . . as they were on the way to Jerusalem, that he was passing through . . . Samaria and Galilee."

Luke alone has preserved this narrative. Following his usual method, he gives time and place of the occurrence, although his data are somewhat obscure. The first clause evidently points back to ix. 51 and xiii. 22. They are the evangelist's words portraying the situation of the following occurrence, which Nebe fixes in the last Passover-journey of Jesus. Nebe: "According to John, a message from the two sisters called him to Bethany; according to Luke, it was not that message which first gave the occasion for His departure. He had already entered upon His journey; the sad message from Bethany impelled him to hasten. As it was still some time before Easter, He withdrew from Bethany to Ephraim, John xi. 54." Now the question arises whether this occurrence transpired on that first slow journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, more definitely, to Bethany *via* Jerusalem, or during His sojourn in Ephraim? Some find *αὐτός* significant: "He, on His part, took this way, *i. e.*, either He did not pass through Peræa, or, quite independently of the route usually taken by travelers, He passed through Samaria."

Some render: He passed through both of these countries directly from north to south. Others: "Through the midst," along the boundary between both countries, through the strip of country forming the common boundary of Samaria and Galilee, just as

"through between two walls." Meyer: "Jesus Himself journeyed in the midst, between—in *confinio*—through the two countries, so that He kept on the boundary, having before him on the south, Samaria, on the north, Galilee." When on His tour He reached the spot from which one would go directly through Samaria, He chose another course, going eastward and crossing the Jordan, in order to go down through Peræa and finally to make His entry into Jerusalem *via* Jericho. The reason assigned for this by De Wette is that it explains how a Samaritan leper could be found in company with nine Jewish lepers. According to Luther, the evangelist would indicate that Christ's journey was slow, circuitous and long, requiring considerable time, "for He did not journey for His own sake, but that He might preach and render assistance to many." The people had thus an opportunity to come to Him from every quarter, to hear Him and receive His help.

12, 13. "And as he entered . . . ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off . . . saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

Turn where He will, distress and misery confront Him. "As the magnet attracts the iron so the true physician draws to Himself the sick."

Ἐσπερχομένον. The participle is strictly Present; not, as He had entered, but, as He was entering the village, as He was on the point of passing through the gate the poor wretches approached. Had they been several minutes later they could not have applied to Jesus; and they should have had to wait for another opportunity.

"Met Him." They did not follow Him, nor go out from the village to encounter Him, "they simply stood before Him on the way." Lepers were forbidden to remain in the camp or in other settlements; they erected tents or houses outside as they were able, Lev. xiii. 46; Num. v. 2; 2 Kings vii. 3; xv. 5. From these abodes outside the village there approached Him ten lepers, one of whom we learn later was a Samaritan. Affliction brings together those who in prosperity keep apart. A Samaritan becomes a boon companion to nine Jews. Society in shipwreck is a comfort to all. "Leprosy which dissolved family ties cast its bonds over those whom enmity and hatred had separated. As relatives and friends could offer these unfortunates no comfort, they comforted each other."

The ten stood on the road, but unlike the leper in Matt. viii. 2, they did not venture near and fall at Jesus' feet as suppliants for relief. Since the law allowed no immediate intercourse between

the clean and lepers, they "stood afar off." The rabbins maintained that lepers must keep at a distance of at least 4 ells. The consciousness of their (ceremonial) uncleanness deterred them from a nearer approach. Nebe notes "a conflict of divergent feelings." They want to come near to the Lord, and yet they are afraid to enter into His presence. "The deeper man's consciousness of sin, the clearer to him the chasm between him, the condemned one, and the Saviour." He stands ashamed and humbled before the chasm, and can only send across his beseeching voice that the Lord may extend to him his gracious hand.

This the lepers do, *αἱροί*, they on their part taking the initiative raise their voices, crying out loudly — "an effort which their disease was scarcely admitting of." Nebe thinks from their standing afar off, that their leprosy had reached its height, they had been suffering long, no one could grant them any relief, all Jewish and Samaritan physicians had vainly exhausted their resources; but now that they see Jesus who has cured so many, they take fresh hope. It is their last opportunity, the situation is desperate. The voice becomes weak in leprosy, speech hoarse, hollow and unintelligible, and the victim often becomes a mute. But the voice of these ten resounds loud and clear; the energy of will, the intense longing for a cure, ignores and overcomes physical infirmity.

Their prayer is short and terse: "Jesus, Master, have mercy." It shows that some knowledge of the Lord has come to them in their isolation. "The name of Jesus is the ointment poured out which shall penetrate and fill the whole house of this world, and cure also the wounds of the pariahs of human society."

Ἐπιστάτα, "Master," as Peter called Jesus after the miraculous draught of fishes, v. 5, not a teacher. Instructoin was not what they needed now, but "one having power," a miracle worker, one who can command leprosy with power and results. They believe in the Lord's power, and also in His heart full of mercy to which they make their appeal. Nebe: "They have such a regard for the mercy of Jesus, that they deem it unnecessary to picture to Him the greatness of their misery."

His heart needs not to be moved and excited by any details of misery. In the presence of suffering it moves of its own accord.

14. "And when he saw them . . . Go and show yourselves unto the priests. And . . . as they went, they were cleansed."

It was their cry for help that first drew the attention of Jesus to these lepers. He sees them approaching, and as they come within speaking distance their prayer is already heard. The Savior of all men varies His methods according to the various characteristics or

situations of men. To each He grants his own cure, that best suited to the man's individuality. The cure of these ten is quite different from His method with the leper, Matt. viii. 3. Nebe: "Individuality, which, for the most part, though not exclusively, has a natural basis in our being, is ordained of God. Hence such individuality must ever be taken into consideration. Christ, therefore, treats every man according to his peculiarities. He is truly the Saviour of all men, because He can be all things to every man."

His answer is "go and show yourselves to the priests." Here was a trial of their faith, which they nobly sustained. While on the road to the priests, who would pronounce them clean, their leprosy would disappear. They obeyed in faith, and their faith was gloriously honored and rewarded.

Paulus: "Jesus made a careful inspection of their case and discovered that their leprosy was in process of healing. Knowing that they were virtually cured He bids them go to Jerusalem and procure the certificates of their freedom from the disorder." Such an interpretation is possible only by the most violent wresting of language, for instance, "as they went," *i. e.*, "as they agreed to go;" "they were cleansed," *i. e.*, "were declared to be not infectious."

Jesus neither tells them that they are clean, or that they will be cleansed, but simply that they shall present themselves to the priests, whose office it was to declare those free from the disorder whom their inspection found to be cured. The Samaritan would have to be inspected and declared clean by a Samaritan priest, according to Meyer, who thus explains the plural, "priests."

This command tacitly contained the promise of their cure while on the way to find the priests—a latent Amen lay in the command, which only the eye of faith could detect. The reason why Jesus did not directly cure them, or assure them of His willingness to cure them, was doubtless to test and exercise their faith. Luther, however, renders: "No prayer is needed. Your faith has availed before you began to pray. You were clean to me then already when you assumed to repair to me. Faith is so mighty to secure everything with God, that before God everything may be regarded as having been granted before it is asked." But it is hardly to be presumed that these lepers reasoned thus in their first interview with Jesus. His further observations are more to the point: "When the lepers began to believe and apply to Christ, he further taxed their faith and tried it, He does not save them in a moment but tells them to proceed to the priests. And that is God's

method with us, to probe and to strengthen our faith, not letting us know how He means to deal with us, thus leading men to commit themselves entirely to His goodness and grace, not doubting that He will give what we ask, or something better. Thus faith is made to grow, etc. For faith must be assured and not doubt, regarding the things which are hidden and which are not perceived."

"Priests." The plural is explained by the the number of lepers, cf. Matt. viii. 5, or by the claim that quite a number of priests were charged with the inspection of the leprous, not only at Jerusalem, but in the various other cities of the land. Lev. xiv. 1 ff. is in conflict with the claim that the sanitary inspection was made wherever priests reside, and that only the purification offerings had to be presented at Jerusalem. "Both acts, the examination and the offering, belonged to the service of the temple." The validity of the Samaritan priestly declaration of the cure, was fully recognized by the Jews, as may be seen in the rabbins. On the other hand, a Samaritan could not enter the temple at Jerusalem. Josephus, Bell. Jud. 5, 5, 2 and 6, 2, 4. The Samaritan is directed to conform to the requirements of his religion, the Jew to those of his. Jesus has no idea of making a proselyte of the former.

In Matt. viii. 4 the cured leper is charged to offer his gift; here significantly they are charged only to show themselves to the priests. There the cure was instantly granted and proclaimed. Here the cure is not yet granted, but He has it in mind, although He will not express His purpose. To this concealment corresponds the "show yourselves." The matter is to be kept in suspense; the obedience of faith is to have a by no means easy test. Bengel errs in claiming that the command implies the previous healing.

This test the lepers without exception endure. "The Lord acknowledges the weak, imperfect faith as faith, according to His grace; the faith of the ten lepers secures a rich reward: as they went they were cleansed." Olshausen: "They were cleansed on the spot." The language, *ἐπάγειν*, hardly justifies that view. Nebe thinks the healing was gradual, step by step, as they were going along, they became rid of their vile plague; and he sees here a new proof of the power of faith. He observes also that in this miracle we have a symbol of the purification of sin being effected only by a slow process, which is true when viewed from the standpoint of sanctification, but not as regards justification.

15. "And one of them . . . turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God;"

Thus far the ten had kept together. Now they separate. Grati-

tude is the line which divides them. Nine journey on, one returns to bless the Healer, and he a Samaritan. Meyer: "The whole scene took place while still in the village," *i. e.*, before going to the priests. The Samaritan, at all events, returned immediately, as soon as the cure they had expected was experienced. "If the Samaritan had first been to the priest, Jesus could not have put the question which he asks at v. 17 f., since the nine Jews had a much further journey to the priests." Luke does not say that the Samaritan returned when he was pronounced clean by the priest, but "when he saw that he was healed;" and as the healing took place as they went, the return could not be from the temple, but the man turned back on the road after they had started for the priests.

This must not be viewed as intentional disobedience, or as intended to rob God of the offering which followed the declaration of the cure. The Samaritan simply follows the just and holy impulse of his heart to render thanks to God's instrument, and therefore to God, for his healing, a sacrifice which is always well-pleasing to God. "Gratitude in its inmost essence is a continual returning to the benefactor." The grateful soul keeps him ever before the eyes, and in the heart remembers him, and in thought turns ever to him.

"The best thanksgiving to the Lord is to return to the Lord." Knowest thou not that the goodness of the Lord is to lead thee to repentance? The cleansed man does not return mute, but as previously in his distress he had from a distance lifted the voice of supplication to Jesus, so now from afar resounds a mighty voice of thanksgiving to the glory and praise of God, the loud voice attesting the fact of the cure, as well as the humility and sincerity of his heart. Gratitude is not a spontaneous outflow of the natural heart. Distress may impel a proud mind to supplication, but when the distress is passed the neck again becomes stiff and the face brazen. We are fain to forget all about our great distress, and a reminder of God's merciful deliverance provokes irritation. The joyful voice of gratitude to the Most High comes only from renewed hearts. "He who would truly give thanks must humble and deny himself." To this recovered leper gratitude is the joy and delight of his heart. He pours it out in mighty strains to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

Turning back to Jesus, in whom he recognized at least a divine miracle-working agent, he offers praise and glory to God. Our gratitude, when limited to the human instrument by which we obtain benefits, is accursed. If the gratitude be true and sincere it

hastens to the ultimate spring of all blessings, and there offers its thanksgiving and worship.

Luther: "The return is bearing back the grace and gifts received, *i. e.*, not retaining them, not exalting ourselves above others on account of them, not boasting of them to our own honor, not assuming to be better than others, not pleasing ourselves with them, but having all our delight, pleasure, glory and honor in Him who gave them, and being ready to have Him take them from us again, and not the less continue to love and praise Him."

16. "And he fell . . . at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan."

While in the first instance glorifying God with his praise, the Samaritan does not forget the thanksgiving due to Him through whom God's grace was mediated to him. "Proper gratitude to God does not detract from Him who is the medium of the benefit." He recognizes alike the Giver and the medium of the gift. We cannot assume that his faith contained as yet the Messianic substance; although his returning to give thanks implies that his was a higher and a better faith than that of his Jewish companions, as the Samaritans generally were more ready to receive Christ than the Jews.

His thanksgiving proceeds from the depths of his heart. He is so powerfully moved by the obligation, that he can discharge it only upon his knees. He falls upon his face in the dust of the road at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. "Falling upon his face" is not equivalent to divine worship. It is an act of obeisance, reverence and veneration. "Here undoubtedly this prostration expresses the Samaritan's profound consciousness of the exalted majesty of the Lord, and of his own debasement." But the chasm between him and the Lord has disappeared. Before this he could not have ventured into Jesus' presence, now the grace of Jesus has filled up the chasm and given him free access. His deliverance has brought strength and courage to his heart. "Servile fear has been cast out, and the joyous confidence of one who has been graciously received as a child of God animates and beatifies this thankful soul." Thankfulness has filled his heart with peace and joy. Behold, too, its striking outward manifestation, and its lofty soaring to God.

Alas! Only one returns to discharge the joyful burden of his thanksgiving, and he a Samaritan, one from whom this act was least to be expected. *Αἰρώς* distinguishes him from the rest. The Jew despised the Samaritans as having fallen away from the true worship, as having lost the true knowledge of God. They

were unholy, unfit to have any intercourse with the chosen nation. And yet the Samaritan puts to shame the children of Abraham, the subjects of the kingdom, the heirs of the promise. Luther explains the mention of this Samaritan in contrast with the Jews, as a warning to us that God has two classes who serve Him, one which has the name and the semblance of great spiritual holiness, and they make much ado over it; the other without semblance or name, yea on the contrary, to all appearance no one is less God's people than they.

17. "And Jesus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine?"

The gratitude of the Samaritan, however acceptable in itself, fills the heart of Jesus with sorrow rather than with joy. The grateful love and homage of this one, a Samaritan, only renders the more conspicuous the ingratitude of the nine. How often He had to express this grief and wonder, at finding a more susceptible and responsive heart among the alien and outcast Samaritans and heathen than among the covenant people!

"Jesus answering." His question was not addressed to the Samaritan, of whom He speaks in the third person, but to those around Him. His disciples thus not only learned of the sad spiritual degeneracy of their favored countryman, but also received an invaluable hint of the readiness for the Gospel, the fruitful soil, among the Samaritans.

"Were not the ten cleansed?"—an instance of His omniscience. He knows to how many He extended help. He remembers what benefits He confers on us. These acts of kindness are to prove a living seed which produces food that abides unto eternal life. The Sower cannot forget where He scattered His seed. Ten were cleansed, but only one lies at His feet bringing Him his sheaf. Among ten, only one grateful one! What a disproportion! What an experience the Lord had from those on whom He conferred the greatest benefits!

It was a heathen maxim that ingratitude is the greatest vice. And this vice is exceedingly common, and is experienced by those who deserve from us the greatest thanks, such as father and mother, who have hazarded for us all they have, body, life, honor and goods. Yet how rare is a thankful child! This shameful vice dries up the fountains from which spring all fidelity and beneficence among men. For where you find a thankless heart, you lose your love and disposition to help such people.

It was not His concern for His own honor that prompted Jesus' question about the nine, but infinite sorrow over the vile ingrati-

tude which possesses human hearts. He does not seek honor among men, only the honor of God does He seek.

18. "Were there none found . . . to give glory to God, save this stranger (alien)?"

Those returning to give God glory for their deliverance were not to be found, excepting only the alien. The gracious mercy bestowed upon the nine was lost on their hearts, and brought no return of fruit to God.

Ἀλλογενής. The Samaritans were an alien race because of their Cuthaic blood, 2 Kings xvii. 24. It may be asked whether the absence of the nine from Jesus' feet, where the Samaritan poured out his thanks, is conclusive of their ingratitude? Did not Jesus send them to the priests, there to present their thank-offerings to the Holy One? They may have more strictly obeyed the injunction of Jesus and the requirements of the law by hastening to the temple. Later they might return to express to Jesus their thankfulness.

It is, however, properly inferred from this question that all the ten were together when the cleansing occurred, and that the Samaritan withdrew from them to go back to Jesus, giving them a suggestive example, which they declined to follow, though more bound than he to give thanks. They were more intent on ceremonial conformity, than on rendering heartfelt gratitude to their benefactor. And selfishly they wanted as quickly as possible the certificate of their cure. However ignorant they were of the true character of Jesus, they might have known that their offering of thanksgiving to the Most High did not discharge them from the obligation to acknowledge the instrument through which the deliverance is received. "If you do not see the hand by which you were rescued, you will also fail to see Him who filled and controlled the hand." The nine did not return because they were not moved like the Samaritan, v. 15, "to give glory to God," who through Jesus effected their cure.

"Save this alien." This accentuates the condemnation of the nine. If he felt constrained to come thus, how much more should they, with their greater light, have swiftly recognized this obligation. Like the Queen of Sheba and the people of Nineveh, this alien becomes the judge of the nine Jews, the children of the kingdom, becomes indeed the judge of the whole nation, whose ingratitude for sovereign mercies culminated on Calvary. Painful as must have been to Jesus their ingratitude, yet it was cast into the shade by that which He had suffered before and was yet to suffer. Only this once, however, does He break out in complaint. Nebe finds

the grounds for this in His present mental state and in the entire situation of the time. He has turned His face toward Jerusalem, for the last time to appear at the Passover. His course is almost run. As He returned from the first Passover through Samaria into Galilee He found that He could venture there, as He could not among the Jews, to proclaim His Messiahship. Since then He has neither journeyed through nor labored in Samaria. Now on His last journey He keeps Himself on the border between Samaria and Galilee, and thus comes again in contact with the Samaritans. And His experience is analogous to that made on His former journey, John iv. While among the Jews there are no thanks for His miraculous benefits, with a Samaritan there is rich, overpowering gratitude.

Gratitude and ingratitude are determining factors. Paul, in Rom. i., ascribes apostasy from the living God to man's ingratitude to God, who did not leave Himself without witness, thus disclosing to us the abyss into which we are plunged by this ingratitude. "Jesus views in the gratitude of the Samaritan and in the ingratitude of the Jews the fate of heathen and Jews. By this ingratitude Israel closes to itself the gates of the kingdom, while the heathen would embrace salvation with a thankful heart." It is this perspective of the future that explains the deep tone of sadness in the inquiry and complaint of Jesus. The course of the alien heightens the guilt and seals the fate of the Jewish nation.

19. "And he said . . . Arise, and go . . . thy faith hath saved thee."

No one turns to God in vain. Words of blessing reward the Samaritan's gratitude. The humble one is lifted up. Jesus kindly bids him rise, and dismisses the thankful stranger, not, however, without giving him to understand what was the cause of His deliverance, "thy faith" (in my power, v. 15), "a germ for the further development of his inner life."

He sends him away, not by way of excusing him from the presentation of his sacrifice according to the law, as though he had virtually fulfilled that by giving glory to God. The leper could not return to society unless he had the official certificate of his cure, which only a priest could grant. He therefore does not send the healed man to his home, but directs him to proceed on his journey to the priest as previously commanded. "Praising God for mercies means to merit new ones; forgetting them means to close up the fountain."

"Has saved thee" is restricted by some to the bodily cure. But it implies more. The nine also experienced bodily cleansing,

and surely by their faith and not their unfaith. Nebe: "All the ten had a measure of faith which led to the application for help, and they all received what they sought, the cleansing from leprosy; for faith is faith though it be but like a mustard seed. The bodily cure was, however, to be but the vestibule of a spiritual cleansing; the Samaritan thanked God, the other nine had no song of praise for Him, showing an element in his faith which was lacking in theirs. While they, too, experienced the temporal blessing, this only burdened their heart with a new and heavier guilt; whereas the temporal blessing of the other one opened not only his mouth to God in praise, but opened his heart wide to God, so that he found a vessel here into which He could richly pour out His grace."

The theme of the Lesson is gratitude, but this may be treated from various points of view.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE DUTY OF THANKFULNESS:

1. A very rare one.
2. One most acceptable to God.
3. One rich in blessing.

TRUE THANKFULNESS SPRINGS

1. Not merely from knowing that we have been helped, but from the feeling that we did not deserve the help.
2. It expresses itself not only in thanks to the benefactor, but in giving thanks to God in the benefactor.
3. It secures not only a temporal good, but also a spiritual blessing.

THANKFULNESS IS SO RARE,

1. Because only distress brings us to prayer.
2. Because thanksgiving humbles our pride.
3. Because our soul's salvation does not concern us.

INGRATITUDE THE REWARD OF THE WORLD.

1. An experience of the world.
2. A complaint of the world.
3. A disgrace felt by the world.
4. An evil borne by the world.

WHERE ARE THE NINE?

1. An inquiry of complaining love.
2. An inquiry of reproving zeal.
3. An inquiry of compensating recognition.

THE ACTION OF TRUE THANKFULNESS.

1. It sees right.
2. It turns back.
3. It praises God.
4. It casts itself at the benefactor's feet.

HELP IN DISTRESS.

1. Call upon me.
2. I will deliver thee.
3. Thou shalt glorify me.

THE TEN LEPERS SYMBOLIZE OUR RELATION TO CHRIST.

1. Our misery without Him.
2. Our yearning after Him.
3. Our salvation through Him.
4. Our gratitude to Him.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt vi. 24-34.

THIS section of the Hill Sermon contains "a specific admonition to Christian simplicity," to set heart and mind upon one thing and to be content with it, since if we obtain this one we shall be possessed of all things. Nebe: "The child of this world is under the curse of what is perishable, of vanity, of care. But the life of the Christian is free from this heavy curse, a life forsooth in the world, but not of the world." "The character of this life is represented in the present Pericope. The progress is clear and beautiful; the life of the Christian is a new life in word and work, a life of thankfulness before God, a life free from the cares of this world, a life of trust in God."

24. "No man . . . two masters: for either . . . and . . . or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

From vv. 22 f. we learn that the eye fixed on earthly objects loses its capacity for the heavenly. This verse accordingly seems to meet the objection that a man might unite the heavenly mind with the earthly. With a declaration which no one disputes, Jesus begins to urge the Christian's freedom from care: "No one can serve two." This was likely an ancient proverb. "Man is a complex being. He stands like no other creature between two worlds; he belongs to two kingdoms and has two-fold needs." This truth, that no one can serve two masters, applies especially to him. The two masters are, of course, assumed to be of opposite characters, the will of each opposed to that of the other, each claiming for himself exclusive sway. Two masters having one will are in reality but one master. And *δουλεύειν*, "serve," is to be taken absolute and emphatic, just as *κύριος*, "master," is used in the monarchical-absolute sense. It expresses the relation to an object in which the latter becomes an absolute master. The servant is surrendered to the will of his lord, he has ceased to be a personality, and has become a thing, a machine. Hence *δουλεύειν* is the surrender of one's self, to the will of another. It is impossible henceforth to divide one's self, serving one now, the other then, the one in this sphere, the other in a different one.

Before applying the general truth, its content is more minutely unfolded. Since one cannot be servant of two at once, a double relation to each is impossible: "either he will hate the one and love the other, or hold to one and despise the other." There is no pleonasm here, there never is with the Lord. His every word has infinite weight. Man's relation to both these "masters" is presented completely and exhaustively by an antithetic parallelism. There is neither climax nor anti-climax in either pair of these relations, as some claim. Nebe admits a difference between *μισῆν*, "hate," and *καταφρονεῖν*, "despise," as also between the other two corresponding terms, but not a difference of degree, but in matter. He refers the first clause to the heart, the second to the act, each of the latter terms the effect of the corresponding previous verb. "To hold to one," to cling to, Tit. i. 9, to take to one, have a care for one. 1 Thess. v. 14. Some claim that love and hate are used here in a mild sense, the Hebrew using the positive "hate" where we employ the negative "think little of," which Meyer denies, claiming that the two are so opposite that the one is loved, the other hated, decidedly not indifferently. Cf., however, Luke xiv. 26; Matt. x. 37; John xii. 25; Rom. ix. 13.

The absence of the article in the third member is explained by the idea being somewhat different from that in the first; "he will cleave to one of them," etc. From this matter of general experience follows the application: you cannot serve God and mammon. The two "masters" are so diametrically opposed that it is a case of "either, or." Only one can be real lord, the other must be set below, deprived of the mastery. Col. iii. 5; Phil. iii. 19; Jas. iv. 4. Even the heathen recognized such a relation between the claims of this world and those of heaven. Yet the relation between God and mammon is not, *per se*, an exclusive one. Over against the voluntary and meritorious poverty encouraged by Rome, Luther says: "To have money and property is not sinful, but thou shouldst not allow them to be thy master, rather shouldst thou make them serve thee, be their master."

Abraham, Joseph and Job possessed great wealth. Often the wealthy are the slaves, and not the masters of their wealth. Hence money and property easily become sin, when they gain the mastery over man, when they are pursued as the chief good, when, instead of being pursued and possessed in subordination to God, they bring us into opposition to His will. Subordinate earthly aims may be united with the heavenly aim, but the heart must belong to God alone. Love to Him must take precedence of all other things, must have no rival. The prominence and importance of every other interest must be subordinate to our loyalty to God.

“Mammon,” riches personified, is said to be derived from a root meaning to support; whether this be correct or not, if men place their reliance on money and goods they make them their god and master. We are to trust, as well as to love and fear God, above all things. Our Creator claims our supreme service. To grant that to another is to become false to God, to substitute an idol for Him. The service of mammon shuts out the service of God. We care not to be rich in God when we covet earthly riches, 1 Tim. vi. 9. Just as God would extend His reign over the whole of man, so mammon. Man is not born to absolute freedom, but to be obedient to God. He must serve. The highest freedom of the will is the service of God, but man is prone to seek another lord, who reduces him to abject bondage. Bengel: “The heart of man cannot be so free as not to serve either God or a creature, nor can it serve them both at once.” It is either for or against God. It either loves mammon or despises him.

25. “Therefore, . . . Be not anxious for your life . . . nor yet for your body . . . Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?”

“Therefore,” because ye cannot serve both masters. This indicates in what the service of mammon consists. Devotion to material things, anxiety for earthly good even where it concerns something needful, must be subordinated to the great end of life. Even care for necessities may interfere with the heart’s faith in God. *Μεριμνάτε*, which is emphatic, means anxious care, Jes. Sir. xxxi. 1 (xxxiv. 1), from a root which means “to have a divided mind,” Luke x. 41; xxi. 34. Others: to rack one’s brain over something. Tholuck limits the sense to anxious care, which Meyer deems unwarrantable, holding that the context furnishes no such limitation. The birds and the lilies explain it. Mammon receives no service from these. They know no care. They look to our Heavenly Father for their food and their raiment, their reliance is on God, their heart is not divided. They enjoy the existence which God allots them, and instead of fretting away their lives in anxiety, discontent, and a slavish absorption in what would enhance their lot, they praise Him in their song and by their ineffable beauty.

Care is the root of mammon service. It divides and distracts the heart; it causes the ebb and flow within us, tosses us hither and thither. “He who would be rid of mammon must free his heart from care.” Meyer: “His disciples shall . . . in the undivided service of God and with a true and undivided confidence in Him . . . be superior to all care whatsoever, Phil. iv. 6. For them to cherish anxious thoughts would be, in contrast with the

duty of full surrender to God who cares for them, little faith, v. 30, or half faith," *i. e.*, "a faith partly directed to God, partly to mammon." Absolute faith secures perfect exemption from earthly care, as seen in the work of Francke and George Müller. Our personal care is equivalent to the belief that God does not care for us, v. 32; 1 Peter v. 7; Ps. cxxvii. 22. The Christian must dismiss all care whatsoever. Nebe thinks, it cuts the nerve of the Lord's discourse to limit the word to anxious care. The Christian is to be as free from care as was Christ who had not where to lay His head. "Had He admitted care into His heart, it would not only have interfered with the activity of His calling, but it would have inwardly obscured the peace of His divine Sonship." All care with reference to the *ψυχή* is prohibited. The term means here the soul as the principle of physical life, hence of life itself, ii. 20; x. 39; xvi. 25. The Dative is the Dative of cause or relation, (v. 28, *πρὸς*).

The *Textus Receptus* mentions three objects of care, Luke xii. 22. Nebe notes the descending scale. The chief care of man is what to eat. In the East there follows immediately after this, what shall we drink? The "care" for raiment comes last, it is the lowest grade. Such questions reveal a faint-hearted, feeble faith. 1 Cor. vii. 32, 34; xii. 25. In v. 34 "for the morrow" is added, care looking far ahead.

The Lord knowing our weakness does not confine Himself to the command "be not anxious," etc. Care is so innate and has become so inveterate that it does not leave us at a single word. Therefore He justifies the command by the argument presented interrogatively, that the life given us by God is a greater thing than its nourishment, xii. 41, that He who has provided the greater, will also provide the less. Rom. viii. 32. Since He has created life and body, which require food, drink and clothing, we may feel confident that He will also provide those things on which they depend. Luther: "Why should a man have care for what he is to eat and drink, who has no care whence to obtain his body and soul."

The prohibition of care does not exclude the law that man is to obtain his bread by the sweat of his face. It presupposes and enforces that. Man is to labor as if he could obtain nothing without labor. Even the birds do not have food placed in their mouths. They are busy gathering nourishment. But they keep singing as they fly in quest of it. Only man whines and groans and frets lest he get too little. And yet they have not the means of procuring food and raiment which he possesses. They are not favored

with versatile endowments like men, but keeping, like the flowers, to the sphere which our Father has appointed them, they read to man in their happy and glorious existence a lesson in economics.

26. "Behold the birds . . . that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather . . . and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?"

"That confidence which the creature is both warranted and obligated to place in the Creator, is now laid impressively upon the heart of careful man." Jesus has an open eye for all things. The earthly and the transitory is to Him a symbol of the heavenly and the imperishable. He points His disciples to the birds which fly to and fro before their eyes, chirping and singing, free from care, without any concern. They have the same wants that we have as to the *ψυχή*. But they have no fields to produce for them, no sickle with which to reap, no barns in which to store up the blessing of God, so as to keep want away when the fierce winds blow over the stubble. They lack all these resources of man and yet they are without care, these birds of heaven, which have no home upon earth, no foot of ground, but dwell under the open sky and roam about in the air. Light and joyous, they are the antithesis of care. "Of the heaven," genitive of locality, participation, like the lilies of the field, fishes of the sea. Gen. i. 20, 25; ii. 19; Ps. viii. 9.

"Behold." The lesson becomes manifest not at the first glance, but when one looks sharply and thoughtfully. The grace of God may so open man's eyes that they behold everywhere fountains of comfort and wisdom. Nebe quotes Luther at Coburg, during the awful suspense occasioned by the Diet of Augsburg, who, on beholding the arches of heaven unsupported by pillars, and the birds gathering in the bushes under his windows, could send comforting and cheering messages to his friends far away. He proposed that we lift our hats to these birds and say: "My dear Herr Doctor, I do not understand your art, your way and manner. You sleep through the night in your little nest free from all care. You rise in the morning, blithe and of good cheer, perch on a tree and sing, and give praise and thanks to God, and then go after your food and find it. Shame on me, an old fool, that I who have so much ground for it, do not likewise."

If a bird can dismiss its cares and demean itself like a living saint, why not we who have every advantage? We who are the lords of creation must take lessons from the little sparrow as man's wisest teacher and preacher. Strange that the birds with nothing at all can trust God, and we with our abundance cannot trust Him. We are so put to shame by them that we should forbear to lift up

our eyes when we hear the song of a bird, praising God but reproaching us. Luther also pictures the bird reasoning to itself, how much rather it would trust itself to God's provision, who has the whole world with which to supply its wants, than to be caged and be amply fed by the hand of man. "But man by falling from the word and command of God has become so stupid and foolish, that henceforth there lives no creature that is not wiser than he, and a little finch which can neither speak nor read, must be his teacher and master in the Scriptures, even though he has the help of his whole Bible and reason."

It would seem to be superfluous for Jesus to add: "are not ye of much more value" etc., but we cannot too thoroughly eradicate care from the heart. For though the great God of heaven and earth has a thousand times over delivered us out of all distress, of what avail is it? When a new affliction arises the old cares at once appear again. Care has so completely taken possession of his heart that man is not without reason called the child of care.

Μᾶλλον strengthens the comparative force of *διαφέρετε*: "You are far superior to the birds." Mark vii. 36; Luke xii. 24; Phil. i. 23. *Διαφέρειν* means not only different, but better, x. 31; xii. 12. Christ reminds man of the dignity and rank of his being. God has made him higher, nobler, better than all other creatures. He is lord of them all, they were created for him, yet the little birds surpass his trust in God.

Jesus would re-awaken the feeling of his rank and worth in his kingship with God and the confidence which that warrants. He is "of more value than they," inasmuch as he is God's child. God sustains a relation to man such as He does to no other creature. Hence, "your Heavenly Father" feeds birds and clothes lilies, what will He not do for you His children? Learn here how the religious sentiment is enforced by the observance of nature. Although there are exceptions, nature as a whole presents a picture of abundance, and he who contemplates it as a whole finds nourishment of faith. There may, indeed, be cases where the child of God is left to want, but not ordinarily. Ps. xxxvii. 25.

27. "And which of you . . . can add one cubit to his age?"

How unavailing and impotent our cares at best! Through them we seek to secure life's subsistence and by this to preserve our life, but can we prolong our life? Has not God appointed for us alike its beginning and its end?

Ἠλικία is height, stature, in Luke ii. 52 and xix. 3. Here that sense would conflict with the context, which speaks of the preser-

vation and support of life among men and birds. Who indeed would think of adding such a disproportionate length to his stature? What a marvelous feat, too, that would be, yet Luke, xii. 25, calls it ἐλάχιστον, "that thing which is least." Jesus would teach us not that we can not compass great things with our cares, but that we cannot with them secure even the least. Hence it should be rendered "age," duration of life. Lineal measure is figuratively applied to human life, whose limits are determined by God, Ps. xxxix. 4, 5, on whom we are dependent for the smallest measure of it, v. 36, and to whose power and guidance we should confidently commit ourselves.

The figure is derived from the race-course and occurs frequently in the Old Testament, Job ix. 25; Ps. xxxix. 6; and in the New Testament, Acts xiii. 25; xx. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 7. The πῆχυς, "cubit," is the arm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. Nothing further is said of the care for drink, food and drink being assumed as going together, but Jesus proceeds to the third care, about clothing, and again points us to nature.

28, 29. "And why . . . concerning raiment? Consider the lilies . . . how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet . . . even Solomon . . . was not arrayed like one of these."

Note the object of care is placed first in the sentence. *Karapáthete*: "consider," observe, learn from—only here in the New Testament. Gen. xxiv. 21; xxxiv. 1; Job xxxv. 5. The word is significantly different from that in v. 26. These flowers, if studied, will preach quite a sermon to man. How they grow! Of what matchless beauty the raiment they wear! As regards clothing He does not point to the animal kingdom, though fit examples could have been given, but yet more strikingly to the insensate creature, to the flowers, yea the wild flowers, those of the field which grow without cultivation or the care of man, the most neglected products of creation, grass of the field, v. 30. The plain of Sharon was covered with a species of red, orange and yellow flowers like tulips or lilies. These insignificant creatures have their growth and their surpassing beauty from the hand of God.

Πῶς, "how," is not interrogative, Luke xiv. 7, so that "they toil not," etc., would be the answer. It is parallel to v. 26. Behold their growth! With what grace and beauty they appear! Although they do not provide their own clothing by personal toiling and spinning, what an incomparable robe of divers colors they wear! Christ speaks of them as persons, and refers to two occupations by which clothing is ordinarily provided. The Oriental affects clothing made from linen, and this requires toiling and spinning, man's

work and woman's work, the former having reference to the tilling of the field. Cf. 2 Tim. ii. 6. The lilies do neither, yet are they not on that account without raiment or cover. God casts over them a robe of beauty before which pales the splendor of even a Solomon. Not even the Jewish ideal, when he appeared in all the glory of his robes of state, could compare with the magnificence of one wild lily. "One of these"—doubtless he was pointing toward them.

Some interpret *δόξα*, "glory," of the royal paraphernalia, crown, scepter, throne; others, especially his splendid robes embroidered with gold, which are brought into view by *περιβάλετο*, "arrayed." 2 Chron. ix. 15 ff.; 1 Kings x. 18.

Luther is here again inimitable: "Just as the birds do not find their food by chance, but God creates it for them and ordains that every little bird shall have its living, so it is with the living flowers. For if it were not specially ordained and created of God, one could never be so like the other, in color, leaves, calyx, veins, etc. If then God bestows this care on the grass, which is here but for a day, trodden under the feet of beasts, and thrown into the fire, is it for us to doubt whether God will provide clothing for us?"

"What are the flowers of the grass in comparison with us? To what were they created, as they continue only a day? And yet God so tenderly cares for these transitory and little things, that each wears its own coat and is thereby more splendidly arrayed than all the adornment of the world. But we his highest creatures, for whom all nature stands, and to whom has been given a destiny not confined to this life but to have life eternal, we cannot trust him so far! We carry on, to our eternal shame and hurt, in such a way that every little flower will witness against us and condemn our little faith before God and every creature till the judgment day."

30. "But if God doth so clothe the grass . . . shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

This interrogative form is the conclusion of the foregoing. The preacher does not leave the inference or the application to ourselves. "We are too slow to draw the most obvious inferences, if we must anticipate that they will cut deeply in our flesh." He leaves us without excuse by drawing the conclusion Himself. Instead of the lilies He names now "the grass of the field," which some interpret as a new thought passing from the species to the genus. He simply designates the lilies by a more general but inferior term, still further pointing out their insignificance. 1 Cor. iii. 12; 1

Peter i. 24. The grass of the field here is undoubtedly the bloom of the lilies, as is obvious from the words "so clothe." The point is now not to portray the beauty and glory of the lily, but on the contrary to present its insignificance and nothingness. Grass comprehends what grows wild; these lilies share that character. Grasslike they come and go in a day, they bloom and fade in quick succession. One south wind in twenty-four hours parches them into cinders. Or, in the scarcity of wood in the east their stalks are thrown into the oven for fuel, iii. 12. So evanescent are they, and yet so beautifully cared for by God.

The lilies offer us two lessons. Beholding the beauty in which they are arrayed, dare we be anxious about clothing? The other is the lesson of contrast. We are not created to be for a day only and then gone forever. Ours is not an ephemeral existence like the lilies, but we are destined to eternal life. Our being thus destined to immortality is given as the reason why Jesus now speaks of God instead of the Father. Our infinite superiority to the lily does not depend on our likeness to God, but on our destiny as God's creatures.

"Shall He not much more?" By as much more as your life and destination surpass the lilies. Jesus closes this question with an apostrophe: *δολιγόπιστοι*. This describes those who have anxieties about food and raiment. The birds of heaven trust God for their food, the flowers of the field show by their beautiful adornment the care of His hand, but His own children put no faith in their Heavenly Father. This term is found only in the New Testament. Matt. viii. 26; xiv. 31; xvi. 8. Faith imports here confidence in God's care and the omnipotence of His providence. The disciples had, like anxious souls generally, a small measure of such faith. "He who believes puts His trust in God, he who has care lacks in this confiding rest in God." Calvin: *omnium curarum, quæ modum excedunt, mater est infidelitas*.

31. "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? . . . drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

This resumes v. 25, repeating once more the three-fold prohibition, censuring the state of mind which reveals itself in care. By laying stress on "saying", some find a new thought here: do not give expression to your anxieties. Care is contagious, avoid pouring out your anxious heart on others, thus injuring their weak faith. This conflicts with the Greek construction. Still it is more than a mere repetition of v. 25, as is evident from "therefore," which enforces the conclusion from the preceding statements. "Because we do not exist for a day only, but are de-

signed for eternity, because we are God's children, we need have no care; *per contra*, we are gloriously cared for." Q. E. D.

32. "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

The care for earthly good is characteristic of the heathen. Cf. v. 7. Meyer: "The first *γάρ* is argumentative, the second explanatory. The first justifies the injunction, v. 31, by reference to the heathen, the second does not give another reason coördinate with the first, but adds a thought by way of explanation." Tholuck: "The first assumes that the heathen know not God, 1 Thess. iv. 5, the second becomes therefore explanatory of the first: You know your Heavenly Father." Nebe: "The second clause with *γάρ* does not relate to the first, but to v. 31, to the exhortation not to care for these things, and gives the chief reason for it. The chief cause why we are to have no care, is certainly now presented for the first time: we have a Father in heaven. The great God of heaven and earth, the omniscient and omnipotent One, is our Father. He has given us life and body, yea, even His only Son. He knows what we need, and how can we regard Him so unmerciful and hard-hearted that He would suffer us to die from want and hunger."

Our freedom from care is not carelessness, which springs from frivolity and folly, but it is grounded on reflection. The disciples were pointed to the heathen whom they as Jews held in abhorrence. As previously Jesus pointed them, according to Luke, to the ravens, the most despised of birds, for a wholesome lesson to their lofty minds, so that these proud Jews might be humbled in the depths of their hearts, so He now reminds them that with questions like these they bring themselves into the heathen mass, they sink to the stage of paganism. The heathen, unenlightened and unbelieving, seek after these things.

Ἐπιζητεῖν, the compound is used here, while v. 33 has the simple verb *ζητεῖν*. A difference is doubtless to be understood. The compound strengthens the idea of the seeking. Bengel: "They seek after it as though a difficult matter to obtain." They know no other good than this life which like a stream rushes by, hence they stand upon its shore in order by their utmost endeavor to catch from it as much as possible. Conscious of nothing better, their cry is, let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die, determined to make the most of life while they have it. But Meyer: "*Ἐπι* points out the direction of the striving."

The spring of our confidence in God is here discovered to us: the conviction that He "knoweth" our need. Notice the emphasis

of the word. There is no occasion for us even to make known our need to God, to ask our neighbor or ourselves, what to eat, etc., for there is one who knows it all, who knows our need from afar and long before we do. And He who knows, is not a man who might have no sympathy for us, whose heart might be unmoved by our distress. He who knows what we need is our Heavenly Father. Hence we cannot doubt that our distress pierces His heart, that He is inwardly moved to appear for our relief. And He is able to fulfill that to which His Father heart impels Him. An earthly father's resources may be exhausted; deeply as he feels for his needy children he cannot find a way to help them; but such is not the case with the Almighty Father in heaven. The argument is drawn from the omniscience, the goodness, and the omnipotence of God.

What ineffable comfort is vouchsafed to the soul, who has found this God in heaven to be his Father in Christ Jesus! With joy he sings, "The Lord is my shepherd," Ps. xxiii. O the plentitude we have in God! How can they have want who have the Maker of Heaven and earth for their helper? Did we but realize what is meant by "your Heavenly Father knows!" There is richness of meaning in that word "KNOWS" as well as in the other terms.

33. "But seek ye first his kingdom . . . all these things shall be added to you."

"The heathen have many cares, Christians but one. He who takes to heart this one, thereby becomes free from all others." Summing up all that has been said since v. 19, and what was especially indicated as the alone normal thing in v. 24, the Lord now enforces the great truth in a positive command. Instead of the forbidden cares, v. 31, He urges the true care, instead of what we are not to seek, He directs plainly what we shall seek. Liberated from worldly cares "we have time, power and inclination for seeking what alone is worthy of our aspiration, God's kingdom and righteousness." Meyer: "The Messianic kingdom, admission to it, participation in it, and the moral righteousness requisite to attain this." Our aim is thus objective and subjective, Rom. xiv. 17. *Βασιλεία* is the leading word here. Luke xii. 31.

There are strictly not two concepts, but one. Man's normal place is under the reign of God, in complete subjection to his Maker, and therein is found true righteousness. Membership in the organic kingdom and fellowship with God are inseparable. The one idea is not to be thought of without the other. We cannot seek the kingdom of God without seeking His righteousness, which

is the essential requisite of the kingdom, the harmony of man's will with God's. Chap. v. 6, 20; vi. 1. As God is the highest good, all moral striving must be directed to the absolute and the perfect. Plato recognized the moral aim of man to be likeness to God. The ultimate goal of the Christian life and hope is communion with God, objectively by entrance into His kingdom, subjectively by righteousness, conformity to His will.

"The kingdom of God" recurs to v. 24, "no man can serve two masters." This kingdom is the reverse of meat and drink. Hence it is to be the object of our endeavor, and not the latter.

"First" we should seek the kingdom, before striving for anything else. Some interpret: subordinate striving is thus not excluded. The heavenly good must be sought in the first instance, then the earthly as secondary object. But Meyer regards it as excluded, both by v. 32 and by *προστεθῆσεται*. The first striving renders a second superfluous. In obeying God we have all the conditions by which we secure food and all things. Bengel: "He who seeks that first will soon seek that only."

The thought that in the pursuit of earthly affairs our care is to be directed first of all to God's kingdom, all things must be done in the name of the Lord, is not admissible. The one care, the one *κύριος*, Master, is the subject of this Pericope. The promise is accented that these earthly things will come as a matter of course, over and above, "as a *protheke*, an appendage of the life and body, v. 25; and still more so, of the kingdom." Luke xii. 32. This "addition" is correlative to "first." Man sustains no loss of material good by subjecting himself absolutely to the law of the Lord. 1 Tim. iv. 8; Mk. x. 30; 1 Kings iii. 11 ff. There is an apocryphal saying of Jesus: "Seek the great things and the little ones will be added, seek the heavenly and the earthly will be added."

To him who cares for the divine kingdom, the other things needed will come without care, in a way we know not, as attested by daily experience. The latter come without our care, but not the heavenly kingdom and righteousness. We are warranted in jeopardizing these things for the sake of the kingdom, but not *vice versa*. Besides the moral results at which we aim, material results will be thrown in the bargain.

Luther: "How would it be possible for him to die with hunger who faithfully serves God and promotes His kingdom, since God bestows overflowing gifts on the whole world? There can be no more bread on earth, or heaven can have no more rain, if a Christian dies of hunger; yea, God must first Himself have died of

hunger. The Scriptures abound in passages like Ps. xxxvii. 19, 25. He will also in this case not prove Himself a liar, if only thou couldst believe."

Note yet that as God's knowledge of man's wants does not preclude prayer, so His care of us does not supersede labor. One who trusts and obeys God first and above all, will be impelled to activity and thrift as well as to contentment.

34. "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow . . . for itself. Sufficient . . . the evil thereof."

"Therefore," inference from v. 33, or from what has been said from v. 25 on. Both vv. 25 and 35 show the care to be about food, etc. There is no need for care since it falls to us without care. We have now a comprehensive conclusion, "practical, fresh, bold and taken from life." Jesus does not here admit of cares for to-day, "a minimum of care," which would be quite a descent from the height hitherto maintained. The following day is mentioned, because it is for that that we usually have cares. Bengel: "A precept remarkable for asteismus, conveying a stern truth so as not to offend or startle the hearer, by which care, though apparently permitted on the morrow, is in fact forbidden altogether; for the careful make present cares even of those which are future, wherefore, to put off care is almost the same as to lay it aside." In view of so great a promise we may be unconcerned about the morrow. Undoubtedly the day following is to be understood. All cares relate in fact to the morrow.

The morrow is personified: it will be anxious for itself, will have its own cares, have itself as the object of its care, will take care of itself. Leave its cares to it. Do not borrow them for to-day. Live a day at a time. "The things needed will come, since our Heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of them." This accords with the promise of the preceding verse, but Nebe fears that it changes the sense of *μεριμνᾶν*. Hence: Do not take to-morrow with its burden of cares already to-day before your eyes and on your heart, that is quite a superfluous task. Let each day attend to its own evils, its own needs. Every day has enough in it of evil and sorrow and danger. Do not add to to-day's, from to-morrow's, stock of trouble. Do not load down one day with the burdens of another. Luther: "Do not take on thyself the ills of two days. Let each day bear its own; it has enough of it, a sufficiency."

Kakia: troubles, sins, labor, sorrow, affliction, Luke xvi. 25; Eccl. vii. 15; xii. 1; Amos iii. 7. Not so much moral evil as physical ill is here implied by the word. Luther refers it to Gen.

iii. 19, "In the sweat of thy face," etc. "Take such trials with joy and be content; for you have enough to bear with them, and dismiss cares which only add to your burdens. Abide by what comes to-day; to-morrow the day will bring you something else." Bengel: "God distributes our adversity and prosperity through all the periods of our life, after a wonderful manner, so that they temper each other." *ἀντὶς*, "thereof." It has enough of its own, without adding thereto the sorrow of either the past or the coming day.

The Pericope treats of the Christian's freedom from care, of the folly of all care, of the only proper striving after God's kingdom.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE CHRISTIAN KNOWS NO CARE. FOR HE KNOWS

1. That he cannot serve two masters.
2. That He who cares for all creatures is his dear Father.
3. That all things will come to him who seeks first the kingdom of God.

NOT CARING, YET CARED FOR.

1. Attested by creation.
2. Not believed by the heathen.
3. Experienced by him who seeks first the kingdom of God.

THE ANXIOUS ONE A FOOL. WITH HIS CARES HE

1. Undoes his service of God.
2. Denies his sonship with the Father.
3. Thrusts aside the precious promise.
4. And wantonly heaps trouble upon trouble.

THE SERVICE OF MAMMON INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE SERVICE OF GOD.

1. The former roots in care, and care in weakness of faith.
2. The latter in striving after the kingdom, and this striving has the promise of all things.

BE NOT ANXIOUS, FOR

1. You are God's servants.
2. You are God's children.
3. You are God's heirs.

SEEK FIRST THE REIGN OF GOD.

1. This only is rational.
2. This only has the promise.

THE RIGHT CARE CONSISTS

1. Not in coördinating earthly and heavenly wants.
2. Much less in subordinating the heavenly to the earthly.
3. But in determining the heavenly want to be the only want.

WHAT IS THE CHIEF CONCERN? AS VIEWED

1. By the undecided.
2. By the heathen.
3. By the Christian.

STRIVING FOR THE EARTHLY AND FOR THE HEAVENLY.

1. The one, mammon service, the other, God service.
2. The one, of little faith, the other, the proof of faith.
3. The one, positively forbidden, the other, positively commanded.
4. The one, full of trouble, the other, full of promise.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke vii. 11-17.

THE Lesson of the last Pericope demanded that freedom from care which springs from a hearty confidence in God. Experience testifies that the demand goes beyond the ordinary capability of the Christian. But that it is not inordinate is shown by the Lesson for this Sunday. Here is a case of extremity. All seemed lost, all hopes were borne to the grave; but the Lord appears and helps, and that by a simple word. "Since we have such a Lord to help us, yea, to deliver us from death even without asking, how can we entertain cares and fears? Our life is God's gift and grace, hence it becomes us to place our trust in Him."

11. "And . . . on the next day, . . . to a city called Nain; and his disciples went with him, and a great multitude."

We pass over the variations of the text and accept the view of many, that Jesus upon the day after the healing of the centurion's servant at Capernaum came to Nain; the distance was not too great to be covered in one day. The town must have been unimportant, since the writer says "a city called Nain." It does not occur in the Old Testament, and is not to be confounded with a Nain which, according to Josephus, lies east of the Jordan. It does not occur again in the New Testament. Luke alone mentions this raising of the dead.

The FF. refer to Nain, some locating it in the vicinity of Endor. Its site is fixed at Nein, on the plain of Esdraelon to the north of little Hermon, about twenty-four miles from Capernaum. Some interpret the name "Beautiful," others, "Meadow." The evangelist had doubtless an object in naming the place. This confirms the certainty of the miracle, as does also the double multitude, those following the Lord and those following the funeral. At the time Jesus had a large following, distinguished as *μαθηταί* and *οχλος*. Not all who followed Jesus were true disciples. Some were intent on salvation, some were impelled by curiosity. *Ἰκανοί*, if genuine, shows that we are not to limit the disciples to the twelve, but as in vi. 13, 17, 20, the term embraces all who attached themselves to Jesus for a longer or shorter period, in order really to

learn from Him. The "multitude," on the other hand, is the great mass, which did not own Him as Lord or Master, but held to Him as some great One doing great things.

12. "Now when he drew near to the gate of the city, behold . . . one that was dead, the only son of his mother . . . and much people . . . was with her."

The description is intentionally minute. The situation is pictured so as to make the miracle more life-like. Of the day's march from Capernaum nothing is mentioned. Jesus has now reached the goal of the journey, He has reached the city's walls, He is about to enter the gate, when, lo! something quite unexpected meets His eyes. The procession He is about to lead into the city is met by one just about to pass out. Two hosts meet at the gate of Nain. Luther sees in the latter procession "what we are and what we bring to Christ, for this is the image and course of the whole world upon earth, a mass who are all marching toward death and must pass out of the city. This is the character of the world upon earth, here is nothing but the image and work of death, a constant and daily journey to death till the judgment day, one dying after the other, one bringing the other to the grave."

It is a most impressive and significant encounter. Nebe: "On the one side stands the king of terrors, about to commit his prey to a place of security, on the other side stands the Prince of life. These two are contending with each other for the human race. The one would hurl us into death and keep us in death, the other would redeem us from death and restore us to life. They cannot pass each other. In this hour they must measure swords with each other. Which side will win? Can death triumph, or will it be swallowed up of life? It may be deemed a favorable index that the Lord is entering the city, whereas death is leaving it, as if it were fleeing from the mightier One who stands in the gate of Nain."

"Was carried out." The Israelites buried outside of towns, in places removed from the abodes of the living. It was a young man that had died, one snatched away in the bloom of life. An early death always touches human hearts far more than the passing of one stricken in years, one who has finished his course and exhausted the vital powers. The youth has barely entered upon his career; his work is not completed, he falls as by violence, he drops like the blossom after the frost.

Another touching fact is that he was his mother's only son. As no period of life is secure against death, so no affection or tenderness of relation can shield from his darts. God had granted

that mother only this one son, doubtless this one child. Her whole mother heart was wrapped up and concentrated in him. She guarded him as the apple of her eye, and anxiously watched his every step. But death is merciless, inexorable, his heart is rock, his hand is ice. He smites the joy of that mother's heart, her pride, her comfort, her hope. The only-begotten son was an object of extraordinary affection among the Jews. Zech. xii. 10; Jer. vi. 26; Amos viii. 10. It is doubtless universally true that the loss of an only child cuts more deeply into the heart than the loss of one out of a large circle of children. With the only one goes all of the heart's love and hope; while, when others survive, there still remain some for love to cling to.

But the climax of the situation is that the bereft mother was a widow. She had lost the husband of her bosom before she had to part with the one child of her womb. In her inconsolable grief she cannot have recourse to the arms of her companion and protector. She must bear the awful burden alone, a sorrow that left her absolutely without any earthly support.

A widow and childless, who can measure the grief, the desolation of such a soul! And especially in that age! Forsaken of every hope, deprived of every protection, bereft of every support! Death has extinguished every light.

As Luther says, she is crushed under two burdens: first, that she is a widow, forsaken and alone in the world, having no one to whom she can repair; second, that she is now childless, her only son and only comfort being taken from her. God takes away both supports, perhaps within a short period. Rather would she have lost her home and all, yea, her own life; but God ruled otherwise. "It was deemed a great misfortune, and indicative of divine displeasure, when father or mother left behind no name or children; thus she must have reasoned apart from her natural and heavy grief: thou art one of the accursed women, with whom God is so displeased that they can leave no name behind them."

Her affliction evidently called forth great sympathy from the community, as is evident from the fact that "much people of the city was with her." Nebe: "A spark of neighbor love is still found in the heart of fallen man; but a mighty voice of God like this may well overcome the strongest heart. In gloom and sorrow the funeral train advances, but the light of life suddenly breaks through the shadow of death."

13. "And . . . saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not."

"Jesus does not turn His eyes from our misery, but fixes them

on it, and at the first glance finds among the crowd the soul which is most deeply affected by it." Ὁ κύριος. Bengel: "This sublime appellation was better known and more used when Luke and John wrote than when Matthew wrote. Mark holds a midway place. This chief article of the faith needed to be taught and established in the beginning; afterwards it might be taken for granted." The term occurs frequently only in Luke, and that in such passages as are peculiar to him, x. i; xi. 39; xii. 42; xiii. 15; xvii. 5, 6; xviii. 6; xxii. 61. At the gate of Nain Jesus, according to Luke, means to proclaim Himself as Lord. The woman, since she stood immediately before Him, fell naturally first in his eye, going before the body, as is the custom in the east. And if the people of the city were so deeply moved with compassion for the poor woman, how much more shall He who planted the human heart, the fountain of all compassion, be touched with her woe in His deepest heart! The verb here is the same strong expressive term, *σπλαγχνίζομαι*, "bowels of compassion," as in Mk. i. 41; vi. 34. The feeling at the grave of Lazarus was expressed by *ἐμβριμάομαι*.

There is no occasion for the question why such depths of sympathy should be opened by the widow's distress. Our Lord bore on His heart our sorrows and carried our griefs, and here was a case of more than ordinary woe. It was not necessary that His own death should be before His eyes, or the lot of His own mother, to whom He was perhaps an only son. There was enough immediately before Him to wring most powerfully a heart so susceptible to human grief. It was the spectacle before His eyes, with all of the domestic and spiritual import which attached to it, that moved Him so deeply. It was for the consolation of the mother that Jesus interposed. He turns to the widowed and child-bereft mother with the strange command, "Weep not." What mother could refrain from tears in such a situation? Those are holy tears which flow for our departed ones. Jesus Himself sanctified such tears when He wept at the grave of His friend Lazarus. They are really a relief, a cordial, to the stricken heart. Who would forbid them? Irrational and cruel would be such counsel to a mother laying her only son in the grave, if it proceeded from one of human kind. But He who thus speaks is more than man. He is "the Lord."

Notably He first approaches the woman and addresses her kindly, instead of first touching the bier and by a miracle staying the fountain of her tears. His consolation before the performance of the miracle shows His power of surely performing it. "It is His frequent preface elsewhere, 'Fear not.' On the part of men

there is always something which the approach of God has to remove out of the way at the beginning."

What the "something" was which was to be removed by the "weep not," is variously explained. It has been claimed that on His part Jesus prefaced the miracle thus. Of His own motion He appeared to offer relief, and it was proper for Him to give notice publicly that it was not mere respect, but heartfelt compassion, that prompted Him. Others: Consideration for the mother called forth this word of comfort before the word of power. The sudden transition from her crushing sorrow to the overwhelming joy might have been too much for her physical or mental strength.

Again, the uniqueness of this miracle has to be regarded. In no other instance did Jesus work a miracle without prayer for help having been addressed to Him. Here He interposed unasked. Unuttered prayer may, indeed, have been offered. Luther: "Now that he is dead, there were secret desires and sighs: Oh! if it were God's will that my son should live yet and become alive again. This cleaves so deeply to her heart that she herself does not see it, yea, she dare not allow herself to ask it, and yet the heart is so full of it that it is a much more heartfelt, fervent prayer than any one can utter, for it proceeds from groanings which cannot be uttered."

The woman, on the one hand, cannot offer Him the faith which conditions such a prayer, and yet, on the other hand, the Lord does no miracle without the requirement of faith. The word "weep not" is accordingly the touchstone of her faith. "His work is made contingent upon her submission to His command with the obedience of faith." This command required faith, at least a faith that submits and resigns itself to the secret counsel of God. "The command was calculated to beget either hope or resignation; hope, if Jesus was known to the woman as a prophet mighty in word and deed; resignation, if she recognized in Him nothing more than a rabbi."

14. "And . . . touched the bier; and the bearers stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

Word and work with Jesus go hand in hand. The work explains the word. From the mother He proceeds to the son, lying on a bier, not confined in a coffin. Nebe: "An open, uncovered casket, in which lay the corpse wrapped in linen." The touch of the dead was defiling, as was contact with a leper, but we have no proof that contact with the bier defiled. There was, however, something startling in this touch, which brought the bearers to a sudden halt. "According to Jewish customs a corpse was borne

away at a rapid pace," but now the bearers stop. From the movement of Jesus' hand they expect something. They stand, chained to the earth, before the determination and resoluteness and majesty with which He approaches the bier and lays His hand upon it. Nebe explains the touch as a signal that the Lord has some object regarding him who lies on the bier. Rationalists interpret it as conducting an electric shock, or some vitalizing current.

We recoil from the touch of a bier, and tremble in the presence of death. Of such fear Jesus knows nothing. He is the conqueror of death. "The messengers and servants of death stand still before Him; they recognize His power and by their action predict that victory is assured to Him." He does not speak to the bearers, but when all is still, He calls out as we do when we would waken one out of sleep, "Young man, I say to thee, Arise."

Peter knelt in prayer before the dead Tabitha; Elijah pressed himself upon the dead son of the woman of Sarepta; and Elisha pressed himself to the son of the Shunamite till he warmed him by his own body. But Jesus, not as the agent of a higher power, nor as the servant of the living God, but as the Lord of quick and dead, stands personally at the bier and by His mere fiat raises the dead. That the youth was a son and not a daughter He doubtless knew without asking, though the latter is not excluded. Mk. v. 41; John xi. 43.

He addresses the dead one as if he heard, and that moment he heard. We cannot enter upon the physiological problem that the soul tarries in the vicinity of the body so long as decay does not set in, that a vital bond still holds it to the tabernacle from which it has barely departed, and that Jesus here found the soul yet sustaining an active relation to the body and called it back from its flight to reanimate the yet perfect body. Neither Scripture nor experience nor science throws any light on the relation of soul and body immediately after dissolution. Jesus not only called to Jairus' daughter, and to this young man, as if their spirits respectively were still near, but also to Lazarus, though putrefaction had already set in. So it is His voice that will awaken the dead on the last day, John v. 25. As the Greeks held, the vital cord is snapped at death and soul and body separate. Beyond that all is unknown. Hence the word of Christ is to be explained here like in the resurrection as a creative word addressed to the spirit, leading it back to the lifeless body.

15. "And he . . . sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother."

Christ's word never fails. The dead respond to His voice. The

spirit which had fled returns at His behest to the body. Whatever the disease to which the young life had succumbed, he rises in perfect health. His own hands unwrap the linen bands, by his own strength he sits erect on the bier. Evidently with the new lease of life new life-forces permeate his limbs, and so his mind is clear and he acts normally. In full consciousness he speaks, like one who has awakened from a sweet, refreshing slumber. To the stupid claim that real death had not intervened in these cases of miraculous restoration, He replies, that the awakening of such persons is always gradual, the breast begins to heave, the blood to flow, the eye to move, etc. Of the natural explanation Meyer says, "it so directly conflicts with the gospel narrative, and moreover places Jesus in so injurious a light of dissimulation and pretence, that it is decisively to be rejected, even apart from the fact that in itself it would be improbable, nay monstrous, to suppose that as often as dead people required His help, He should have chanced every time upon people only apparently dead."

"Gave him to his mother." Death sundered the bonds of love. Jesus binds together again by the almighty power of love the severed cords. "What He did here, He will do also for us; as He will awaken our dead so he will also reunite us with them. In this giving back of the son to his mother, Jesus places the crown upon His work of love. He does not withhold him from his mother and keep him for His own service; He knows it to be the true service of God to visit the widow in her affliction, Jas. i. 27, so that this service of compassion to her is a service to His God. The miracle of the highest power is a proof of the deepest mercy, the purest love. ix. 42; Macc. x. 9.

16. "And fear took hold on all: and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen . . . and God hath visited his people."

What the young man spoke is not reported, as in the case of the deaf mute healed, Mark vii. 32 ff., but we assume here as there, that it was the praise of the restored one which gave the pitch to the praise of the people. A powerful impression was made upon all by this miracle, the deep sympathy of the people for the widow having made them profoundly susceptible.

"Fear," a reverential, godly fear seized them. "The death-conquering power of Jesus leads all of them to recognize the contrast between the Conqueror of death and the children of death, but as the power of the Lord stands in the service of love, fear is soon dissolved into exclamations of praise."

God is glorified for having sent them a prophet. They do not yet recognize in Jesus God manifest in the flesh, but certainly one

who was directly sent forth from God, "One who imparts divine gifts, lessons." *Ὁτι* is recitative, not argumentative, as claimed by Meyer *et al.* One portion of the vast concourse exclaimed thus, "A great prophet," etc., the other responded, "God hath visited," etc.

It would be indeed remarkable if the great multitude should use the same words in their impromptu shouts of praise. The responsive feature in public worship is the expression of our mental organization, it is most rational. Some are impressed with Christ's appearance as that of a great prophet; some with that of the divine mercy, the two ideas not being specifically different, but having a beautiful and striking correlation. So great a prophet springs not from the ground, comes not in His own name, He is a divine gift. God has anointed and sent Him. He is the expression of God's will and grace. Meyer: "They saw in this miracle a σημεῖον [sign], of a great prophet, and in His appearance they saw the beginning of the Messianic deliverance, i. 68, 78." In the great Prophet they recognize with joy the sign of the Messianic time being at hand, that the God of Israel has graciously visited His own people.

Ἐπισκέπτομαι, to look after, to look upon in order to help, to have a care for: "salvation from God has come to us." The term is also used in an evil sense, especially in Old the Testament.

17. "And this report went forth . . . in the whole of Judæa, and all the region round about."

Ὁ λόγος οὗτος, "this saying," that a great prophet with his claim made good by a raising from the dead, etc. This ascription of glory spreads from the gate of Nain in ever-widening circles, not only around Hermon and Tabor, but beyond even the borders of the Holy Land. "Judæa is not here to be understood in the narrower sense of the province (Nain was not in Judæa), but in the wider sense of Palestine in general," i. 5; and by "the whole region," etc., it is asserted that the rumor had spread even beyond the limits of Palestine into the heathen countries bordering on Galilee. Hence the theocratic term Judæa. Some have referred the *λόγος* to the "glorifying," others to the "report" of the miracle, whereby Christ showed Himself a great prophet. The rumor was "concerning Him," He was mentioned as its subject.

The FF. allegorizing made the woman the church, the youth, man made subject to the death of sin.

The Pericope admonishes us to true confidence in God. The extreme distress of life confronts our Lord, He overcomes it, and He will redeem us in time from all evil, also in the end from death.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

TRUST IN THE LORD.

1. He has an all-seeing eye.
2. He has a compassionate heart.
3. He has a kindly word.
4. He has mighty power.

Or,

1. He comes at the right moment.
2. He dries the bitterest tears.
3. He restores to us all things.

THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST'S LOVE IN OUR AFFLICTIONS.

1. He hears our unutterable groanings.
2. He comes to us with kindly comforting words.
3. He helps us with almighty power.

WONDERFUL IS THE LORD'S HELP:

1. Wonderful the time in which;
2. The love for the sake of which;
3. The means through which;
4. The success with which, He comes.

CHRIST, THE WONDER WORKER.

1. Death He changes into life.
2. Loss into gain.
3. Heart sorrow into God's praise.

WEEP NOT:

1. A word of heart sympathy.
2. A word of blessed promise.

CHRIST, THE CONQUEROR OF DEATH.

1. He stays the pains of death.
2. Looses the bands of death.
3. Unites those torn asunder by death.

DEATH AND LIFE

1. Always encounter each other.
2. But Life always swallows up death.

GOD'S VISITATION OF HIS PEOPLE.

1. Through the great Prophet, who sojourns among us.
2. Through the merciful High-priest, who stays our tears.
3. Through the Prince of Life, who robs death of its power.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Luke xiv. 1-11.

THE Pericope consists of two parts which though closely connected in time, seem not to be specially related in sense. The chief thought in the second part is evidently the exhortation to humility (see both its introduction and close, v. 7 and v. 11). In the first part the cure of the paralytic is doubtless to the evangelist less important for its own sake, than on account of the humility which Jesus would inculcate on the Pharisees. "Both sentences of the refrain, v. 11, are developed in this Gospel, so we may fix as the centre of this Pericope that the new life must be a life of humility."

1. "And . . . when he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees . . . they were watching him."

The narrative is peculiar to Luke, who loves to portray Jesus at a social meal, where he most beautifully reveals His pure humanity. The scene occurs in the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem. In xiii. 31 He was in the domain of Herod Antipas (outside of Jerusalem, v. 33) in Galilee. This was prior to His proceeding along the boundaries between Samaria and Galilee, xvii. 11. The occurrence is therefore located in Galilee. The person who invited Him to his house is not named. Only his position is given: "one of the rulers of the Pharisees." Some: A member of the Sanhedrin. Some: An *archisynagogus*. Nebe: "He was not merely a ruler who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, but one of the chiefs of the Pharisees. As they did not, however, have a distinct organization, but *per se* stood all on an equality, we have to regard this archon a man, who either by his knowledge of the law or by his zeal for the righteousness of the law, was held in high esteem by others." Hillel, Schammai and Gamaliel belong to this category.

This eminent Pharisee invited Jesus "on a Sabbath" to his house "to eat bread," *i. e.*, to take a meal, to dine, v. 12; vii. 33; Matt. xv. 2; Mk. iii. 20; John xii. 2. "It was a sacred custom among Israelites to distinguish the Sabbath from the other days also by better food and better drink and thus to hallow it externally." A hint of this is given in Exod. xxiii. 12, and Neh. viii. 9, 10 shows the custom to have been permanent. Entertainments were not

unusual on the Sabbath, and they were even the occasion of excesses in which the spiritual Sabbath was forgotten, but the food was prepared on the day previous. See Nebe.

Some hold that the invitation was a friendly one, but *παρρηγοιούμενοι*, "watching," hardly admits of that. The other guests were not simply all eyes and all ears, as Olshausen suggests, but as they were doubtless fellow-Pharisees they were intent on finding "occasion for charge or complaint." The same word is used elsewhere in the New Testament of the sly espionage of the Pharisees, their malicious lying in wait with a view to entrap and to catch Him, Luke vi. 7. Nebe thinks the aspect of the times was such that a friendly attitude on the part of the Pharisees could no longer be looked for, they had become thoroughly embittered and were only seeking an opportunity to vent their rage on Him. He suggests that the invited one knew the object of the host, and that we may well be surprised that He amicably accepted the invitation. "Although He knew the malice of the Pharisees He became their guest, that He might through word and miracle profit those present." His goodness knows no bounds. Nebe: "He goes because He is always prepared for action and never lays Himself open to attack, because He knows like a master how to drive a thorn into the conscience, and because He would yet save His bitterest enemies."

What hypocrites they are! They watch whether He will keep the Sabbath, and by this very craftiness they are themselves wickedly profaning it. For to lie in wait for a neighbor with a view to his destruction is not the rest which God has appointed. *Καὶ αὐτοί*, they on their part. "This is not a subordinate observation, but the circumstance which accounts for what follows."

2. "And behold, there was a certain man which had the dropsy."

How he came to be in the Pharisee's house is not said. "And behold" emphasizes the unexpectedness of his appearance. He may have been brought there for the purpose of inveigling Jesus. Of course the poor man may have dragged himself there on learning of Jesus' presence. If the former were the case Meyer would expect *γάρ* to connect v. 2 with v. 1, while Nebe sees in *ιδού* a substitute for *γάρ*. The Pharisees were on the watch, and here stood a man having the dropsy—it does not seem that he was to the host and his fellow Pharisees an unexpected sight. V. 4 shows that he was not a guest. Everything seems to be so narrated as to force us to the conclusion, that as Jesus courteously entered the house into which He was invited, there stood the poor sufferer who was to serve as a trap for Him.

The usual crowd is not present, and a dropsical person could not move rapidly, nor easily intrude, nor readily conceal himself, and he very naturally at once falls into Jesus' eyes. Assuming that he had come of his own impulse from his home, he could certainly not remain here, particularly in the dining-room, without at least the silent consent of the host. A fortunate accident thus offered the archon the means of tempting the Lord.

But how could He grant healing under such circumstances, where the sick one himself was presented to Him with an evil purpose? This is the opposite of that faith which is always required. The unbelief of the people hindered Him from working miracles in His native city. The sick man may, however, have been ignorant of the purpose for which he was being used. The Pharisees had no interest in admitting him to their secret, which might have led to the miscarriage of their plot. They may indeed by their assurance have awakened in him that spark of faith which Jesus required. "They treated him with the same kindly outward consideration with which they shortly after welcomed the Lord, and they place him in such a position that he must meet the eyes of Jesus immediately upon His entrance." This did not prevent his misery from appealing to the merciful heart of Jesus. And there were doubtless other reasons why He should not withhold the benefit. The occasion served Him an excellent purpose, which He could not have accomplished without the miracle. He did not refuse the hospitality tendered with such treachery, why should He withhold His grace of healing? Hardly all the particulars are given.

3. "And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?"

"Answering"—to the act and the thoughts of His adversaries relative to Sabbath healing. While observing the dropsical man, He saw at the same time through the cunningly-laid net of their malice. The poor man serves as a living note of interrogation. The question stands in living form before Him: "Is it lawful to heal?" etc. It was a question on which the masters in Israel were at the time much divided. The school of Shammai forbade healing on the Sabbath, that of Hillel permitted it. The lax and the strict schools were agreed only on one point, to wit, if life was in danger. The canon was: *Omne dubium vitæ pellit Sabbatum*.

Such a condition was not present in this case. Hence the simple question confronts the assembly, "Is the healing on the Sabbath permissible?" As they were the "lawyers," teaching the law and laying great stress upon it, He puts the question to them, perhaps to show that He understood their plot; perhaps to catch them with

their own snare. Had they answered, Yes, they would have sanctioned His miracle and come into conflict with the strict view of the Sabbath; had they answered, No, they would have shown heartlessness to be the main cause of their attack on Jesus—in either case to their discomfiture.

4. "But they held their peace. And he . . . healed him, and let him go."

They could not answer without drawing around their own necks the noose they had prepared for Him. Luther: "They had planned that if He did not help him they would denounce Him as unmerciful, unmoved by human suffering; on the other hand, if He extended help, then He could be accused as a wicked Sabbath-breaker." Their silence gives the Lord a free course, and He proceeds according to the promptings of His kindness with the cure.

Ἐπιλαβόμενος, "a taking hold which brought about the miraculous cure." Cf. Mk. viii. 23; Matt. xiv. 31. He took the dropsical man by the hand and thus the healing virtue passed over into the sick man. Some have held that a case of dropsy had been specially selected, because it is a disorder which yields to no physical remedies, and which never secures more than temporary relief, even when some alleviation takes place. Dropsy is certainly a chronic disorder which does not disappear in a moment. But here by a momentary touch from the Lord the man is freed from the disease. However helpless he may have been, incapable of bowing the knee, he is now in perfect health, able to move freely, and the Lord sends him away, that he may assure himself of his recovery and rejoice in his delivery. "With this joy should not be mingled the bitter thought that in his innocence he had allowed himself to be used in opposition to his benefactor by the cunning malice of His enemies."

The sick man had not been invited as a guest, v. 7. His cure and his dismissal occurred before the dinner. Having now both silenced His enemies and triumphed over them by this miracle, Jesus proceeds to score them for their inconsistency and hypocrisy.

5. "And he said . . . Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway . . . on a sabbath day?"

Literally, "Does not he (or any one else) whose ass," etc. Jesus puts another question, as was His wont in matters of controversy. "Such questions have a two-fold advantage: in the form of a question His words are less likely to give offense, since He does not express the judgment, but challenges them to pass a proper sentence on their own case; again, through the question the sentence becomes so much severer, since it is pronounced on themselves."

To give them a case of *deductio ad absurdum* He offers an instance from common life. Matt. xii. 11. A little sense uncovers the absurdity and the folly of sin. Most of the wells in the east are pits or cisterns. Springs are rare, and man and beast must be content with the water that is artificially collected, and it is quite easy for an ass or an ox to fall into one of these open pits. Nebe suggests that the pit is shallow and muddy, so that at first the animal may feel at ease in it, but gradually becomes distressed and is not able to struggle up out of its watery prison. It is not a question of life being in peril, which would justify the rescue on the Sabbath, and yet any one of them would take pity on his beast; and even if these men were devoid of all pity, yet, if for no other reason, from consideration of its value as property, every one of them would on the Sabbath day ἀνασπάσει, "pull out with much toil," with the application of all his strength and resources, by calling in the aid of others, extricate the unhappy beast from the pit without any compunction and without hesitation, "straightway," fearing that the beast will sustain some injury and that he will sustain a considerable loss. What any one allows himself in the case of an ass or an ox dare not be allowed to a merciful heart in behalf of one of *its* kind, in behalf of one's neighbor. They would not allow a man to be drawn out of a pit on the Sabbath! That would be working! This poor man "who also had fallen into the water must not be taken out of it on the Sabbath." The law warrants the rescue of an irrational animal, but not of a rational being for whom the irrational exists! What arrant humbuggery, what heartless, irrational and preposterous ideas, and that under the mask of religion! Meyer, who with many others accepts *υἱός* instead of *θῆνος*, which is probably introduced from xiii. 15, says, "the conclusion of Jesus is not drawn as in xiii. 15 f., a *minore ad majus*, but from the ethical principle that the helpful compassion which we show in reference to that which is our own (be it son or beast) on the Sabbath, we are also bound to show to others (love thy neighbor as thyself)." "If without hesitation we do such work in *our* affairs on the Sabbath, how can we hesitate to go to the relief of our neighbor in his distress?"

6. "And they could not answer again unto these things."

The word of Jesus shows its power in connection with His foes as well as in connection with His friends, outwardly more so. These lawyers and Pharisees were ready in debate, and practiced in casuistry; here were assembled not the ordinary representatives of their class, but the host who was pre-eminent among

them invited a number of keen disputants to share his triumph over the Nazarene rabbi; and then he confronted Jesus with this case of dropsy in order to force from Him a practical decision whether it was right or wrong to heal on the Sabbath. Yet these heroes, prepared with all their effective armor for the contest, had to bite the dust in disgrace. Their silence confesses their utter discomfort. They are compelled to decline His challenge. They are driven to the wall. "They could not answer." In v. 4 they *would* not answer, now they *cannot*. Such is the downward progress of all who trifle with the truth, who hold it in unrighteousness, Rom. i. 18. Those who withstand the irresistible power of the truth, will by and by find themselves incapable of knowing it and be given up to believe a lie. "Innocence triumphs over malice, sincerity over defeat; God's righteous ones tread upon serpents and scorpions."

Christ solved forever by word and deed the question of Sabbath rest. The view of the scribes was planted on the letter while it rejected the spirit of the third commandment. That command is based on God's resting on the seventh day from the work of creation. But He rested from only one form of His activity, creation. In place of this a new activity is revealed, that of preserving and governing what He had created. An absolute cessation of activity is not to be thought of. The Sabbath, too, brings work, activity. "God rested on the first Sabbath in that He beheld the works of His hands: man is to rest on the Sabbath in that he withdraws his eyes and heart from the works of his hands, and fixes them upon the Most High, on the works of God's hands."

This is not all, however. "To God our hand and heart shall be primarily directed on the Sabbath, but not exclusively. We can also turn eye and hand to what is below. The Lord of the Sabbath gives us in the Lesson two instances which admit of labor on this day. He justifies a man in restoring his child or his cattle on the Sabbath from the pit, and He Himself rescues a sufferer, who could doubtless have borne his misery a day longer without peril to his life. A work of love Jesus performs on the poor man. Works of necessity and works of charity are consequently allowed on the Sabbath. But not every work of charity, only such as are at the same time works of necessity, and conversely not every work of necessity, only such as are at the same time works of love."

Our Lord does not rest with His threefold triumph over His foes. He passes irresistibly from victory to victory till all his foes become His footstool.

7. "And he spake a parable unto those . . . bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them,"

Δὲ after ἐλεγεν shows this brief table-talk to be closely connected with the preceding. Yet there seems to be a change of subject. Before this Jesus was dealing with the deception of the Pharisees, now He reproves their pride. This Nebe denies. "The Lord who has by a simple question just put to shame the proud and self-confident scribes and Pharisees, now openly and directly castigates them on account of their pride. Nothing escapes His eyes, which are not only a flame of fire that penetrates every barrier and lights up the deepest darkness, but like the wheels with eyes all around, they move in every direction and acutely observe all things." Anger, too, sharpens eyes. He had excellent grounds to pour out his wrath upon these lawyers, who under the mask of friendship had invited Him to a meal where their real purpose was to spring a trap on Him. But it is not the wont of Jesus to return tooth for tooth, eye for eye. He never repays with the same coin. So it was not anger that made His eyes so keen, but forgiving, saving love; that love which overcomes evil with good, and melts an enemy by coals of fire upon his head. Despite their malicious conspiracy, He enters the chamber where dinner is waiting and seats Himself among the other guests as if nothing had occurred. These other guests likewise took their seats, but not with the nonchalance which marked the Lord. He noticed how they picked out seats of honor, with what unseemly decorum they scrambled for places which would elevate them above their brethren.

Ah, what vanity in the human heart! How it seeks empty honor among men! "Life is really a theater in which vanity enacts her play and celebrates her triumph." Each wants to be above the other. Each would be the first, each is so intent upon the first place that Cæsar spoke for all, when he said he would rather be first in a contemptible village, than second in Rome. And Satan, too, has the same disease.

The conventional forms of social life might seem to make it an oasis of the deepest peace, but viewed more closely it is but the field of a war of all against all. Society, it is claimed, opens its circles to afford a masked ball to vanity of vanities. The company here is not one of ordinary worldlings. Yet they were manifestly under the spell of this inveterate foolish passion, the ambition for rank and precedence. Christ's own ministers, alas! forget the law of their master: "If any would be chief among you let him be your servant."

"A parable," in the wider sense, not of an invented narrative,

but of a parabolic address, an apophthegm of moral significance, "taken from external manners, but having regard to internal principles." $\alpha\chi\iota$. 29. Ἐπέχων. Supply *ὧν*, fixing his attention on the circumstance. With what an observant look Jesus saw everything! Acts iii. 5. Some: "The parable is omitted, we have only the practical application." The propriety of Jesus' rebuke to the host and his friends on the occasion of being a guest has been questioned. Meyer: "This judgment applies an inappropriate standard to the special relation in which Jesus stood to the Pharisees, seeing that when confronting them He felt a higher destiny than the maintenance of the respect due to a host moving Him, vii. 39 ff." "The occurrence with the dropsical man had prepared a point of view widely different from that of customary politeness." Conventional politeness is not the highest form of propriety and duty, Righteousness as well as charity takes precedence of it. The world pays its compliments and keeps silence over improprieties, while the offender is present, but when he has gone they tear him to pieces. Jesus did not offend against good form in using a discreditable transaction as the occasion of some uncomplimentary remarks. He spoke in season and out of season in behalf of truth.

8, 9. "When thou art bidden . . . to a marriage feast, recline not in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden . . . and he that bade . . . say to thee, Give this man place; and then shalt thou begin with shame to take the lowest place."

Jesus does not with this apophthegm attack a particular guest, who had thrust himself into the highest seat of honor; He uses the second person, as is still customary in the east, in order to make a more effectual impression than is done with the third person. He addresses Himself to all the guests, as He had indeed noticed that not one but all scrambled for the favorite seats. Seeing all of them guilty of the same vulgar ambition, the Witness for the truth dare not be silent. The men who were so holy that they condemned the healing of the sick one on the Sabbath, show themselves so unholy the next moment that each esteems himself better than others, and appropriates to himself the choicest seat he can snatch. It was too much for the Son of Man! When should He speak if not here, where this shameless proceeding occurred before His eyes?

It has been suggested that to Jesus had been assigned a very humble seat, but certainly not humiliation like that prompted His telling rebuke. He was meek and lowly of heart, and never sought honor among men. Not for His sake, but for the sake of His host and His fellow-guests, did He deliver a reproof which they greatly needed.

γάμος, a wedding feast. Some: That required the seating of guests according to rank. There decorum is certainly yet more important. Others: By speaking of a wedding feast He avoided open discourtesy. The word γάμος doubtless retains here its specific sense, especially as v. 12 speaks distinctly of ἀριστον and δεῖπνον. If γάμος meant an ordinary meal, He would have offered the company a direct insult, and thus would have precluded the impression He proposed to make. It is not enough to tell a truth, it is important that it be told in an engaging and effective manner. A kindness is often thrust aside because of the manner in which it is offered. The words of Jesus are seasoned with tact and with tenderness. Meyer denies that Jesus had a special purpose in the selection of the term; "but the typical representation of the future establishment of the kingdom as a wedding celebration obviously suggested the expression." Matt. xxii. This would make the teaching of the parable bear on the demeanor required of those who come to the heavenly feast. But are these unbelieving Jews to grace that festal board?

The instruction is framed entirely according to the circumstances of the moment. Modesty and humility, cardinal virtues, are inculcated by means of a scene taken from life. Jesus was a model Teacher.

When bidden to a wedding feast "do not sit down in the πρωτοκλισία." There appears to be but one, and to this corresponds the singular ἐντιμότερος, one more honorable, and the ἐσχάτον τόπον, "the lowest place."

"The vain man seats himself before not merely some men, but all men." Ps. x. 4, 5. He does not consider that some worthy of greater honor and esteem may be invited. He forgets that no one stands alone, that we are bound together in manifold relations and fellowship, so that no one should regard himself as the highest. He will only thereby insure himself bitter mortification, as shown in v. 9.

The construction is notable. So far as the sense is concerned all the clauses depend on μήποτε. They give the thought which the speaker had in mind in using that term. "Do not . . . that not thereby," etc., when a more honorable one is present, the host will say to thee, "Give this man place." But grammatically only the first clause, ἐντιμότερος, κ. τ. λ. is dependent on it, as the following are independent clauses.

The motives are drawn from life. There will always be distinctions with respect to the honor to be conferred. "A Christian loves to see another honored above himself, for that accrues to the

honor of God." But the worldling offers honor to himself, he ignores the merits of others, however brilliant. They only excite his envy.

He who gives the wedding feast must also see that all passes off properly, and first of all that every guest has the place which becomes him. What advantage has the conceited man who plants himself at the top? If there be one present to whom greater honor belongs than to him, which is likely, the man of the house will dispose of him with little ceremony. He conducts the one who is to have this honor to the first place, and commands the other to surrender to him his seat. The few words show the indignation of the host. They are sharp, terse, vigorous. He does not add, friend, as in v. 10. A categorical Imperative is used and not a gentle Optative. "Out of this, step down, sir." The choice of leaving the first seat is not submitted to his pleasure. He is bluntly ordered out of it, that a more honorable gentleman may occupy the place of honor.

The words "invited thee and him" are employed "as a motive for modesty" ("and him" are accordingly not repeated in v. 10). Both of you are here only by invitation, and it devolves on him who invited you both to distribute the guests at the table.

"And then shalt thou begin with shame." That is a hard descent to make after one has possessed himself of the chief seat. The dishonored guest is likely to move slowly, to linger. He cannot believe his ears that such a demand should be made of him, and that before the eyes of all. "Begin" emphasizes the shame of the initial movement of taking the last place in which he must now acquiesce after his previously assumed "chief seat."

Chagrined, crest-fallen, deeply mortified, he steals to his proper place, but that is now occupied. By assuming what did not belong to him, he loses what was properly his own. All the seats between the highest and lowest are occupied, only the lowest one remains to him. The shame of it arises from the fact that he had intruded himself into a position that was above him. The shame here is contrasted with the "glory," worship, in v. 10. Thus the man is sent not only to a lower but to the lowest place of all. "He who is once bidden to give place is put away to a great distance."

10. "But when thou art bidden . . . sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh . . . Friend, go up higher: then . . . glory in the presence of all." . . .

To the prohibition Jesus kindly adds a command, knowing how hard it is for the natural man to humble himself. Having been

bidden, take the lowest place, and do so with alacrity and from the heart. "The lowest place," the seat to which he was remanded who had seized the first one, is the seat one should voluntarily choose, so that if he is to have honor it may be bestowed by another, the host, and not self-conferred. The man worthy of honor need have no fear of not being recognized or appreciated. His modesty is itself a halo of glory. It is wise, too, to take the lowest place, for if you seat yourself above only one, you may possibly be forced to give way to him. The way up begins below. Humility is the path to honor. Do not fear of wronging yourself by sitting from choice in a humble place.

"Go up higher," to others, who like himself are honorable guests, Prov. xxv. 7. Very characteristic. He tells his modest friend not only to go up, but adds another term *ἑνὸς*, "higher." He who has gone blithely and joyfully to the feast, and contents himself there with the lowest place, receives a friendly address that urges him to come up, nearer the host, if not in every case to the highest seat of all, at least a promotion, and the honor herewith connected is doubled by the fact that it is conferred in the presence of all his fellow-guests. This is in sharp contrast to the disgrace which falls upon him who had pushed himself into the first seat, and was then ordered out of it and sent down to the bottom. "The discourse is masterful in this that without the appearance of depth and force, it yet places in a clear light the secret sentiment back of the fault which it reproves." "It sounds like a maxim of wordly prudence, but the deeper sense is apparent and through this veil could penetrate more deeply."

Anent the objections offered to the application of this parable to the great Messianic feast, the supper of the heavenly kingdom, Nebe says: "The Jews were the first invited guests to the marriage supper; from the remotest times they sat there as children of the kingdom, but their innate spiritual pride makes them the last."

11. "For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

A general law of retribution, an axiom often repeated, and that with the most impressive force, xviii. 14; Matt. xxiii. 12. Meyer: "With an intentional application to the Messianic retribution." "Every one," emphatic. This is the principle according to which the parable proceeded, a principle maintained in social as well as in spiritual life. All men, as well as God, are set against the proud. Luther: "No one can hate the humble, and no one can endure the proud." He explains our aversion to the proud as inspired by

God, and as the teaching of His Word, that He will see to it that the proud and haughty shall be humbled. He shows what place the Jews held, the foremost on earth, sitting at the head of God's table, possessing God's Word, and were His chosen nation; now they sit below, dispossessed of all rule, for God cannot endure the proud. He overthrew the proud from the beginning, and, as shown in the case of Lucifer, could not endure pride in heaven. On the other hand, the humble one wins the heart of God and man, so that God with all His angels, and afterwards the people regard him as a precious jewel. Then fortune and prosperity follow as in the case of Saul, 1 Sam. ix. 21, and David. The humble has such a hold on God that God cannot withhold from him His grace and mercy, and all that He has. Ps. cxiii. 5-8. God will have men, children, all to be humble. He Himself will lift them up.

The ancients had so little conception of the virtue of humility that classic Greek has no proper word for it. Holy Scripture everywhere strongly commends it. Isa. lvii. 15; 1 Sam. ii. 3 ff.; Luke i. 52 ff.; Matt. xi. 25; 2 Cor. vii. 6; 1 Peter v. 5; Jas. iv. 6, 10. Augustine calls pride the original sin, the chief sin, the sin in sin.

The subject of the Pericope is humility. But the rigid observance of the Lord's day may also be treated.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

DO NOT EXALT YOURSELF.

1. Pride judges itself.
2. It will be judged of the Lord.

HUMILITY'S GAIN.

1. It obtains the victory over all malice.
2. It obtains the grace of God.

JESUS, THE EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY.

1. He does not hold Himself above going to those who are way-laying Him and from defending himself against them.
2. He does not deem them too wicked to reprove them and to invite them to the wedding.

THE LOVELINESS OF HUMILITY:

1. How patient.
2. How meek.
3. How tender.
4. How careful.

THE LORD PUTS ALL PRIDE TO SHAME:

1. The conceit of wisdom.
2. The pride of virtue.

THE OBJECT OF THE LORD'S DAY:

1. Refreshment of the body.
2. Primarily the salvation of the soul.

THE RIGHT OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

1. The Lord must be in the house.
2. All must keep silent before Him.
3. The invitation to the marriage must be given.
4. Those invited must humble themselves.

AGAINST WHAT MUST WE GUARD ON SUNDAY?

1. Against gluttony and drunkenness.
2. Against the propensity to be masters over the Lord.
3. Against the presumption that we have the first seat at the wedding.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt xxii. 34-46.

This Pericope contains the greatest command and the greatest article of faith, the sum of the law and of the gospel. What unites the two? If the chief emphasis is laid on the first theme, the connection may be this: No wonder that you do not know the first commandment, since you do not know the essence of the entire Scriptures. If on the second, the connection may be this: The law points beyond itself, it is a *paidagogus* to Christ. Nebe: "It is simplest to coördinate the two parts, each conditions the other. There is no life in the faith of the Son of God without this life in love, and conversely there is no life in love without this life in faith." A glorious conclusion to a circle of Trinity Lessons is offered by this Gospel, which presents the Christian life in its two chief elements, faith and love.

The first part has a parallel in Mk. xii. 28 ff., the second in Mk. xii. 35 ff. and Luke xx 41 ff.

34. "But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together."

This passage is taken from the last decisive discourses of Jesus at Jerusalem. Nebe: "One party after the other had entered the lists against Him, in order to show that the breach was irreparable and that things had proceeded to extremities. The Pharisees having made common cause with the Herodians had been routed by a single question. After them the Sadducees fell upon Him with the issue of the resurrection, but Jesus soon stopped their mouths." Now the Pharisees renew the attack. They came together, *i. e.*, to the same place, Acts i. 15, for the purpose of concocting measures for a final attack. Still smarting over their defeat about the "penny," they can perhaps make amends for that. They counsel with each other and lay plans to manage their case better. But the motive especially assigned for their coming was the news that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees.

The Sadducees derived their origin, according to tradition, from Zadok, a disciple of Antigonus of Socho, who lived in the second

half of the third century B. C. They were the rivals and the antipodes of the Pharisees. "They rejected the authority of oral tradition and of all the teachings derived by the Scribes from the law, and recognized only the written law according to its verbal sense; but through their conflicts with the Pharisees they were driven in their opposition to the denial of the resurrection, of the doctrine of rewards and punishments after death, and of the existence of angels and spirits." The accounts of the Talmud concerning them are unreliable. Josephus treats them more mildly.

As there burned an ancient bitterness between Sadducees and Pharisees, it appears strange that the discomfiture of the former, learned probably through spies, should determine the latter to return once more to the attack on Jesus, hardly to avenge the rout of their enemies. Some: They renewed the assault in order that they might gain a triumph over Him who had triumphed over the Sadducees, and thus accentuate their superiority to the Sadducees. They had doubtless various incentives. Even had the defeat of the Sadducees not occurred, they would hardly have allowed Jesus to depart from the temple unchallenged, "but that rout impelled them to execute their purpose as quickly as possible." Meyer: "To extort an answer that might be used against Him."

Apart from all consideration relative to the Sadducees, it was clear that they must strike, if all was not to be lost. His triumphal entry produced a mighty excitement even within the gates of Jerusalem and the temple itself, which had not subsided. It needs but a spark, and a conflagration will be kindled which the rulers of the people will be unable to extinguish. The people had viewed with astonishment the scenes which in rapid succession crowded one upon another. What shall all this come to? The Pharisees now once more come forward, in the hope of forestalling what seemed so imminent.

35, 36. "And one of them, a lawyer, asked him . . . tempting him, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

They had united on a plan. A political and a dogmatic question Jesus had answered to the amazement of all. They mean now to catch him with an ethical problem. Excusing themselves from another encounter, they select a suitable instrument for carrying out the plot. They have had enough on that score; they now put forward a man of exceptional equipment, a νομικός, a master in the law, a Doctor of Laws, called by Mark in the parallel, γραμματεὺς. There is no essential difference between the two words; the former is more specific and more strictly Greek. "The more innocent he was of their malicious design the better he could serve their purpose."

A harmonistic difficulty confronts us here. Each of the synop-
tists gives a case of Jesus' judgment regarding the first command-
ment. In the Gospel of the Good Samaritan we concluded that
that case was unique, peculiar to Luke. Why should not this
question have arisen often in the interviews with Jesus, as it was
doubtless a current problem among Jewish interpreters?

In the case recorded by Matthew and Mark, there are various
divergencies, both respecting the character and aim of the inquirer
and respecting the extent of the conversation. In Mark He comes
pleased with the Lord's answer to the Sadducees, in Matthew He
comes *πειράζων*: there he comes at his own instance, here in the
name of others; there he acquiesces in the answer of Jesus and re-
ceives the attestation that he was not far from the kingdom, Mat-
thew reports nothing of this. Still the FF. and most moderns ac-
cept the two accounts as identical, as presenting different versions
of the same occurrence.

An argument for this is found in the fact that both place this
history between the encounter with the Pharisees and the discus-
sion regarding the Son of David. Nebe offers the following: Mark
presents the whole scene merely as a personal matter, Matthew as
a public one. The "lawyer" who puts the question feels inwardly
constrained to ask concerning the first command, from a conscious
secret drawing toward the kingdom and righteousness of God; his
party avail themselves of his holy innocence and prompt him to
put the question with a view to ensnaring Jesus. He does not
know that he is being used as the instrument of their malicious
designs, he asks in good faith, "Teacher, which is the great com-
mandment," while those who had disputed with him gather around
the speakers.

What is the import of the question? Luther: "Which is the
foremost commandment?" Meyer: "What kind of a command-
ment (qualitative, xix. 18) is great in the law? What must be
the nature of a commandment in order to constitute it great?"
According to this "in the law" is superfluous, and the answer of
Jesus and the consequent astonishment of the people are unac-
countable, Mk. xii. 34. Jesus' reply was no answer at all to such
a question. He steered clear of the salient point. Bleek: "Which
is pre-eminently a great commandment, one which must be con-
sidered great above the others?"—a sense not essentially different
from the superlative. Mark's form of the question confirms this;
"Which is the first command of all?" The "lawyer" inquires con-
cerning the contents, the *formula* of the command to which Jesus
gives the preference. Some are at a loss to see wherein such a

question involved a temptation, as it was one on which the rabbins were not agreed. Nebe: "The rabbins counted altogether 613 commands in the law of Moses, one party holding the law of sacrifices to be the chief thing, another the command concerning circumcision, the third the law of the Sabbath. That in the time of Jesus the views of the lawyers differed in their estimate of the importance of individual commands, is clear enough from the fact that the duties prescribed by the command to honor father and mother were placed in the rear, when they conflicted with the duties of the altar and sacrifice." Meyer: "The ensnaring character of the question proceeded from the conflict of the rabbins over the important and unimportant commands. Had Jesus specified any particular *πρώτης* of a great commandment, His reply would have been made use of in accordance with the casuistical hair-splitting of schools, for the purpose of assailing or defaming Him."

37, 38. "And he said . . . Thou shalt love **the** Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . soul . . . mind. This is the great and first commandment."

He is at no loss for an answer. The sum of all commandments is evident from the law itself. The words in Matthew conform more closely to the original passage, Deut. vi. 5; cf. v. 10. They are frequently repeated in the same book of which it is the sum, xxx. 19, 20. Mark and Luke say *ἀγαπᾶν ἐξ*. Matthew has *ἐν*. Then the two former add a fourth factor, Matthew gives but three. He departs from the original LXX. in saying "with the mind" instead of "with all thy might," and then along with the original and the other two evangelists He gives *καρδία* "heart," instead of *διάνοια*, "mind."

Nebe: "According to Mark and Luke and the LXX. the love of man to God manifesting itself in works must proceed from the innermost being of man. Matthew with the Hebrew text sees love diffused over the whole man, wholly permeating, animating, filling him."

This command of love to God is not given in the categorical Imperative, but in the Future tense. Nebe: "It is as if love was already present in the heart and needed only to have the flood-gates opened that it might flow out. The command was given to the Jews, and Jesus is here speaking to those who are in the covenant of promise."

He whom they are thus to love is no unknown God, but *κύριος*, Jehovah, thy God, whose altar stood in the centre of their land and of their history. The command to love Him supremely is the Alpha and the Omega, the sum of the whole law. Behold the

contrast between Grecian and Christian Ethics! Plato, the loftiest Greek philosopher, gives as the fundamental principle of ethics, likeness to the deity as to power. Aristotle repudiates this and pronounces it absurd for any one to say that he loves God. But revealed religion does not hesitate to pronounce this absurdity the highest wisdom; this it is which constitutes the first and chief commandment.

Bengel: "All ought to be animated and governed by the love of God." He adds on the word "first:" "This commandment is not only the greatest in necessity, extent, and duration, but it is also the first in nature, order, time and evidence."

39. "And a second like . . . is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,"

Giving the command to love God as absolutely the greatest and first in the law, the Lord who was asked only about "the first," adds a second, which is "like unto it," of the same nature and character, possessing the same quality of greatness, and therefore no less radical and fundamental. The inquirer had supposed that the sum of the whole law might be reduced to one commandment, but Christ gives two as making up the sum of the two tables. It may be answered that the question was not as to the greatest in general, but the greatest in the law, *i. e.*, in the law of Moses. That was written upon two tables, hence it is not to be viewed as passing into one command. The "ten words" are coördinate and parallel. Still the text does not speak of a bipartition of the law. The second command is "like" the first, namely, this command which in the Decalogue appears as the second fundamental commandment, "coincides with the first one, is identical with it."

So Luther understood the relation of all the commandments to the first one. In his masterful and unrivaled explanations of the Decalogue he gives as the basis of each command "we should fear and love God, and not," etc. The truth of this identity becomes apparent when we get the full import of the second commandment. Self-love is admitted here, not required. The ego is designated as an object of ethical love yet the Lord does not really say, Love thy neighbor as thou lovest thyself. Meyer: "As thou shouldst love thyself." Self-love is justified on the basis of the Scriptures, Rom. xiii. 9, Gal. v. 14; Jas. ii. 8.

Still the object of our human love is not to be sought in ourselves, but in our fellowmen. We are to regard him as our self, or fellowself, or other self, "whereby he indeed ceases to be a distant foreign one and becomes a neighbor." Love does away with the distinction between I and thou.

That this so-called second command must be like the first, follows from the reflection that there is demanded a love to God from the whole heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind. J. Müller: "A love which lays claim to the entire inner life, can no longer in other ethical demands have the outward relation of coördination, or subordination, but only the inner relation of inclusion and permeation." "That which Christ's designation of the first commandment—the great or the absolutely great one, and the first one—already expresses clearly enough *i. e.*, that we have to seek the proper unity of the whole in Him, is yet more apparent when we ask why man in distinction from all other creatures known to us, is to be the object of a love, which never admits of using him as a mere instrument for one's own purpose, but everywhere recognizes him and seeks to advance him as an end in himself." Let us remember, too, that man alone, of all creatures, bears the image of God. In His spiritual nature lies this image "to which the love of the original must necessarily pass over." "Consequently the content of that second fundamental law has that of the first for its principle, and the outward relation of super- or sub-ordination of both is lifted to true unity. God is not only in general the subject of human love, but the absolute, all-embracing, subject of this love, so that all other love becomes holy and imperishable only by being absorbed into the love of God." Thus the love to God is the root of all other love, the impelling force of all ethical life.

"The identity of both commandments is not in the last instance to be ascribed to the fact that it is one Law-giver from which both proceed, but to the fact that the contents of both coincide, that the second is germinally contained in the first." "The love of our neighbor resembles the love of God more than all the other duties." Love is the basis and the goal of all ethical action, and the Holy Scriptures often give the one commandment because the two are in essence one. 1 John iv. 16, 20, 21; Matt. xxv. 40, 45.

Meyer: "He specifies those two commandments themselves, in which all the others are essentially included, as though He had said: 'Supreme love to God and sincerest love to our neighbor constitute the *πρόβλημα* about which thou inquierest.' This love must form the principle, spirit, life of all that we do."

40. "On these . . . hangeth the whole law, and the prophets."

What an emphasis this lays upon the two commandments which correspond so closely that they are essentially one. "The whole law and the prophets" is a most important addition. This fundamental requirement of the law does not become obsolete or abol-

ished. It is the soul of the whole Old Testament. All law and all prophecy is suspended on this fundamental principle embraced in the two commandments. Love is the fulfilling of the law and of the prophets. "These"—with emphasis. "Hangeth." The figure is taken from a door swinging on its hinge. Remove the hinge and all falls to the ground. In these two, united as one, are found the basis, the support, the essential condition of the moral quality of all the other commandments. Rom. xiii. 8 f.; Gal. v. 14. "He who takes away either of these commandments takes away the law." "In these two, which in essence are one commandment, the sum of all commandments for time and eternity is included."

"The prophets." Meyer limits the thought to the preceptive element in them. Cf. v. 17. Jesus, as was His wont, includes more in His reply than was contemplated by the question.

41, 42. "Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked . . . What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he? They say . . . *the son of David.*"

A new transaction begins, the last one. After this conference Jesus directed no further words to the Pharisees and scribes. Standing before the final scene we may expect no indifferent question to be put, but the question of questions, the question on which turns the destiny of the individual soul, the fate of the nations, yea the history of the whole world.

The Pharisees, though they had delegated an expert to ply Jesus with a commandment, were themselves present in considerable force. Before they succeed in getting away after their discomfiture, Jesus turns the tables and challenges them with a question, "What think ye of Christ?" According to some, Jesus, provoked by their course toward Him, presents the question to banter or irritate them. Others: "He would instruct them in the one thing they needed." The former is not in accord with the majestic person of Jesus, nor with the solemnity of the hour. Jesus is not a disputant fond of debate. He is the Son of Man who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Meyer: "He puts the question for the purpose of convincing them of their own theological helplessness, and with the view of thereby escaping any further molestation on their part."

For this purpose he selects the chief subject of prophecy, the Messiah, and especially His relations to David as portrayed by the royal psalmist himself in that most familiar passage, Ps. cx. Nebe imagines a crowd of Pharisees around the Lord, rendering it unlikely that a word of His reached the ears of the multitude, and holds also that no further proof was needed to the Pharisees of their being smitten with blindness. If the previous proceeding

did not convince them of it nothing else would. He, therefore, prefers the view that Jesus proposed to set forth before the Pharisees a positive doctrine. That doctrine according to Bengel is "that the gospel is as much to be sought for in the Scriptures as the law."

To this Nebe objects that said doctrine would have been taught very obscurely and that the whole procedure is opposed to this view. Some of the FF. to indicate how it was that he saw through their designs and always escaped their snares. Over against a number of modern theories we accept that of the Reformers, that Jesus deduces from this psalm not His omniscience, not any one divine perfection of His person, but His divine nature, His divine Sonship. "Christ means to present Himself in His entire glory, in His entire being, to those who wished to know nothing of the Son of God in connection with the Messiah, but regarded Him only as the Son of man, in order that this Christ, stripped of the form of His divine glory, might serve their carnal desires, their human designs." "Jesus thus gave them an opportunity of acknowledging Him as the Messiah."

Luther explains the connection of the two parts of the Pericope thus: "You know well enough that you love God, but you will certainly never love Him with all your heart, etc., unless you have a right knowledge of Christ and recognize who He is." Again: "When the law says, love God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself or thou wilt be damned, I say, I cannot. Then Christ says, come here accept me, cling to me through faith, and you will be free from the law. Christ has by His death procured for us the Holy Ghost, who keeps the law in us, not we. For the Spirit whom God for the sake of His Son sends into our hearts makes out of us a new creature, who with love and delight will do from the heart everything which the law commands, and which was before impossible."

The thought which serves as a bridge uniting the two parts is nowhere given, but the Pharisees were the last to confess their own moral inability to obey the law. Nebe would find another connection from historical considerations. He connects this question with that which Jesus puts to His disciples in Matt. xvi. 13 ff.: Whom do men say, whom do ye say, that I am? "There the question indicated that a decisive point had been reached in the life of the Son of God on earth; His revelation as the prophet . . . had reached its close, and with this question He would fix the results of His activity hitherto. From that time He is preparing Himself for His passion; the prophet recedes more and more,

and the High-Priest comes to the front." Now we have reached another milestone in the life of the Messiah. His revelation before the people and their rulers is approaching its close. He would now sum up the conclusion of His work among them with the question "what seems to you, what is your opinion, concerning the Christ?" "By this question He gives them to understand that the one which they propounded must not be viewed as the question on which turn heaven and earth; the law and the prophets have yet another problem, which incomparably transcends that: the problem of the Christ of God. Let them offer Him and themselves an answer to this question, for no human being can pass by the Son of man, since every man's eternal destiny turns upon Christ. But this question about Christ has to do not with His doctrine, not with His work, but ultimately with His person. Christ, the Person, is the embodied salvation, the living centre of our faith, our love, our hope."

The doctrine of Christ's person takes precedence of the doctrine of Christ. "Christ, the living personal Christ, is the all-animating centre." And the person of Christ is not to be understood without the question "Whose Son is He?" He can only be the Christ if He is the Son of God; a Christ who is not Son of God, is a master in Israel, a *preceptor mundi*, but not the Saviour of men. Jesus had shown Himself to the people as Son of God. Had the Pharisees been willing to accord Him this glory they would have confessed what Peter had confessed; this they would not. Therefore Jesus convinces them that the Scriptures predicate the Messiah as the Son of God. As Matthew often has the formula: "this happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled," so we have a like seal here. He who has understandingly read his Gospel recognizes in Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God; and this proceeding seals our experience and our knowledge that Jesus is truly the Son of God. The Lord stands in the temple and reveals Himself at last in these sacred precincts as the Son of God; as the Son of God attested by the Scriptures, He Himself now enters upon His sufferings and death. The Lord who is to come suddenly into His temple manifests Himself now quite unexpectedly, suddenly, as the Lord in the temple.

Their prompt answer is "the son of David." This is Scriptural and so far as it goes correct, but as they purposely avoid going farther the answer is not correct, it is one-sided, faulty, a half-truth, and therefore an error. They judge Christ to be but the son of David, they recognize in Him merely a man, though one never so extraordinary.

43-45. "He saith . . . How then doth David . . . call him Lord, saying, the Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till . . . underneath thy feet? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?"

Jesus would correct or extend this one-sided narrow view of the Pharisees; pointing them to Ps. cx., in order to open their eyes to the fact that the Messiah is not only David's son but David's Lord as well, and therefore Son of the living God. This psalm is one of the most important, if not the most important, in the whole psalter. Luther calls it the right sublime chief psalm of our dear Lord Jesus Christ. It doubtless holds among all psalms of its kind the first place in Christian interpretation, especially in view of the import of its contents, the brevity and double sense of the language, and its frequent application in the New Testament to the Messianic idea.

Meyer admits that Jesus starts with "the universal assumption in His day that David was the author of Psalm cx.," but he holds that "it was only composed in the time of this monarch, and addressed to him." Some refer the psalm to the Maccabæan period. But the Maccabæans were priests by birth and then by their victories became princes and kings; here conversely, v. 4, the king by virtue of the oath of God is made priest. We know, too, that this psalm was much quoted in the Old Testament as a basal passage. Dan vii. 13 f.; Zech. vi. 12. DeWette refers it to Uzziah, but the conflict at the time between royalty and priesthood would have deterred a poet, who wished his hymn to be sung in the sanctuary, from ascribing priestly functions to a king. There is nothing in the psalm which forbids its assignment to the time of David. Nor is there anything in it which justifies the view that it is a glorification of David. See Delitzsch on Heb. i. 13.

Nebe joins the Reformers and some great modern expositors in recognizing the Davidic authorship and holds the psalm to be a direct, conscious, intentional prophecy of David regarding Him who mysteriously was to be both his Son and his Lord. Its Messianic interpretation in the times of our Lord was universal. No Old Testament passage is more frequently quoted in the New Testament. It was only after Christ, that the Rabbins attempted by every expedient to apply this glorious psalm to other persons, *e. g.*, Abraham, the hymn being composed according to some by his steward Eliezer; according to others, by Melchisedec. The Targums recognize in the lauded king, David; others, Hezekiah. Still the Messianic interpretation continued for a long time in the synagogue.

"Jesus now proceeds to show the Pharisees from this confessedly Davidic and Messianic psalm, that they made a grievous

error in viewing the Messiah as merely a son of David, and therefore a mere man." "In the spirit call Him Lord." Meyer: "meaning, perhaps that He did not do so on His own authority, but *impulsu Spiritus Sancti*. 2 Peter i. 21; Luke ii. 27; 1 Cor. xii. 3; Rom. viii. 15; ix. 2. David was regarded as a prophet, Acts ii. 30; i. 16. "Him," the Messiah; "for the personage in the psalm is a prophetic type of the Messiah."

"The Lord said." The whole of this verse, excepting perhaps one word, agrees verbatim with the LXX. "My Lord." He was David's Lord before Jehovah said to Him, 'sit thou on my right hand.' David is inspired of God; he hears the Lord of heaven and earth address another person, in whom he joyfully recognizes his Lord, the Lord in whom he hopes, *i. e.*, Messiah, saying, commanding, "Sit thou on my right." Not upon His war chariot, but beside His throne, He is to seat Himself. Not that honor may accrue to Him, is the idea, but as was shown in the Ascension Gospel, He is to share in the divine government. In Dan. vii. 13, "the Son of man comes with the clouds of heaven. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him, etc.," a passage which Jesus, Matt. xxvi. 64, connects immediately with this one, whose essential contents He presents in Matt. xxviii. 18, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Here, too, the Son of Man rules upon earth from heaven. "That the throne of God on whose right sits the Messiah can be only the heavenly throne, is everywhere presupposed in the New Testament." Acts ii. 34; Eph. i. 20-22; Heb. i. 13, 14. In regard to the right hand as seat and symbol of power, cf. Exod. xv. 6.

There the Messiah is to be seated "till I put thine enemies underneath, etc." 1 Cor. xv. 25. "To put under the feet," to subject, Ps. xviii. 39 f.; xlv. 6; xlvii. 4. To fall under the feet, to cringe under one, etc., is a natural figure in all languages; a stronger poetic coloring is given in Psalm 110, to make one a foot-stool, referring to a symbolic rite, that of placing the feet on the necks of the conquered. Josh. x. 24; Ps. xlvii. 4. Whether Matthew transfers the figure is not material. He has the idea. "For if the Almighty puts the enemies of the Messiah under Him He can only put them underneath His feet, for with these alone does He touch the ground." Thy enemies lie prostrate, and amongst them the Pharisees. They are Christ's foot-stool, by right of conquest. They serve a purpose.

This represents the climax of Messiah's power. His enemies cannot escape from Him by flight, they are prostrate and serve as His footstool that He may celebrate His triumph. What infinite comfort here for Christ's people, for Christ's enemies are also theirs. "Till" does not deny the eternity of the session, "but it is denied that the assault of the enemies will interfere with it." It does not exclude but include the period beyond, Hos. x. 12; Ps. cxii. 8; Gen. xlix. 10, yet so at all events that the final overthrow of the enemies indicates a turning point which introduces something else, Acts iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 28. "Till" in its application to the world-dominion of Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 24-48, "is in strict logic viewed as the goal, and, according to the apostle's aim, the finiteness of this dominion for the diffusion of His kingdom is shown; it is not, however, to be pressed here, but to be taken ideally of an endless goal," as often, Ps. lxxi. 17 f.; Gen. 28. 15; 1 Tim. iv. 13, "and similarly in all languages." The warlike reign for conquering the enemies has an end, the peaceful reign has none. The supermundane glory of the Lord, of which Jesus speaks here, shall become also intramundane; He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain shall take possession of the whole world.

If then David whose son He is, according to your express confession, still calls Him Lord, how is He his son? Styling Him Lord must seem incompatible with His sonship. With this salient point Jesus reaches the conclusion. That was a point for them to study with the utmost earnestness. Luther: "It is contrary to nature for a father to call his son, Lord, as if he made himself subject to him and served him. Now David, in accordance with the divine glorious promise that he stood in so great a covenant with God, was the greatest man on earth, and this great man and king falls down, humbles himself and confesses that his son Jesus Christ is his Lord. Now if Christ is David's Lord it follows that He is a greater Lord than the highest and greatest king upon earth, since there can be no higher nor greater king in this world than David was. And forsooth David calls Christ such a Lord, to whom God says, Sit thou on my right hand, *i. e.*, be my equal, be acknowledged and worshipped as proper and true God." "It is considerably more evident of Christ, that He is the Lord, than that He is the Son of David."

Nebe holds that the nerve of this conclusion is cut if the Davidic authorship is denied. He says "For not the fact that another singer, captivated by the glory of the Messiah, exalts him over David, can convincingly prove that the Messiah is more than David's Son; the conclusion only in this way becomes fixed and

for all deniers of the divinity of Christ annihilating, that David himself pays obedience to his son as his Lord." Again: "If Christ, as He on the basis of this passage directed His attack against the Pharisees, either shared the erroneous popular view of David's authorship, or if He simply accommodated Himself to the popular belief in order to argue *ex concessis*, the whole demonstration hangs in the air, and has no further value than that we be amused at the lack of understanding of God's Son, who was unable to distinguish between genuine and false, or that we be impatient with the King of truth, who in order to defeat His enemies, employed contrary to His own better knowledge such miserable and disreputable weapons." Thus is confirmed the result previously gained: David truly spake thus in spirit, in the Holy Spirit, who opened his ear that he might perceive the mystery and the saying of God.

46. "And no one was able to answer him . . . neither durst . . . ask him any more questions."

Heretofore the Pharisees were always ready with counter-questions, but now by this citation from David they are smitten into silence. This was too much for even their ingenuity. They cannot get over it, and so admit by their silence the truth of Jesus' position, that the Messiah is more than a Son of man, more than a Son of David. And the victory of the truth is now so complete and decisive, that the enemies never recover from their overthrow. No one ventures again to contradict Him, not even to put a question to Him with the object of testing Him. "But how great is the power of sin! No one brings himself to bow his knee before the Lord. Instead of coming forward penitent, they turn back thirsting for revenge, chagrined, hardened, in order that they might seize Him with force whom they could not catch with cunning." "A new scene, as it were, opens from this point."

The homiletical treatment should include both parts of the Pericope under a higher unity.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE AIM OF THE CHRISTIAN.

1. The aim of his life, the love of God with all the heart.
2. The aim of his faith, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of David.

THE GREAT QUESTION.

1. Ours to the Lord: What is the greatest commandment?
2. The Lord's to us: What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?

THE SUM OF THE WHOLE SCRIPTURE:

1. The commandment of love.
2. The faith in the Son of God.

THE UNITY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

1. The law of the Old is sealed by the New.
2. The gospel which is preached by the New, is predicted by the Old.

OR,

1. The Old is unveiled in the New.
2. The New is concealed in the Old.

THE OLD TESTAMENT, THE SUM OF THE SCRIPTURES. IT REVEALS

1. The greatest commandment.
2. The chief article of faith.

WOULDST THOU BE SAVED?

1. Behold thyself in the mirror of the law.
2. Acknowledge in Christ the Son of the living God.

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT POINTS

1. Far beyond the strength of man.
2. To the Son of God.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt. ix. 1-8.

THE preceding Gospels have brought to our view the Christian life in its manifold aspects. The remaining Trinity Sundays fix our attention on the last things, the completion of the kingdom, "the eschatological close which crowns the system." The present Lesson shows us Christ as "the Savior who awakens the deceased spiritual life to a new divine life, and while He vouchsafes a new vital spiritual energy, He restores also by the power of His word the deceased bodily life to the palsied limbs." It reveals Jesus Christ as the Savior of the body as well as of the soul, and thus affords a glance into the whole of eschatology.

The parallels in Mk. ii. 1 ff. and Luke v. 17 ff. present no difficulties. This cure follows, with all three, the miracle among the Gergesenes. Matthew's account is the most succinct, hence it is well to draw on the other evangelists.

1. "And he entered into a boat, and crossed over . . . into his own city."

Jesus adopts for Himself the course which He enjoined upon His Apostles, x. 14. The Gergesenes begged Him to depart from their coasts, and He accordingly takes leave of them. He forces His presence and favor on no one. "He knows, too, that if some hate Him, others are with yearning hearts waiting for the hour of His appearance."

"His own city." Augustine *et al.*: Nazareth, giving to *πῶλις* the sense of country. But Matt. iv. 13 informs us that Jesus had changed His residence to the shore of Lake Gennesaret, and Mk. ii. 1 says explicitly that "He came to Capernaum." Chrysostom: "Bethlehem brought Him, Nazareth reared Him, Capernaum had Him dwelling continuously."

2. "And behold . . . a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said . . . Son . . . thy sins are forgiven."

Matthew, intent on recording a number of miracles in chaps. viii. and ix., hastens over details, which Mark and Luke supply.

Jesus had entered a house, doubtless His own, where multitudes crowd around Him. From a roomy chamber on the ground floor

He proclaimed to them the Word, and power went forth from Him to heal. In addition to the souls that longed after His Word and His works, others also had gathered, Luke v. 17, Pharisees and scribes from Galilee, Judæa and Jerusalem. These were sitting there and watching. Amid other miraculous healings (cf. Luke) there occurred one in the highest degree noteworthy. The circumstances by which it is introduced are unique: "Behold, they were carrying, etc." *Ἰδοὺ* implies that such a bringing of the paralytic was something quite extraordinary. The house in which Jesus sits is as if besieged, all the approaches are closed. The paralytic who had lost the use of his limbs could not get near, the friends who carried him on his couch could neither by entreaty nor by force open a passage to Jesus, but "where love burns in the heart we bear and endure anything for the sake of our neighbor, until we bring him to Jesus." True love to one's neighbor, springing alone from faith in Christ, cannot rest until the loved one is brought to Christ. And no better service of friendship can be rendered to any one than to lead him by the hand to Jesus, to bear him in the arms of prayer to the Son of God.

It was no easy task to bring the helpless man to Jesus. It seemed almost impossible. "But love has keen eyes and shrinks from no effort. And the dear Lord who draws us to His Son, has already prepared the way on which despite all hindrances we may reach the goal." By the usual way it is impossible to come to Him who helps in every need. But the construction of houses in the east admits of a possible coming to Him. The flat roofs enable a man to pass readily from one house to another.

The direction given by Jesus, xxiv. 17, to escape from the enemy and save life instead of descending from the roof into one's own house already in possession of the foe, to flee from house-top to house-top until the street can be reached, is here reversed. The four bearers in order to reach Jesus with their patient, mount somewhere the flat roof of a house,—some have thought they ascended a stairway in the court of Jesus' house,—and then they carry their burden from roof to roof until they reach the one beneath which Jesus was sitting and teaching. The theory that Jesus was sitting on a balcony or in an upper chamber, is incompatible with the fact that the Pharisees sat without, hearing and seeing everything.

A door and stairway led from the house to the roof, but the door is too narrow and the stairway too steep and hazardous. The bearers after all seem baffled, though they have reached the roof of the very house. The bed on which the paralytic lay cannot be

let down in the ordinary way, and the paralytic is too helpless to be taken from the bed and dragged down the steps. The only way to bring him into Jesus' presence is to tear up the tiles composing the roof, and to lower the couch by means of ropes, as a coffin is lowered into the grave. Thus the bed with the paralytic is suspended right before the eyes of Jesus.

"Their faith." "Their" is limited by some to the bearers. Others stagger at this. In view of the faith of others, in view of their prayer or righteousness, God does indeed grant to the wicked His favor, spares them from judgment and bestows upon them earthly gifts, *e. g.* Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah. The servant of the centurion was healed by a word for the sake of his master. But we are not justified in holding that on account of the faith of others God will bestow spiritual gifts, and especially, as in this case, forgiveness of sins. According to the analogy of Holy Scripture, personal faith is the *conditio sine qua non* for the reception of forgiveness.

The paralytic's own faith is not specifically mentioned, but, Nebe holds, becomes self-evident on more careful consideration. In view of the lingering character of paralysis and the deadening effect of a lingering disease on the love and sympathy of neighbors, we cannot assume that these neighbors undertook at their own instance to bear the paralytic to Jesus. He in all probability asked this service of love at their hands. Lange: "It is *a priori* not probable that the paralytic involuntarily had them proceed thus. His courageous faith impelled them to the undertaking." He doubtless also gave his consent to the hazardous lowering of his couch through the roof. His mind was fixed upon Jesus. His heart yearned toward Him, and expected deliverance from Him. Had he been without faith he would not have consented to this procedure. Believing, he at last lies before the face of Jesus, who is busily occupied with teaching and healing.

One might expect that the arduous efforts undergone to come to Jesus would be rewarded with an instantaneous cure. But instead of promptly healing the sufferer, Jesus addresses to him the words: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins, etc." Infinitely gentle and affectionate, He calls the feeble and deformed man, "son," child, Luke xvi. 25. As a father turns toward his child, so Jesus turns here to the sick man, Matt. x. 24. The woman with the bloody-flux He accosted as "daughter," v. 22. How condescending such an address from the divine Healer! How cheering to the weary and anxious spirit!

Words of encouragement were doubtless needed. The courage

of the paralytic which had conceived and carried through the project of getting before Jesus, vanishes, now that the end of the journey is reached. His fears get the better of him. He is so overcome that he cannot open his lips now that Jesus is before his eyes. Yet it is not the nearness of this exalted majestic personage that overpowers him, nor is it likely that strong faith turned now in the decisive moment into weak faith, into doubt that after all Jesus could not relieve him of his malady. The secret of his fear is disclosed by the startling assurance "Thy sins are forgiven."

Ἀφένται. Indicative Perfect Passive, same as *ἀφίενται* which is adopted by Tischendorf. According to the *Text. rec.* the same form is used by the three evangelists, so also in v. 5, and in a similar connection Luke vii. 47; 1 John ii. 12. The idea is not Subjunctive: may your sins be forgiven, "though the form might *per se* admit of this rendering." "The Subjunctive does not answer here and still less in both of the last two citations." Scholars are not agreed whether this Perfect Passive is an Attic or a Doric form. Nebe does not accept the version of the Vulgate *remittuntur*, but renders *remissa sunt*. "The forgiveness of sins is not held out in prospect as shortly to be granted, but is announced as a completed act, as a fact which has without doubt already taken place."

To the question, how the Lord came to grant forgiveness to the paralytic before He healed his malady, some answer that it was to meet the paralytic's state of mind. He was conscious of some wickedness or of a wicked life, which was the dire cause of his malady. Jesus in John ix. 3 corrected the false notion that every instance of suffering was a punishment for a particular sin, but he never denied the connection between sin and the ills of life, so clearly taught in revelation. God's judgment on the first sin sheds light on this from the beginning, and the remotest eschatological light presents suffering and sin in an organic connection. The connection is not so vague that sufferings follow only as the results and penalties of the sin of the race. That general connection would float in the air if it had not for its basis the connection between special sins and special penalties in individuals. Luke xiii. 1 ff. shows that we are not warranted in maintaining this direct connection in every individual case, yet is it our duty to remind both ourselves and others of this connection, "in order that the fruit of repentance may not be wanting to such a sowing in tears." John v. 14; 1 Cor. xi. 30. The paralytic recognizes the relation of sin to suffering not only in general, but also in particular and especially in his own case. Some: He was conscious that he had contracted the disease by his own guilt, and he hung accordingly

between fear and hope. Nebe: "In his long illness he may have reflected that there would be no suffering in the world if there were no sin, and that no suffering could have befallen him had he not fallen into sin."

The profound religious truth of the connection between sin and suffering is perverted when made the basis of the ethical judgment of the individual man, but not when a man's sufferings bring him to the consciousness of his sinfulness, when they fix his eye upon his guilt before God. That was no doubt the case here, even though the malady was not the immediate natural consequence of the man's excesses. "The Saviour must have recognized that he regarded his sufferings as a righteous judgment of God upon his sins, and that he was deeply bowed down by the sense of his sinfulness. But it was accordant with His mercy and grace first of all to comfort the sufferer's mind and to quiet it by the assurance, that however great the sins which rested upon him, the same were remitted to him, and that in consequence also the malady from which he still was suffering dared no longer be viewed as a punishment. For, the deliverance from the malady itself, the Lord does not pronounce directly with these words, and it was not immediately connected therewith, but it only followed later." It is not strange that the man's consciousness of his sins should overpower him just at the moment. "In the presence of the Pure and Holy One, such consciousness must break in upon the soul with power."

The reason for Jesus attending first to the spiritual ailment is not only this, "that the soul is of greater value than the body, and that a powerful medicine cannot effect a cure of the bodily organism if the soul and the spirit are not quieted and strengthened, but above all this, that He came into the world not to be a physician, but the Saviour, and that his chief concern is the salvation of the soul, and not the health of the body."

Nebe pictures the paralytic outwardly calm, while his whole soul is writhing and trembling; his sins have laid hold on him, and he has but one desire, one unutterable sigh, that his sins might be forgiven. How then his heart must have leaped when Jesus said unto him, not: I announce that thy sins are forgiven, but with the majesty of God in the flesh and yet most graciously and mercifully, "Be of good cheer, child, thy sins have been forgiven."

3. "And behold . . . scribes said . . . This man blasphemeth."

These scribes understand the full import and scope of the announcement. They doubtless know that sins are forgiven on earth,

though some have claimed that forgiveness was regarded as taking place only on the last day. It was the manner in which the Lord forgave sin that staggered them.

Nathan, whose prominence as a prophet and whose divine mission no Israelite could doubt, had absolved King David, and had also assured him "The Lord also hath put away thy sin." 2 Sam. xii. 13. The priests were wont to absolve from sin, but they required an outward offering at a holy place from him who desired forgiveness. "Jesus, whom the scribes do not recognize as a prophet of God, who also, as they well knew, did not spring from the priestly tribe, announces here, and not in God's name, the forgiveness of sins; He imparts it immediately without any external means, He does it by His own authority." In the eyes of the Pharisees this is an invasion of God's prerogative. Jesus makes himself God. Hence they charge him quietly with blasphemy.

Blasphemy was reckoned by the Greeks as the summit of sin. Jesus appears to the scribes as guilty of this enormity, offering wanton insult to the Deity. "Blasphemy is committed when (1) things unworthy of God are attributed to Him; when (2) things worthy of God are denied to Him; when (3) the incommunicable attributes of God are attributed to others."

The last form is that here charged. Jesus usurps in the mind of these judges the prerogative of God, for according to Mark and Luke they said among themselves, Who can forgive sins except God only? According to their views they were quite correct. "If sin is in the last instance enmity to God, the transgression of His will, it is obvious that God alone can discharge us from the guilt of sin. The impartation of forgiveness by any one else can take place only in the name of God."

4. "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?"

Christ is not indifferent to thoughts. They are not trifles in His sight. "He draws them into the light and pronounces judgment upon them." "He reads the thoughts of His adversaries and He tells the same to their face."

Nebe denies that He proves by His omniscience His power to forgive sins. The event shows that it is in virtue of his omnipotence. The question contains a sharp rebuke. It is a sin for them to think thus in their hearts. They are evil thoughts which they entertain.

That their thoughts could be declared evil was due, some think, to their malicious and frivolous readiness to pronounce a severe

judgment. They were quick to suspect evil from the start. But we are not obliged if one claims for himself a divine prerogative, quietly to listen to it, and these scribes had not yet given expression to their judgment.

"The Pharisees and scribes had for a long time witnessed the works of the Lord, they had perceived that divine power in work and word proceeded from Him, but they would not yield to the conviction, and they sought to extinguish it by reviling Him."

5. "For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk?"

This second question makes a further disclosure of their thoughts. Nebe: "By themselves they say he may claim likeness to God; it is easy to speak like God, but it is a very different thing, an impossible thing, to act like God. The result of such presumptive language cannot be discerned by the senses. Who can testify that forgiveness of sin resulted from His word? But it would be very different if he attempted to say like God: Arise and depart; then you might be convinced in an instant whether His word amounts to anything." Chrysostom held that these thoughts of the Pharisees moved Jesus to add the bodily cure to the spiritual. But He never does anything by halves. The paralytic might have been content with the spiritual cure; he had been relieved of his heaviest cross, "but body, soul and spirit must rejoice together in the Lord."

The question of Jesus "whether is easier," is a hint of what He is about to do. His words of forgiveness they charged against Him as blasphemy. He now asks them, which expression they considered easier to utter: the word of forgiveness, or the word, arise and walk? whether both are not equally exalted, majestic, divine, to be traced back to the same foundation of the divine dignity, of equality with God? Which is easier? Is there a difference between the two words? Does not the repetition of the one require the same power as the other? Some have taught that the forgiveness of sins is the more difficult. By as much as the soul is better than the body, by so much is it a greater work to forgive sins than to heal the body. Others hold the opposite view. Bengel: "In itself either is the sign of divine authority and power; and the connection between sin and disease is in itself most close; the power which removes both is one. According to human judgment it is easier to say, Thy sins are remitted; and He who can say, Arise, which appears greater, can also say this, which appears less." To both, divine power is requisite. One is as impossible to man as the other. No man can say in his own name, Thy sins

are forgiven, nor, Arise and walk. Neither here nor in any other of Christ's miracles do we hear Jesus say: In the name of God.

All excuses are to be cut off; they shall know that when He heals He works miracles in virtue of His own name. He will therefore repeat the fiat, Arise and walk.

6. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins . . . Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."

Jesus had excited the expectations of the scribes to the utmost. He could not retreat now. If it is alike impossible for a man to forgive sins and to cause a paralytic to walk, if both require power from God, then Jesus will be blaspheming if He utters the fiat, Arise and walk. But if that happens which He commands, it will furnish the proof that in speaking as He did He did not intrench on the honor of God, but acted within proper bounds, for it was never heard that a sinner could do such miracles. John ix. 25 ff.

The construction is somewhat difficult and clumsy. Meyer: " 'Then He saith to the,' etc., is not to be taken parenthetically; but Matthew's style is such that no formal apodosis comes after 'sins,' but rather the call to the paralytic 'Arise.' Matthew reports this change in regard to the parties addressed with scrupulous fidelity, and so, after concluding what Jesus says to the scribes with the anacoluthon 'in order that ye may know,' etc., he proceeds to add in the narrative form, 'then he says to the paralytic.' " This is a circumstantial simplicity of style which is not to be met with in polished Greek writers, who would have omitted the clause "then he saith" altogether as a mere encumbrance.

They shall know, recognize by their senses, that Jesus was not blaspheming when He said, "thy sins are forgiven." The Lord speaks of Himself, yet not directly or openly, "that ye may know that the Son of man," etc. As Son of man it is His province to forgive sins. Because He is Son of man His forgiveness is no blasphemy.

Nebe: "The view widely spread, that Jesus is called Son of man as the flower of the human race, as the primordial and ideal man, is here refuted. No man, even though he occupy the highest pinnacle of ethical perfection can have this authority." "Against thee, thee only have I sinned," was the confession of one who was guilty of adultery with Bathsheba, Ps. li. 6. "Since Jesus acknowledges here that He has this power as the Son of man, and since God alone can forgive sins, He must be called Son of man because as such He is God manifest in the flesh."

This power to forgive He has on earth. Some: "The Son of man" and "on earth" are correlative. God forgives in heaven,

the Son of man on earth. To the objection that the power of the Son of man to forgive sins is not limited to the earth, that Christ is also in heaven the Saviour of sinners, Nebe replies, that "the Son of God is called Son of man only in His temporal form of existence; if He forgives in the other world He does this not as Son of man, for He has passed into another form of being." This conflicts with John i. 51. "Since the scribes took umbrage because one who stood before them as man forgave sins as God, Jesus purposely chooses this name which designates the Son of God after His incarnation." Only God can forgive sins and He who said to the paralytic, Son, thy sins are forgiven, for He is the Son of man, *i. e.*, the Son of God come into our flesh. That such is the case, He now proceeds to convince the Pharisees. "He who spake as God will give them an ocular demonstration that He is *able* to speak as God."

Turning to the helpless man He says, "Arise and take up thy bed and walk." He does not in this instance lift His eyes to heaven, asking in silent prayer His Father's assistance, for He means to prove that He Himself has the power. He is not a minister or agent of this power, but its author. Steimeyer's view is, that Jesus proposed to show that He declared the forgiveness of sins by the authority of the same One who gave Him the power to heal, but "this is a shifting of the point on which everything turns. Jesus did not announce the forgiveness of sins, He actually imparted forgiveness. The Pharisees had not stumbled at His forgiving sin in the name of God, but at His granting forgiveness in His own name as if God did not exist."

7. "And he arose, and departed to his house."

He has spoken the word which was to attest that He is the Son of God manifest in the flesh. With what tension His adversaries must have gazed upon the paralytic! And how the people must have swayed between hope and fear! Notice, too, the evangelist's matter-of-fact style of narrating the result of the fiat. To him it appears in no way extraordinary that the paralytic at once rises from the bed which had borne him, and shouldering the bed in turn he proceeds to his home. He had seen before how the spirits were subject to Him, how He spake and it stood fast!

8. "But when the multitudes . . . they were afraid, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men."

What impression was made upon the Pharisees we are not informed. They must not be included in "the multitudes." Doubtless they withdrew ashamed and confounded. But the people whom they had not yet turned against Him were deeply im-

pressed by the superhuman, divine character of the issue. The *Text. rec.* says: "they marvelled." But this must yield to "they were afraid." DeWette: "Same as amazement." Bleek.: "They shuddered from fright." Meyer: "The fear developed gradually into praise." Weiss: "The miracle had a various effect on the people. On some the revelation of divine omnipotence produced a holy awe. Others were prompted by the gracious miracle to break out in praise to God."

"Which had given such power unto men." Why this plural? Some: The reference is only to Jesus. But why do the people call Him "man," when He had by word and deed wonderfully shown Himself to be God? Grotius: "The people praise God in heaven that He has wrought this miracle not through an angel, but through One who has Himself entered human nature, *i. e.*, they glorify the incarnation." The Dative plural should, however, be referred to real plurality, not to a man, but to mankind. "They rejoiced that there was one of the human race endowed with this authority." Bengel: "*dativus commodi*: for the good of men." "The words 'on earth,' v. 6, imply the same wide range of the Saviour's power for the good of men." But Nebe: "The Dative designates those to whom God has given this power," the human race, including Jesus. "The power granted by God to His only-begotten Son is not confined exclusively to His possession. As He has the life in Himself to impart His life to others, so the gifts with which God furnished Him are given to Him only that from Him as from a living fountain they may pour forth over the whole human race. Whatever may have been the doctrinal view of the multitude concerning Jesus this thought has its full eternal truth." "For as certainly as the word of the Father was revealed in the person of our Lord, so certainly was Jesus also truly man; and what divine fullness was manifested in Him had been imparted to the human race in general in His humanity!" The people have an anticipation of the times to come. "They see humanity, anointed by the Spirit of God, endowed with the powers of the world to come, transfigured into the image of the Son of man, dispensing spiritual and bodily blessings."

Christ shows Himself in the Pericope as the Redeemer from all evil. The practical treatment may bring to view the glory of the Redeemer, the glory of His redemption, and the conditions under which He saves.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

JESUS HELPS

1. Believers.
2. Through the forgiveness of sins.
3. From all evil.

WHAT POWER THE SON OF MAN HAS!

1. What power of grace, to forgive sins!
2. What power of life, to save from death!

THE PROGRESS OF REDEMPTION.

1. It begins with the soul of man.
2. It passes through manifold conflicts.
3. It renews the dead body.
4. It ends in God's praise.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE PRESENT SERVE

1. The sufferer, to bring him to repentance.
2. The Lord, to reveal Him in word and deed as the Son of God.
3. The people, to learn the true praise of God.

THE CONDITIONS OF FORGIVENESS.

1. Divine authority on the part of Him who bestows it.
2. Repentance and faith on the part of him who receives it.

THE POWER OF THE LORD TO FORGIVE SINS.

1. The sinner's only hope.
2. The believer's surest experience.
3. God's highest praise.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS IS,

1. Necessary. 2. Possible. 3. Actual.

Or,

1. We need it. 2. We find it in Christ. 3. If we believe.

THE END OF FAITH.

1. The forgiveness of sins.
2. Deliverance from all evil.

THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN THEE.

1. A true word of comfort.
2. A true word of judgment.
3. A true word of God.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt. xxii. 1-14.

For the relation of this parable to that of Luke xiv. 16 ff., see the exposition of the latter in the Lesson of the second Sunday after Trinity. "There is a happy connection between this Lesson and that of the previous Sunday. As the former gives a prospect of deliverance from all evil in the last times, this presents the dark reverse side of that bright picture; the last time is a serious one, a time of judgment."

1. "And Jesus . . . spake again in parables unto them, saying,"

Bleek refers *αὐτοῖς* to the chief priests and Pharisees mentioned xxi. 45 f., and *πάλιν* to the two previous parables, xxi. 28-44. The occasion for the parable, he thinks, is not given, and the evangelist inserts it here doubtless "only because of a certain affinity of aim with the previous ones."

Meyer holds that the closing verses of chap. 21 indicate the purpose of Jesus in adding another parabolic address aimed at His enemies. They were endeavoring to arrest Him, but were held in check by fear of the people. The parable is in "answer" to their well-known design. "Not only He who has been questioned, but He also to whom a reason for speaking has been given, may rightly be said to answer." This would give a two-fold warning to the Pharisees, that Jesus sees through their thoughts, and that their plan will involve them in ruin.

Nebe thinks His answer may refer to the question which they may have agitated, How did we builders reject the corner-stone, that the kingdom is to be taken from us and given to the Gentiles? The plural of category accounts for "parables," when only one is given, though some hold that the evangelist gives only the most striking one.

2. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a marriage-feast for his son,"

Many parables begin thus. What point or aspect of the kingdom is meant, the hearer will determine.

**Ἄνθρωπος βασιλεύς* : a man who was a king, or a king who was a man

The latter would qualify the king as humane, kind, etc. Better βασιλευς, "king," qualifies the man, a royal man. He made for his son γάμους, a festival in general, possibly the festival when the father abdicated sceptre and crown to his royal son. But γάμοι is properly a wedding feast. The plural is customary because the wedding festivities were wont to be continued for some days. "As with the prophets God united Himself in marriage to the nation, so in later Messianic language the *Messiah*." Rev. xix. 7-9; Eph. v. 23 ff. By the king is to be understood the great God of heaven and earth, and by the son of the king, the Lord Himself. What now is the marriage or the union celebrated? Some: The divine and human nature in Christ. But nowhere in the Scriptures is that union celebrated under this image. This image is, however, used in the Scriptures of the union between God and the human race. The bride is the church. Some: The human soul. The two are combined. The church is not an organism without believing souls, but is the communion of believers and saints. Christ is joined alike to the individual and to the organism.

No allusion is made to the bride; the points of the parable do not concern her. The subject is confined to the king giving to his son a wedding, a wedding-feast.

Luther: "Eine *Hochzeit*, nicht eine *Arbeitszeit*, noch *Trauerzeit*, sondern eine *Feuerzeit* und *Freudenzeit*; when one adorns himself, sings, plays, whistles, dances, eats, drinks, and is happy; otherwise it would not be a *Hochzeit*, if one labored, mourned or complained." The gospel has its analogy in the highest joy on earth. "It is a lovely, joyous sermon, a happy marriage where Christ is the Bridegroom and the Christian Church the bride and our mother; that He might kindly invite us to enter into His kingdom, accept His Gospel, come to the glorious feast." To make it still more beautiful and glorious, it is called not only a wedding, but a royal wedding, between a king's son and a king's daughter. Everything is on the most splendid scale—a royal feast and royal pleasure. The kingdom of heaven is not only a kingdom where we rest from labor, but where there is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.

3. "And sent forth his servants to call them which were bidden . . . and they would not come."

The call is that of the economy of salvation, which came to men through the history of redemption. Under "servants" the FF. for the most part understood the prophets of the Old Testament. They sought indeed to bring the called to the wedding, the law was a

paidagogos to Christ. But the clause "the king made a wedding" is against this. They were to summon those who had been called. "The first call was before the wedding, the second on the day of its celebration." This first sending out of the servants took place when the feast was ready. Some refer to John the Baptist, but the king sent out a number of servants. Some have added Jesus, because though Himself the Son for whom the feast was prepared, yet He also took a servant's place in the preliminary work. Some: The Apostles and the Seventy, at least Peter and his associates, but these are supposed to be meant by the "other servants," v. 4. Again, a distinction is made between the apostles accompanying the Lord and the apostles filled with the Holy Ghost. Nebe thinks that those first sent out and those later sent out were different persons, and he adds to John those "men who, whether they themselves had experienced the Lord's miraculous power, or were deeply impressed by His word, went forth and spread the fame of Jesus throughout the land."

But though the messengers called, those called would not come. "Their not coming had its ground not in a physical or an ethical inability, but purely in the evil will which shuts itself against the miracles of grace. This not willing did not advance to open violence; they offered a passive resistance, opposed indifference to the work of God's servants."

4. "Again . . . other servants . . . Behold . . . my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast."

The king was doubtless wounded over the extraordinary course of those whom he had so graciously bidden, but this day of joy was no time for anger. "Kings are wont on such occasions to grant amnesty; this king does more, his love goes beyond the ordinary measure." "Again he sent forth," etc. God invites not only once Israel of old or the sinner now. In the times of preparation how earnestly He called the people through Moses, and then again through the prophets. In the time of fulfillment there were again two invitations. The first group of servants called out: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," by which they stirred the entire country, and they were followed by others who sought with yet greater earnestness to bring the tardy guests to the wedding. The FF. understood by the latter the apostles. Paul and his companions cannot be meant, because these servants are also sent to those who had long since been invited, *i. e.*, the Jews. The apostles went among their own people as heralds of the Lord and pressed them to come to the feast.

The king of the feast put into the mouth of his servants the

message they were to deliver: "Behold, I have made ready my dinner, etc." Ἰδοὶ makes it impressive, let not the people neglect the day of their visitation. Show them their extraordinary conduct toward the provisions of divine love. What a contrast! On the one side the king's love and mercy which cannot do enough, which covers the table with the choicest viands, and himself sees to it that everything is prepared in the finest manner, and on the other side an indifference which passes comprehension. Ἀριστον, not the same as δειπνον, or γάμοι. This was but one meal during the festal period, partaken of near midday, and inaugurating the succession of splendid feasts. We learn here that one enjoyment succeeds another in the kingdom of heaven, one degree of blessedness is succeeded by another and higher one.

The king details circumstantially all that has been prepared and these details they shall repeat to the bidden guests. The richness of the feast provided for them is to be pictured before their eyes, their mouth made to water and their hearts to long for it. Regarding the ancient interpretations which recognized under the oxen the Old Testament fathers, and under the fatlings the New Testament fathers, etc., Nebe justly maintains that the idea is simply that they will find at the feast the finest and best in the greatest plenty.

"All things are ready"—not only all things necessary to salvation, everything delectable. Hence the more urgently it is said, "Come to the marriage feast." This second invitation is a great reproach to the guests. They ought quickly to have accepted the first invitation, but they delayed with an indifference which showed what they thought of the king, of his son, of the feast. The second invitation is no conventional courtesy, but the result of their discourteous conduct. Will they not come now? Do they not hear with us the jubilation: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come!" Rev. xix. 7. The Old Testament, Jer. vii. 34; xvi. 9, had taught that this marriage had the greatest joy in store for them.

5, 6. "But they made light of it. . . one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the rest . . . his servants, and entreated them shamefully and killed them."

Such behavior in social life is simply unheard-of and incredible. It is the very opposite of the reception accorded to such condescension from a king. Every consideration of propriety and of pleasure impels the bidden ones to accept. But the parable conveys exactly the truth concerning man's contempt of God's favor, his rejection of infinite mercy. God, who provided the feast, remains true to Himself, and the invited guests also remain true to

their aversion and hostility to the grace of the great King. There seem to have been two classes: of the first it is said that they paid no attention to this second (third) call, and went away. The others, v. 6, conducted themselves in a manner directly hostile. Meyer holds that the first *οἱ* represents the majority of those invited, while *οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ* "constitute the remainder;" the general form of the first clause, v. 5, "they made light of it," finds its limitation in "the rest" who had not been in the eye. The first were simply apathetic, the second bitterly hostile.

There is a diversity among those who do not receive the gospel. It is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, a light which brings all things to light. There are active and passive natures who have no interest in the marriage feast; there is both indifference and opposition. The first turn away from the invitation, when the messengers come. They have no mind for the kingdom of God, their heart clings to this world's good. In the parable of the great supper these earthly-minded ones are portrayed at greater length; here it is briefly stated, "they went away, one to his farm, another," etc. Even among the indifferent there is a distinction, "the one busied with immovable, the other with movable goods; the one detained by a false contentment, the other by the desire of acquiring more."

But the invitation of grace goes not only to indifferent worldlings; it goes also to those who oppose the most determined resistance to the royal grace of heaven, who aggressively make an attack on the kingdom and seek to destroy it. And here again there are distinctions: They lay hold of the servants and bind them, they wantonly insult and dishonor them, they proceed to the extreme of murdering the agents of their most gracious and kindly sovereign.

It is not said that all went the same length with all. It is only represented how far open enmity to God may proceed. "The enemies of God stir up each other; the torture which one inflicts on a servant of God goads the other to plan some wanton torture for another servant of God. The enmity to the King vents itself on His servants, for these evil-doers know the sympathetic relation between the King and His servants." Peter, John and Paul serve as examples.

7. "But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers" . . .

The servants are slow returning. Some of them get back with heavy hearts, for their kind invitations found no entrance; others with the scars and wounds of their maltreatment; some never

return, for their mission of love cost them their lives. But he who dishonors the messenger of an earthly king, dishonors the majesty which the messenger was to represent in person. He who lays violent hands on the servants of God lays violent hands on God Himself.

"The king was wroth." He knows what has befallen his servants. Though they cannot personally lodge their complaint, he knows the whole business. Their blood cries from the ground, Rev. vi. 9 ff.

Hé is no longer called *ἄνθρωπος*, but simply *βασιλεὺς*. He who provided the feast dismisses now the tender-hearted *ἄνθρωπος*, "man," and is conscious henceforth only of his kingship, whose might and majesty he means to vindicate on those murderers of his servants. Wrath supersedes grace. Cf. on this the Exposition of the Lesson for the 2d Sunday after Trinity. Hupfeld: "Never is the wrath of God pathological, a passion, leading to unrighteousness, a principle of severity of justice; much more is it the principle of the divine punitive justice. Ps. vii. 7 ff., 12. Wrath is merely the human expression for God's hatred of evil, which flows from His holiness and manifests itself in punitive justice."

These wicked men did not simply in their hearts hate the king's servants, but pursued them with overt acts; nor is the king's wrath called forth by their conduct confined to his heart, it expresses itself in acts. "He sent his armies," etc. This is not merely a general description of terrible punishment. The *jus talionis* is the principle of the righteousness that rules the world, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. "As the parable has thus far pictured the attitude of Israel toward the invitation to the marriage, so we have now a prophetic picture of the judgment which will break in over those people, who have imbrued their hands in the blood of God's holy ones."

"His armies." The FF.: "The heavenly hosts." Others: The Roman armies under Vespasian and Titus, which turned Jerusalem into a heap of smoking ruins. Some understand both. The God of heaven and earth sends out His armed forces. It should not surprise us if He sets in motion at one time both the legions of the skies and those upon the earth. The Romans who carried on war and judgment for God upon earth—for God often chooses His enemies to be the executioners of His judgment—recognized that they did not fight and triumph without the special assistance of a higher power. Josephus, B. J., vi. 1, 5; vi. 9, 1. "As to the seditions they have been in and the famine they are under, and the siege they now endure, etc., what can they all be

but demonstrations of God's anger against them and of His assistance afforded us?"

God's armies are ever approaching nearer to those murderers, they slay them and finally set on fire their city. It is only the murderers who are killed, not those who simply made light of the invitation. The latter escape the sword, "they went away," did not repair to the city in which the murderers were slain. They received, indeed, their reward, only not the reward of blood. God rewards every man according to his attitude toward Him.

"Their city." Jerusalem, the metropolis, the city of the Jews. Nebe holds this to be the judgment which befell the indifferent. They clung to this world. Now, that the city perishes in flames, they lose all that they have in this world, their city, their country, freedom, possessions. The warning of Moses is fulfilled, Israel becomes the wandering Jew, a homeless fugitive upon the earth. "The fall of Jerusalem is an overpowering sermon of God to all despisers of the marriage-feast; one should think these flames would dispel all darkness and open all eyes; as intense as is the love of God, so intense may also be His wrath. Let him who resists the fire of His love take alarm at the consuming fire of His wrath.

8. "Then saith he the wedding is ready, but they . . . bidden . . . not worthy."

God's commands are executed. "The king turns now to the servants who had no part in the execution of his judgment; the servants of grace are not to be the messengers of judgment; the hands which offer the atoning blood of the Son of God for the forgiveness of sins are not to be stained with the blood of men, though it should be the blood of murderers." Let the servants of grace confine themselves to their sphere and to spiritual weapons.

"The wedding is ready." That is an assured fact, a glorious truth. It is not the fault of God, if the tables till now stand empty. The whole fault lies with the guests. They were not worthy. Their conduct was utterly unbecoming the position of a guest. A certain ethical qualification is required of the participants in the feast. Those bidden do not spread the table by their works. The king has by his own hand done this: they have only to come, to taste and see that the Lord is gracious. "They were not worthy because they did not regard the gracious call." Acts xiii. 46.

9. "Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast."

Despite the king's wrath his grace continues. The ingratitude

with which his extraordinary kindness was rewarded might have determined him to dispense with guests at the marriage. But he is unwilling to enjoy the feast alone with his faithful servants. So he sends them out to the *διεξόδοι*, not where the streets cross in the city, the city squares, for the city is in ashes. The servants might have proceeded to other cities, but before they reach other cities they come on the highways, the country roads, where these cross each other. At the cross-roads you are likely to find most people. Luke xiv. 23. Nebe holds that the heathen are meant. And the king will have them invited without distinction. "As many as ye shall find, bid." All are to come, regardless of age, race, station, culture. There is room for all, even if the fulness of the Gentiles should sit down at the table.

10. "And those servants . . . into the highways, and gathered together . . . both bad and good : and the wedding was filled with guests."

Literally and fully the command of the king is carried out by his faithful servants. Nebe emphasizes *ἐκεῖνοι*, "those," generally overlooked by expositors. It points to the fact that those servants who labored with such poor results in Israel are now occupied in the heathen world with the invitation to the royal wedding. Noble servants! for they had to overcome their particularistic prejudices, as well as to carry the burden of their lamentable experiences among their own people.

But in the obedience of faith, at the command of their Lord, they go forth—and not in vain. Contrary to what might have been expected—considering the course of those who had for centuries been invited to and trained for the wedding, and the fact that the heathen were strangers to the promises, they respond quickly and marvelously to the call of grace. What the children of the kingdom rejected, the strangers gladly accept, and that in large numbers, *πάντας*. The fullness of the Gentiles yielded to the call of grace.

Σύναγειν does not point to compulsion as in Luke xiv. 23. When the king later surveys the guests he does not reprove the servants for bringing in the unsuitable guest. He takes to task the man himself, because he was the real, responsible offender; he had come of his own motion.

All manner of people were brought together, "bad and good." It is charged that in this the servants went beyond the king's instructions. The "bad" are mentioned first. Meyer: "They proceeded on the principle of not inquiring whether the parties in question were at the time morally bad or good, provided they only accepted the invitation." Nebe: "They met many more bad ones

than good ones." He thinks the ethical character of the guests is to be brought out, and not, as Meyer assumes, that they made no difference whether the subjects at the time were bad or good, only so they accepted the invitation. He holds that they did not disregard the difference of good and bad among them, but "this did not hinder them from bringing the bad as well as the good, for they knew that in this feast a *palingenesis*, a renewal, was to take place with all the guests."

From Rom. ii. 14 and John iii. 20 f. it appears that in the natural man there is absolutely no difference between the bad and the good, yet there is relatively. The *νμφών*, the room in which the ceremonies were held, was filled with guests. "The falling away of Israel is fully compensated for by the fullness of the Gentiles." The kingdom of heaven will suffer no want. Multitudes will fill the festive halls. V. 14 says, however, that few are chosen. Cf. the Lesson for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, Matt. viii. 11. When the chosen ones, few in comparison with the many who were called, come together from all ages and all lands, they will constitute a vast, innumerable throng. "The multitude of believers, contrasted with the world, remains ever a vanishing little company, and yet at the same time an innumerable multitude." Is. ii. 2 ff.; xxv. 6; xlix. 18; liii. 12; lx. 4 ff.; Rev. vii. 9.

11. "But when the king . . . to behold the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment."

From this point the parable goes beyond the corresponding one in Luke. It is not enough that we come, that we appear at the marriage, we must come with a proper inward disposition. Jewish theology held that judgment would not pass beyond the court of the Gentiles. But it really penetrates the sanctuary, it begins at the house of God. "Before the entrance into blessedness stands the hour of judgment." The king who had the guests invited does not make his appearance whenever new guests arrive, but he comes in when all the tables are full, "when the great period of the calling of all nations has terminated."

Then he enters with the avowed purpose to behold his guests, to survey, inspect, *i. e.* to sift and judge. It is noteworthy that he takes the matter of judgment into his own hands. This office he does not commit to his servants. An appeal might have been taken from them to the lord and king. "This is to be forestalled. Judgment shall now be held by the Most High himself, for the sentence now passed shall remain in force forever."

The judgment is committed to the Son, but as the parable makes the son the bridegroom, and as the royal father gives the wed-

ding, it suits the requirements of the parable that the Father sees to everything passing off in order and propriety. He will, moreover, put all the enemies of the Son under his footstool.

The mustering or sifting of the guests has an unhappy issue. One is discovered without a wedding garment, "some remarkable one amongst the many bad who are called, and yet not chosen; who is individually a sample of all such, one whom you would especially suppose to be chosen, and from whose not being chosen the small number of chosen is perceived. The singular number is emphatic; for the passage would otherwise have equally admitted of the plural." Judgment is executed on the first guest found in this plight. Others will be found in the same condemnation. This one is only the representative of the many, v. 14, who are not chosen.

Ἐνδύμα γάμου. The "wedding garment" was lacking to the unhappy man. On the possession or the non-possession of this depends participation in, or exclusion from the feast of salvation. Some: personal righteousness, the garb of virtue! Others: the righteousness of faith, *justitia Christi*.

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress."

Some of the former include repentance, change of heart, the new heart well-pleasing to God. It is not likely that the guests had to furnish their own festal garments. The parable does not admit of that. The king directed his servants to go out upon the highways and bring in whomsoever they found, intimating not a word about letting them go home to change their apparel. They brought in bad and good, and if it was silently taken for granted that every guest must first return to his home to procure a fine and clean garment, the cause of any appearing without one must in part be charged to the servants. Thiersch: "If the invited had to procure their own festal robes, both the question and the displeasure of the king would be inexplicable. And the man need not have become speechless, but simply plead poverty. How could the people who had been gathered upon the streets be in possession of wedding clothes? These must have been presented to them as they entered the house of the king." Dogmatic and ethical considerations require this. How, indeed, could our own ethical attainments ever make us well-pleasing to God! We are but unprofitable servants when we have done all that it was our duty to do. Cf. Gen. xlv. 22; Judg. xiv. 12, 19; 2 Ki. v. 22; x. 22; Esth. vi. 8; viii. 15, from which passages it appears that the host delivered to the guests in

the vestibule the necessary festal robes. In those days a man's wealth consisted largely in the stock of raiment he had on hand. These Old Testament citations have a parallel in the *Cyropædia*, viii. 3, 1, and the *Iliad* xxiv. 228 ff., showing this to have been a general custom in the orient. In Rev. xix. 8 f. "it was given to the bride of the Lamb to array herself in fine linen."

This was not an ordinary, but a royal wedding. It has been objected that the parable does not emphasize the fact that such garment had been offered to the unworthy guest and despised by him. But why should the king give prominence to a circumstance which was well known to all the guests? He simply calls attention to the offensive dereliction and pronounces the sentence. "The garment of salvation had been offered to this man, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but he scorned to receive the same; he declined to put off the old man, but sat down to the marriage supper in the torn and filthy shreds of his self-righteousness."

The living connection between faith and works must not be overlooked. The wedding garment is Christ, whom we put on in faith, Rom. xiii. 14. Calvin: "Thenceforth the garment sheds a lue, *i. e.*, faith in Christ produces fruit, namely love, which worketh through faith in Christ. These are the good works which shine forth from faith, and they take place without any purpose of gain, solely for the good of the neighbor; otherwise, they are heathen works if they do not flow from faith; such are vain and condemned and are cast out into the outer darkness. Wouldst thou perform good works, believe beforehand; wouldst thou bear good fruit, become first a tree and then the fruit will come spontaneously."

Nebe: "The man without the wedding garment is not reproved that he is found without it, but that he entered without it. The wedding garment must be brought along into the hall. Good works, on the other hand, cannot be wrought before man has tasted at the gracious table of the kingdom the powers of the world to come. One cannot be a new man before he has come out from the world into the kingdom of God."

12. "And he saith . . . Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."

The king calls the thoughtless trifler to account. He addresses him descriptively, *ἑταῖρος*, xx. 13, "comrade:" "a word of ambiguous meaning, which is also applied to those with whom we are not on terms of intimate friendship." "How camest thou in, etc?" This is the surprising and incomprehensible matter. By what culpable neglect of the servants, by what audacity on his

own part? Was he so deluded, or so devoid of shame, that he fancied he needed no special apparel in order to stand honorably before the great king and his son?

The man is speechless. No answer can be given. He is guilty and without excuse. Men perish by their own fault and not by any fault of Christianity. According to Nebe the man's speechlessness is not to be ascribed to his timorousness, nor to his hardened heart. The hardened wretch would not have accepted the invitation, and had he been a timorous soul he would have quietly had himself arrayed in the festal garb in the antechamber. Remembering that the parable was directed against the Pharisees, v. 15, he argues that the man who in the conceit of his own righteousness had declined the wedding garment of his gracious sovereign in the banquet hall, and had prided himself in the piebald garment of his own righteousness, now learns to his consternation from the lord himself whom he wished to please, and for whose pleasure according to the conviction of his heart he had lived, that his own garment will not answer, that it will not cover and conceal his nakedness. Finally and too late his eyes are opened. All self-delusions end in dismay. He is speechless. He has not a word whereby to excuse himself.

13. "Then the king said . . . Bind him hand and foot . . . into outer darkness; there . . . the weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The man is self-condemned. Silence gives consent. "God's command regarding him is only the textual exposition of his silence."

Τοῖς διακόνουσι, attendants. The δούλοι, bondservants, are sent forth, the διάκονοι wait at table. John ii. 5. In v. 7 the king sent not his δούλοι, but his στρατεύματα, "armies," to execute his sentence. "The servants who mediate to men the call of grace have nothing whatever to do with the judgment. They are purely ambassadors in Christ's stead, beseeching men to be reconciled to God." Cf. xiii. 29, where the man who had sowed good seed in his field did not allow his servants to gather up the tares, but reserved that for the reapers (the angels) in time of harvest. The teaching of both parables is the same. The servants must have noticed that the man entered and sat at the table without the wedding robe, but it was not their province to separate him from the others. "Up to the time when the king enters the festive hall, there is yet a time of grace; repentance and conversion are still possible. The banquet hall unites bad and good up to the moment when the wedding is to be celebrated."

"Bind him hand and foot." The closing words form a part

of the parable and are the words of the king, not of Jesus. There is no indication of a change of subject. The guest is out of place. He does not belong to the bright company in their festal uniform; his true station is not in the brilliantly illuminated banquet chamber, but in the darkness without. He is deprived of his freedom, treated like a criminal, put in chains like a heinous offender. Sin makes a slave and an outcast of its victim.

“Cast him out.” Chained hand and foot, he could not move himself away. Even if he could, no one betakes himself voluntarily out of a banquet hall into the outer darkness, into the place of torment. “The king is in a passion; his anger burns, the servants shall not gently carry him out, but throw him, hurl him into the realm where he belongs,” into the darkness where his filthy rags will give offense to no one.

14. “For many are called, but few chosen.”

The Lord concludes with an epiphonema which we meet also in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, xx. 16. *Γάρ* introduces the reason of “there shall be the weeping,” etc. “For, so far from the mere calling availing to secure against eternal condemnation, many, on the contrary, are called to the Messiah’s kingdom, but comparatively few are chosen by God actually to participate in it.” Form. Con.

Gregory M.: “That we are called we know, that we are elected we do not know.” Bengel: “*Γάρ*. This general sentence is a proof that this man without a wedding garment, and all who are like him, will be cast forth.” Cf. Bengel on Luke xvi. 8.

The Pericope points, above all things, to the judgment which we are approaching. The righteousness of God and the guilt of man may be treated in connection with it.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

WHY SO FEW THAT ARE CHOSEN.

1. Because so few accept the call.
2. Because so few who accept it make it sure.

THE JUDGMENT :

1. On those without. 2. On those within.

THE GOD OF GRACE, A RIGHTEOUS JUDGE.

1. He will not suffer His *call* of grace to be despised with impunity.
2. He will not suffer His *feast* of grace to be defiled with impunity.

GOD REVEALS HIS WRATH

1. On those who insolently despise **His** gracious *call*.
2. On those who self-righteously despise **His** gracious *robe*.

SAVE THY SOUL.

1. Behold the marvelous goodness of God.
2. Behold the fearful judgment of God.

THE CALL TO THE WEDDING IS

1. An invitation to grace.
2. A summons to judgment.

TWO CLASSES OF UNWORTHY GUESTS:

1. Those who will not come.
2. Those who would sit at the wedding table without a wedding robe.

THE BLIND SINNER.

1. He has no eyes for the grace offered him.
2. He has no eyes for the wrath this kindled.
3. He has no eyes for the righteousness which makes acceptable before God.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

John iv. 47-54.

THE characteristic of this Pericope is "the development of faith from its carnal, sensuous swaddling bands to life in the acknowledgement of Jesus Christ." Luther: "It is a beautiful example of faith, its form and character; namely, that it is to grow and become perfect, and that it is not dormant and idle, but living and active, going forward or backward. If this is not the case there is no faith, only a dead conceit in the heart. For the true living faith which the Holy Ghost pours into the heart cannot be idle. This is the nature of faith, that without ceasing it grows and increases."

The occasion for treating the gradual progress of faith at this point Nebe gives thus: "The two preceding Lessons have, as it were, clearly set forth both the factors of eschatology; the grace of God and the righteousness of God are both hastening to their goal; faith demands deliverance from all evil, righteousness a final all-decisive judgment. Now, before entering upon the series of Gospels which present the last things, we have a few Pericopes which bring under review the character of those who shall be found to stand in those last times. The subjective conditions and demands which the Lord requires of those who would bear off the crown are introduced. As a matter of fact faith comes first; the end of faith is salvation."

In the third Epiphany Gospel it was shown that Matt. viii. 5 ff. and Luke vii. 1 ff. narrate the same occurrence. Is that same occurrence also narrated here? Are the centurion of Capernaum and the nobleman of Capernaum one person? Some of the FF. answered this affirmatively, others denied it, and the latter view came in time to be universal. Rationalists have again identified them, while the orthodox in a body maintain their distinction. Nebe: "Not only do the cures differ in outward features, but they possess an entirely different character. The locality of the synoptic miracle is Capernaum, where Jesus is appealed to for help; with John the miracle proceeds from Jesus at Cana. Here, too, the miracle takes place when Jesus returns from the first Easter to Galilee, there, when he returns to Capernaum from the Mount of Beati-

tudes. The sick man in the synoptists is a paralytic, and is, besides, a *servant*; according to John he is stricken with fever and is the suppliant's *child*; there the suppliant is a centurion and a heathen; here a courtier and a Jew. And there are still other differences."

Furthermore, each miracle bears its peculiar stamp. Nebe: "The centurion offers to Jesus such faith as He had not seen in Israel, whereas the nobleman approaches Him with a faith, if indeed it may be called faith, in which Jesus sees a genuine mirror of the unbelief which He has all along discovered in Israel. Accordingly the Lord's procedure is essentially different: whereas in the synoptic miracle He most complaisantly offers His help to the centurion, He declines here to go with the nobleman. Here He teaches faith a lesson, there He crowns the *perfected faith*."

46, 47. "And . . . a certain nobleman, whose son was sick . . . When he heard that Jesus was come . . . into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down and heal his son . . . at the point of death."

Βασιλικός, only here in New Testament, not a member of the royal house, a prince of the blood, but according to the *usus loquendi* in Josephus the βασιλικοὶ were the ministers of King Herod. The term is used both of those high in position in court, and of those in menial service. Some: an official of King Herod. Most moderns: a courtier, but there is nothing to indicate whether he was on the civil list or in military service. The identification of this official of Herod Antipas with Chuza, Herod's steward, whose wife Joanna was one of the Galilean women who ministered to Jesus, Luke viii. 3, or with Manaen, Herod the Tetrarch's foster-brother, Acts xiii. 1, is pure fiction. This nobleman's child, παῖδιον, was sick at Capernaum, doubtless in the house of his father. Οὗτος is significant. It supplies the place of ἰδοὺ. This is most extraordinary, that a courtier should come to Jesus. Luther, who had special opportunities of knowing, often declared that the fear of God and the love of Christ were rarely found among courtiers. Even the poet Lucian laments the absence of piety at the courts of heathen kings. It is not likely that Herod's court was a nursery of godliness. But the Lord has all hearts in His hands and turns them whither He will. It is not likely that this courtier, resident of Capernaum, came now for the first time in contact with Jesus, or received his first intelligence concerning the deeds and words of his mysterious fellow-townsmen. Jesus began His preaching in Capernaum, and the wine-miracle must have been well known there. But till now he had no occasion to go to Him. Learning of his return from the feast, whether incidentally or on

inquiry, we are not told, and having heard of his miraculous deeds at Jerusalem, he hastens with his suit to Cana, where the Lord was stopping, and beseeches Him to hasten to the relief of his son. Distress brought him to Jesus. It is some distance from Capernaum to Cana, but all remedies have failed and the young patient is hourly growing worse and worse. Nebe: "Painful as it is to tear away from the dying-bed of a son, he does tear himself away from it and hastens thither, love giving wings to his steps. He had slaves, but he feared that they would not go with sufficient haste, and that they would not paint with sufficient urgency the extremity of his child. He has on one side great faith, believing that Jesus may yet help though nothing can any longer be done by human aid, but on the other hand it is small and weak, believing that Jesus could only help if He would come down, Himself to see him and lay His hands on him; and he believed also that Jesus could no longer help if life itself had fled." Luther: "Had he been in doubt he would not have come to Christ; but his faith lives, hence he arises and goes to Christ, which is the beginning in faith." He praises the courtier who was so impressed by a discourse of Jesus and a miracle that he came to Him in the hour of need for help, and adds "what do we learn? We have God's Word richly, and yet we do not believe." That the nobleman dictates to Christ the manner of his extending relief and that he binds the power of Christ to his bodily presence, are, however, striking defects in his faith.

48. "Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye . . . nowise believe."

The apparent harshness of this answer to one in deep affliction recalls Christ's reception of the Syrophœnician. It was not usual for Him who did not break the bruised reed, to make such reply to those coming to Him with their burdens. Matt. xi. 28-30. His answer was, however, intended not to extinguish the glimmering faith but to raise it to a flame. Some have held that in His reproof of the courtier, Jesus chides the whole Jewish nation, which cares not for His doctrine but for His miracles. But the courtier represents the Galileans, to whom Jesus again repaired after finding in Samaria great faith without signs and wonders. For in Judæa also, even in the metropolis, He to whom Galilee offered so little faith, gathered many believers around him, ii. 23.

"Except ye see signs, etc." Some place the accent on "see:" Jesus reproves the man because he requires Him to save his son from death at his home and before his eyes, showing a lack of confidence in the miraculous power of Him who in His absence can

heal by a word. But why should the man repeat his petition, if he was reproved for wanting to see?

Nebe puts the emphasis on "signs and wonders." "Jesus does not deny the presence of faith in the courtier, but shows positively that such faith is not the right kind, since it seeks for sensuous, palpable, visible proofs, it wants to rest upon sensuous conviction, on signs and wonders which overpower the senses." Luther: "The courtier had a certain confidence in Christ that He could and would help his son, but it was a confidence not resting on the word, but merely on the miracle which Jesus had wrought at Cana. This may be called faith, but it is yet a very weak faith. For the promise has not yet been given, and such faith rests only on the uncertain presumption whether He will help or not. If He helps, the courtier will take Him for a great and holy man; if He does not help, he will not regard Him so highly. Hence Jesus addressed him somewhat harshly, 'Except ye see signs, etc., ye will not believe,' i. e., faith must not rest alone upon signs and wonders, but upon the Word; for signs and wonders may be false and counterfeit, but he who builds upon the Word cannot be deceived, for the promise of God is sure and cannot lie. For, although Jesus wrought miracles in order to move the people to faith, yet it was his ultimate object that the people should look more to His Word than to the signs which were to serve the Word as witnesses. It was not His principal office to relieve those suffering from bodily ills, but to point the people to the Word, and to inform the same in their hearts, that through it they might be saved."

Not against miracle faith in general are these words directed, but against those who will not believe otherwise, those who like Thomas must first see before they believe. Nebe: "Jesus deeply laments that such means are necessary in order to awaken faith, when He has already in a most unique manner revealed Himself by word and deed. If the courtier and the Galileans, who in him stood before the eyes of Jesus, had a heart susceptible to the kingdom of God, signs and wonders would no longer be needed by them. Their hearts would beat in holy joy and living faith towards the Lord."

The faith in miracles is the lowest stage of faith. "In such a faith the purely external is so preponderating, that he who only believes thus does not properly believe at all." The Messianic activity of Jesus had begun to manifest itself in separating some from the mass, and directing their minds to what is internal. Lücke: "After Jesus had by His miracles as the first revelation of His

glory for the outward sense excited their attention and external prepossession, He wished more and more to exclude the sensuous, the purely external element from the faith of His contemporaries." He takes advantage of the opportunity offered to show that this prevailing faith is an unsatisfactory stage of development, that He requires a higher, a more spiritual faith, such as was already springing up in Samaria.

Besides His aim to correct the courtier, who saw in His miracle-working the chief calling of Christ, it must be noted that Jesus Himself must have felt deeply wounded and grieved to find here such a contrast to the faith He had just witnessed in Samaria.

The stricture on miracle faith is not intended as the answer to the prayer. Bengel sees in it a rare mixture, "composed of a certain semblance of repulse, and a tacit promise of aid, according thus with the suppliant's feeling, which was made up of faith and weakness." "The anxious courtier wavers between faith and unfaith. He believes and in his faith seeks Jesus' help, but he does not seek help with the right faith; for the faith which seeks help leaves to the Lord the determination of the ways and means, and regards nothing impossible." The beginning of faith is here, but it is like a child that cannot walk uprightly on its feet, and as it requires a hold and a support when it has learned to stand, so the germinal faith in the heart of the nobleman required an outward support, a sensuous crutch.

Perceiving the people's faith to be so weak as to require the support of miracles, He who came to strengthen what is weak, and to revive what is dead, will provide what is needed and mercifully regard their weakness.

49. The nobleman saith . . . "Sir, come down ere my child die."

His faith gathers strength from the reproof, as it was meant to, and pleads afresh. Satan doubtless suggested his going home, Jesus would not help. Luther: "The poor man trembles and his faith begins to sink, hence he cries, Sir, come down, etc., *i. e.*, you must come quickly and be present in person, or my child cannot live. His faith and his petition do not soon cease, but his faith does not reach to the point that it believes Jesus able to heal without being present."

He may attain a very different faith from what he had at first. It was a most excellent trial for him and he endured the test. "His petition now is not the petition of one who feels the ground giving way under him: rather the prayer of one who is resolved on reaching his goal, who submits to reproof and does not cast away

his confidence." *Κίπτε*. He may not have used this address in the dogmatic sense it had with the apostles, yet he undoubtedly means to express the preëminence of Jesus. "He holds on to his supplication and cherishes the hope that despite His reproof Jesus will accompany him to Capernaum." By the tender endearing term "child" he touches His heart; he reminds Him of a father's affliction and anxiety. "A growing confidence is to be recognized in these words."

50. "Jesus saith unto him, Go . . . thy son liveth. The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and" . . .

Entreated to help quickly, Jesus helps the anxious father with surprising swiftness in a way in which He had not helped up to this time. Going along with the father is not necessary. Help was already granted the moment he said "thy son liveth." The father asked Jesus to go down before his son "dies." Jesus answers he "lives;" he is not dying, he is living. He has been recovered from the grasp of death. He is not only better, but he has passed the crisis, he is out of all danger, he lives in the emphatic sense of the word. This word which does not promise help to come, but announces perfect help as having been already granted, is a word of continuous probing of the man's faith. As in view of his low conception of the Lord's power, he had insisted on His accompanying him, will he now go without him, with a firm joyful confidence in the word of Jesus? "The more store he set by the presence of Jesus and the more anxiety he felt for the lad, the more incredible must it appear to him that a single word could effect such results. Thus far he had accorded nothing to the Word, and now he is of a sudden to confide everything to the Word." By a mere word Jesus proposes a miracle miles away.

At the moment Jesus said "thy son liveth," the miracle was accomplished. The miracle is not to be reduced to a natural improvement of which Jesus knew; it is not a miracle of omniscience, but of omnipotence.

Well does the courtier sustain the test. "The moment which witnesses the recovery of his son witnesses also the healing of his soul unto eternal life." "He believed the word," which is incomparably more than believing signs and wonders. The "man," not the *βασιλικός*, believed thus; the *βασιλικός* wanted external contact, the "man" in him came to a better faith. Luther: "He has such an excellent faith that he now believes the mere word of Jesus, and doubts not that upon his return home he will find his son robust and well, though he neither sees nor feels aught. For we

must not have fear regarding our small faith, but we must guard lest Satan tear faith out of our hearts. It may happen that one who has small faith will remain steadfast in faith, and the one having strong faith may fall into doubt. With the words 'thy son liveth' the man rises from his first faith, which believed that Jesus could heal if present, to a higher faith, which believes the mere word and does not doubt that it is just as the word says. Christ follows the great blow, v. 48, with great strength, for now he must cling to what he does not see. That, then, is the right strong faith, when a heart believes what it neither sees nor comprehends, against all sense and reason, clinging to the Word alone."

True faith has nothing but the Word. "He who cleaves to it must abide while the living and everlasting Word abides." We should, therefore, ever aim at growth, and hence welcome cross and conflict, that our faith may thereby increase and grow strong.

51. "And . . . now going down, his servants met him, saying, that his son lived."

The reward of faith is sure to come. Even before he returns to his home, the blessing of the obedience of faith comes to him: "thy son lives." Jesus' word is confirmed by the event.

Since *καταβαίνειν* means to descend, and since the road from Cana to Capernaum ascends till one reaches the vicinity of the latter, the servants must have met their master as he came to descend to the city from the hills which flanked it on the west. Just as he saw the city before him they brought him the glad tidings. His anxiety, as from the heights he caught a glimpse of his home, may have suddenly re-awakened, and doubts as to how he would find the situation at home may have set his heart to beating, when of a sudden he spies the servants, like angels, hastening to bear him the good news, refreshing the roots of his faith with the information "thy child lives." How wonderful that the servants repeat the very words of Jesus, though they had not heard them! Those words have a most literal fulfillment. The language shows, too, that the father did not exaggerate when he reported his son in the last extremity. What he was most anxious to know, the servants' report.

52. "So he inquired . . . the hour when he began to amend. They said . . . Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."

The humble slaves by their message strengthen the faith of their master in Christ, and we might have expected him to break out in strains of praise to God. Instead of this he inquires the hour when he began to amend. *Κοιμῶς ἔχειν* is usual in the classics as the opposite of *κακῶς ἔχειν*. Various explanations are offered

for this question. The immediate effect of the answer was the powerful increase of his faith, v. 53, which implies that he made the inquiry with a susceptible and not a doubting heart; in other words, the recovery took place just as he had expected, at the very hour when the word of the Lord was spoken. "The inquiry did not proceed from unbelief, but from the faith which believes and which will have faith assured, which uses every means offered in order to attain to the knowledge and experience of the truth." Bengel: "The more carefully divine works and blessings are considered, the more nourishment faith acquires."

"At the seventh hour." There was no question or difference of opinion on this point. The exact moment on the dial had been noticed and registered. The family at home must have known the father's mission, as they knew also the extremity of the son, and the father's faith was then already shared by the whole house. The seventh hour, according to Jewish (Babylonish) reckoning, would be 1 o'clock p. m. If the Roman reckoning is accepted the hour could not have been seven in the morning. If Jesus, however, spoke the word at 7 p. m., the servants could not possibly have reached him before midnight. But Nebe holds that the Roman reckoning prevailed neither in Palestine nor in Asia Minor, where John wrote the Gospel, hence the Jewish must be accepted.

It seems incredible that the man should have spent all the time from 1 p. m. of the previous day on the journey, nor is it likely that he passed the night in a house, even if robbers infested the neighborhood. Whether the father was depressed or exultant, it is not likely that he loitered on the way. He could have no rest until he reached home or got word from home. The distance, about twenty-five miles, would hardly, however, admit of his reaching Capernaum before midnight if he set forth from Cana at 1 p. m.

The recovery was not gradual, as is wont to be the case with this disease, but the fever left him all at once.

53. "So the father knew . . . that hour in which Jesus said . . . Thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house."

Again those blessed words, "thy son liveth," are repeated. They can never be forgotten. The sentence is complete. After "liveth" Meyer adds "the fever left him," as the predicate to *ἔτι*.

Nebe: "The more we study the ways of the Lord, the more are disclosed to us the hidden paths of His government, the indications of His all-wise omnipotent rule. Only let us with a childlike mind seek for the footsteps of the living God." *Credo, ut intelligam*.

Once more it is said "he believed," v. 50. There are stages in

faith as in other virtues, which have their beginning, increment and perfection. Bede puts the beginning of the courtier's faith when he asked for his son's cure, the increment when he believed the Lord's word, and the perfection of it when the servants reported the recovery. His faith now is not believing the Lord, but believing in the Lord. Jesus becomes the life of his life. He had in faith sought Jesus and he had found Him. "He who was his comfort in distress has become the light of his life. Through life's cross he struggled into saving faith. All afflictions, even that of the last time, break upon us that the fragrant rose of faith may bloom under the thorns."

Streams of living water shall flow from him who believeth. From the courtier a rich stream pours over his family, so that his whole house believes with him. He who was converted to true faith, now that he enters his house becomes the messenger of faith. God raises up witnesses from all classes and conditions of men. Nebe calls the courtier the first lay-preacher in the New Testament. Great success attends his labor of faith and love. He brings his entire family into the way of life. As Jesus by His word wrought at a distance and rescued his son from death, so he now works with his word for the absent Lord, and assists him in rescuing the members of his household from death. He is the first New Testament house-father at once prophet, priest and king, teaching, praying, ruling and providing. Luther: "He not only increased in faith so that he passed from a lower to a higher stage, but he also brought others to believe; he did not remain alone in his faith; he had an active faith, not that which rests idle and dormant in the heart, but which broke forth and preached and praised Christ, showing how he came to Christ and found help through faith, so that the whole house must come to faith. Such is indeed the nature of faith, that it draws others, it breaks out and goes to work through love. Faith cannot do otherwise, it must speak, for it will be serviceable to its neighbor."

54. "This is again the second sign . . . having come out of Judæa into Galilee."

The evangelist states explicitly that for the second time Jesus wrought a miracle upon returning from Judæa, referring to ii. 1 ff., the wine miracle, which was wrought upon His coming from Judæa. It was not the second miracle in general, for John ii. 23 reports Him doing many miracles in Jerusalem; neither was it the second miracle in Galilee, but the second one wrought on occasions of His returning from Judæa. Some find in this addition a reproof of the Galileans. "The first miracle brought only the disciples to be-

lieve, the second only the nobleman's house, while in Samaria a whole city believed without any miracle."

The subject of the Pericope is faith, its growth, its essence, its characteristics, its promise.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

FAITH GROWS.

1. It is born in distress.
2. Exercised in confidence.
3. Completed in the experience of salvation.

Or,

1. It has its beginning in distress.
2. Its progress is conditioned by struggle.
3. Its goal is the communion of believers.

THE BLESSED GROWTH OF FAITH:

1. From miracle faith to faith in the word.
2. From faith in the word to faith in the person of the Lord.

THE ATTAINMENTS OF LIVING, SAVING FAITH.

1. By coming to the Lord.
2. Submitting to His reproof.
3. Believing Him on His word.
4. Experiencing Him to be our Saviour.

TO TRUE FAITH BELONGS

1. Prayer for the Lord's help.
2. Submission to His word.
3. Seeking after His miracles.
4. Testifying to His glory.

CHRIST, THE

1. Author.
2. Promoter.
3. Finisher of our faith.

THE CROSS, THE SCHOOL OF FAITH.

1. It awakens,
2. It tests,
3. It crowns, faith.

VARIOUS TYPES OF FAITH:

1. That which seeks miracles.
2. That which clings to the Word.
3. That which seeks the truth.
4. That which testifies to the truth.

THE GREAT RECOMPENSE OF FAITH.

1. It experiences,
2. It spreads abroad, the salvation of the Lord.

THE CHURCH'S INEXHAUSTIBLE RESOURCES.

1. She has the living Word.
2. She has the living faith.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt. xviii. 23-35.

THE theme is forgiveness, well-suited to the eschatological cycle. As we learn from the Lord's Prayer, there is an inner connection between God's forgiveness and the forgiveness which devolves on us. And this Pericope teaches that God can forgive us only when we also forgive our neighbor his faults. The previous Gospel presents living faith as that which procures salvation; here we see that this faith must manifest itself in a life which exercises love and forgiveness.

23. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would make a reckoning with his servants."

"Therefore." The connection with what precedes is essential. The discourse is therefore placed here not by the evangelist, but by Jesus Himself, as an illustrative conclusion of the answer He had just given Peter. The latter had asked whether one was obliged to forgive his brother seven times. The prompt response was not "Until seven times; but Until seventy times seven." This number shows in contrast with Peter's number that we are not to keep a record of the repetition of forgiveness. It is to be rather a *progressus ad infinitum*; no account is to be kept, but it shall be forgiven anew and cheerfully and continuously. Even for the ordinary relations of life Peter's measure was too scant, though it is certainly much larger than the measure of the natural man, who does not forgive at all, but demands eye for eye.

**Ἄνθρωπος βασιλεύς*, cf. Lecture on Twentieth Sunday after Trinity. *Βασιλεύς* defines the former, not *vice versa*. Many a man might hold a reckoning with his servants, but in this case it was not an ordinary man, but a mighty king, a ruler.

The kingdom of heaven has two aspects: first, a kingdom over which a merciful Father is sovereign; second, an hour when He will execute righteousness and judgment upon earth. The king of the parable is the Father, not the Son, xxii. 2. Socinian difficulties are fully met by the fact that it is not the purpose of a parable to present the full content of Christian doctrine. Each parable presents but a section of the total orb of truth. It is not

meant to teach here on what grounds God forgives sin, but “simply to deduce from the forgiveness we receive from God our duty to forgive one another.” The servants here are not slaves, for one of them, v. 25, is treated as a freeman. They are officials, employees of the king, who had committed to them the administration of his country and its revenues. *Δούλος* admits of this sense in the classics. According to the ancient view the king was absolute. His subjects had no personal rights.

24. “And . . . one was brought . . . which owed him ten thousand talents.”

The king proceeds with his purpose. It looks as if none of the servants would of his own accord have presented himself for this object. They had good reason to keep away from the king’s counting-room. “One was brought,” *i. e.*, against his will. He does not come with firm step and open countenance, but he is conducted perforce into the presence of the king, who demands settlement. Some have guessed that it was on account of this very servant that the king issued specific orders for a general settlement. It is possible, too, that the summons was to be served first of all on one of those highest in office. At all events, in the beginning of the reckoning one is brought in who was behind in the enormous sum of 10,000 talents.

What man is not a debtor to God? No one can deny this obligation, Rom. iii. 23. He who would deny his guilt before God would be worse than a heathen, for the heathen show by their sacrifices that they know themselves sinners and debtors before God, yea, the greatest sinners, judging by the character of their offerings. Some have rendered *μυρίων* as \equiv *πολλῶν*, but since in the case of the debtor it is stated not that he owed a small sum, but, explicitly 100 *denarii*, it seems best to admit here not a large sum in general but a specific amount.

There were various talents. The Jewish was worth nearly \$2000, the Persian over \$1200, the Roman about \$1100, the Greek was somewhat smaller, while the Syrian had a value of but about \$225. Some commentators accept the one, some the other. The matter of chief import is that his indebtedness reached such enormous proportions.

Who can know his errors? Boos: “The righteous man falls seven times a day, which makes 2555 times in a year. How often in a life-time?” Augustine: “We transgress every commandment 1000 times, hence altogether 10,000 times.”

“We move along thoughtless and blithe, little dreaming of the burden of guilt that rests upon us, when God sends out His mes-

sengers of judgment, and opens the books, and begins to reckon with us. Then we learn that our sins are more than the hairs of our head, and that they stand like mountains before us about to fall on us." Luther says, the Lord compares our sins to so large a sum of money to show that we can never discharge or make good the debt. When God would hold a reckoning with us He has the law preached unto us, from which we learn what we owe, as if He spake to the conscience: "Thou shalt have no other God, thou shalt love me with all the heart and put all thy trust in me. Here you may read the account, here you may see written the amount you owe. He takes it in his hand and reads it to us and says: See this you are to do, you are to fear, love and honor me alone, put your faith alone in me and seek your good with me; but you do just the opposite, you hate me, you do not believe on me, you place your confidence in other things. *Summa Summarum*: you are not keeping one letter of the law. Man is thus brought to see what he is obliged to do and has not done, and must confess that not for one moment has he believed God and loved Him."

25. "But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, . . . and payment to be made."

The balance is struck. The appalling debt rises before the servant and he cannot reduce it by one penny. Gladly would the king have found it otherwise. The enormous indebtedness is not of his making. Fain would he have found all things straight and square and have called out, "good and faithful servant." The servant realizes the correctness of the balance sheets and in silence he confesses it. The lord commands him to be sold. Sin is a serious business, it is not a mere word, or a vain conceit. The world fain believes that it will not be punished. It "flatters itself with the idea of changing *minus* to *plus*, the deficit before God into a balance in one's favor." The king in the parable does not share this conceit. The debtor is insolvent, forever insolvent. He is delivered up to inexorable justice. The king commands him to be sold. The lord, "his lord," commands this. The legality of the procedure is thus justified. The servant was his exclusive property, hence he could dispose of him in any way whatever. If one has destroyed my property I can reimburse myself to some degree by the appropriation of his own. The lord follows the strict Jewish law with his servant. Exod. xxii. 3; Lev. xxv. 39; Amos ii. 6; viii. 6. Among the Romans, too, the insolvent debtor forfeited his property and life to his creditors.

Rigorous as is the king, he yet remains a kind master, well-

disposed toward his servant. He does not convey his command in secret to his servants, but the culprit himself hears his sentence announced. He knows what is before him, and as the sale does not take place immediately he has a period of grace. Punitive justice demands the person of the debtor for his debts. He used his liberty to sin, and now he must do penance for it by the loss of his liberty.

But the king's righteousness is not satisfied with this punishment. The *δοῦλος* is not a single individual, he has a wife and children. And they, too, may be seized, not because of their share in the squandering of the property, but on the simple ground that the debtor with all he had was surrendered to the creditor, and in ancient times wife and children were not regarded as persons, but as chattels. 2 Kings iv. 1; Neh. v. 5; Isa. l. 1.

The frightful fruits of sin appear. It draws the guilty one with all he has into the abyss of ruin. Its sad effects are sure in some way to extend to those near us. It brings unspeakable misfortune and misery upon those most closely united to us. The sins of the parents are visited on the children. The father by profligacy brings his offspring to bitter want. The very name they bear he makes for generations a stench in the land. The rich man in hell offers an example of the torment one suffers there who was here a stone of stumbling to others. "What woe must it be when a man must say to himself, you have dragged down into ruin your innocent wife, your innocent children!"

"Payment to be made." The proceeds of the sale could not be expected to cover the colossal debt. But right and justice must be executed whether the loss is made good or not. Men often let the debtor go, as no reimbursement is possible. God does not act thus. He suffers no loss if one squanders ten thousand talents, for He is Lord of all, but he who is guilty of this must suffer justice. Not only must payment be made that the proceeds be covered into the king's treasury, but the sum due must be paid. The king demands his money, and though the sale prove not sufficient for this purpose that does not in any way affect the order.

26. "The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

"The knees of the servant strike together, the terrors of judgment seize him, his pride is broken and he falls prostrate before his lord."

His sins and his guilt are more than he can bear, and from the depth comes the piercing cry for mercy. Lying on his face, he pleads, "Lord, have patience." Do not act hastily. Like all

debtors, he only asks for an extension, for time, and makes positive promise to pay, where, with the utmost indulgence, nothing can ever be expected. So large a sum he could never make up. Bengel: "He merely exhibits, therefore, his contrition." Luther: "Not until the king demanded a settlement did he realize the debt. So with us. The greater part have no thought of sin, feel secure, have no fear of God's wrath. Such cannot come to forgiveness, for they never come to the consciousness that they have sin. The servant, too, made light of his obligations, but when the account was taken and sentence given to sell him and his family and all, he came to realize the debt. So it becomes a serious matter to us when our sins are made manifest in our hearts and the account is held before our eyes. Then one feels himself the most wretched man on earth. Such knowledge makes a man humble and penitent, so that he can come to the true forgiveness of sins. Where such humility is wanting, there is no forgiveness." Luther further holds that the gospel of forgiveness is only for true Christians, who know and feel their sins. He adds, "Where are we to go? Here is the debt, and we cannot pay. It is impossible. This is the great concern, how we may escape from this awful debt. Look at the servant. He realized his debt, his inability to pay, and the punishment before him."

"He therefore humbles himself and entreats for mercy. This is the lesson the Lord would have us learn, if we would be free from the debt. Any one denying the debt, like the Pharisees, only makes the matter worse. But if we confess, then we are fast, for we cannot pay. There is no possible way of our satisfying that claim against us. Our only recourse is to confess our guilt, and falling down with the servant, cry like the publican, "God be merciful to me, the sinner." The servant, by his promise to pay all, represents the conscience, which in its perplexity and distress presumes that it can make payment to God for sins. We act like this fool. Though hearing of the forgiveness of sin, we reason, for this and that sin I will do good works, fast, pray, give alms, so as to pay for it. Human nature always wants to pay and get credit for it."

We are unable, also, to comprehend the exceeding riches of grace. It is too much, too good to be true. God cannot discharge us from everything. Something must be made amends for. It is too much to have everything cancelled and presented gratuitously. Luther further suggests that to a heart smitten by the law, feeling its need, and prostrate before the Lord in prayer, there remains only this defect, that it wants to help itself. Nature cannot rid itself of that.

While we cannot pay a single farthing of the accumulated debt, we must at least be resolved not to add anything farther to it, *i. e.*, that we will cease from sin. "For to continue in sin, and not be willing to cease from it and yet pray for forgiveness, this is mockery to God."

27. "And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt."

The cry for grace touches the heart of the lord. The servant fears his righteous wrath, and cringes like a worm before his majesty. The royal heart is moved with compassion, a faithful picture of the heart of God. The law proclaims him to be, indeed, a rigorous judge, but he is this, says Luther, "with reference to sinners who neither hope for grace nor seek it. But sinners who grieve over their sins and pray for grace shall find grace." And that because God is a gracious God and has a Father's heart. It is, in fact, God's grace that brings the sinner to sorrow over his sins and lets him see his desperate plight, wherein he realizes that he can not extricate himself. "God beholds this, that thou canst not pay, hence He presents all as a gift of grace."

The servant awaited with an awful suspense the result of his petition. The worst that could befall him threatened him, and the strictest command regarding him has been given. Though knowing the gracious character of his lord, he is also sensible of his justice, and his own conscience is condemning him.

What he could not hope for, actually happens, namely, the grace in the heart of his lord triumphs over justice. Above all that he could ask or think, his lord is merciful and gracious. He does not give orders for the delay of judgment, nor fix a time for making up the ten thousand talents. By one stroke of amazing pity he cancels the whole obligation, remits the entire loan and sets the servant free. He sends him away, "not with the anxious fear that sooner or later the judgment will yet be executed, a fear which would become intensified by his unavailing efforts to raise the fabulous sum due, and by the terrible certainty that after all he with his wife and children could not escape the just fate." No, he is released once for all, and with uplifted head, with peace and joy in his heart, he can go forth, beginning life afresh under the benign reign of so gracious a sovereign. The mercy far exceeds the prayer. The verb for the lord's compassion expresses more than the verb used in the servant's prayer. Besides, he had not dared ask for forgiveness, only for a delay of judgment. "He had prayed for one kindness and he obtained two." Luther from this forcibly expounds how man is freed from

sin: "in no other way than it stands in the Creed: I believe in the forgiveness of sins, *i. e.*, I acknowledge and truly feel my sins, I tremble and quake on account of them. How shall I be delivered from them? Thus am I freed by believing that although sin is here and I feel my sins, yet is it not sin, because it is forgiven. But if sin is forgiven, the forgiveness has not been merited. For, to forgive is not to reward, not to pay, but to give freely out of pure grace. . . . And this is a great matter that I apprehend and believe with my heart that all my sins are forgiven and that through such faith I am righteous before God. All jurists and wise men say that righteousness must be in the heart and soul of man. But this Gospel teaches that we become righteous and redeemed from sin through the forgiveness of sins."

"Our righteousness, salvation and comfort are without us. We are before God righteous, acceptable and holy and wise, although within us is nothing but sin, unrighteousness and folly. In my conscience is nothing but the memory and consciousness of sin and terror of death, and yet I am to believe that no sin or death exists, for this word has been spoken to me: Thy sins are forgiven thee. This servant does not pay his debt out of his own pocket or chest, for he has nothing to pay with; the payment rests altogether in the power of another, in the power of the king who takes pity on the servant and says: 'I have compassion on you, I will tear up the ledger so that you are no longer indebted to me, not because you have paid me, but because I exempt you from payment.'"

Flesh and blood proposes of course to bring forward something of its own on which it may rely. It cannot comprehend pure grace and forgiveness. Luther confesses that it is hard for himself to believe this article of the Creed. He compares human nature in this matter to a man at whom one aims a loaded gun with a view of shooting at him, and he is yet to believe and say, This is nothing. He declares that his nature and his papistic training inclined him to do good works in discharge of his sins. "I would present a painted sinner before God, and acknowledge myself a sinner so far as I do not feel my sins. But when the words of the Holy Ghost say I believe the forgiveness of sins, he cannot refer to painted, but to real actual sins."

If the forgiveness of sins is to be real, then the sins, too, must be real. He urges that one do not dispute much with his sins, or he will get to where he wants to pay for them like this servant. One should not listen to the fear and unbelief of his own heart but to the word of God, who is greater than your heart and mine. "If we believe the Word, that Word will open heaven to us, and

we shall know that God's Word is greater, higher, deeper, longer and broader than all creatures."

"Strikingly this Pericope teaches also that our justification consists not in causing a new deportment or conduct, not in effecting a moral transformation of man, but in bringing about a new personal relation of man to God." The relation of the servant was instantly changed from that of being under the king's wrath, to that of enjoying his unqualified favor.

It teaches, too, very clearly that the debt was actually paid by the king himself. He assumed the obligation. It was at the expense of the royal treasury that the colossal debt was cancelled. The sacrifice, the loss, was sustained by the lord himself, and thus the captive debtor was discharged.

28. "But that servant . . . found one of his fellow-servants which owed him a hundred pence: and he . . . took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest."

"The first act of the parable is concluded, a second follows which alas! completely annuls the first one." Jesus said nothing of the thanks expressed by the servant to his lord, for He means to refer to the thanks shown by his conduct—which renders reference to verbal thanks superfluous.

Scarcely had he emerged from the palace, discharged from an immense debt, when, before reporting to his wife and children, and while the good impressions and noble resolutions were still fresh in his mind and while, one would think, his heart was in a transport of joy over his master's goodness and his tongue must have been saying, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, he hunts up a fellow-servant, one like him in the employ of the great good king, who owes him a few *denarii*, about 17 dollars? One might have thought that, his heart swelling with joy and gratitude, he would with a burning tongue have announced the king's munificence, that having received so vast an exercise of mercy, he would be delighted to show mercy also to an associate, for whom he would have a fellow-feeling and who owed him but a paltry sum. He should have "recognized the hand of God which brought him this opportunity to show his gratitude to his lord on the humblest of his fellow-servants."

But we see the reverse of all this. The moment he finds this debtor he falls upon him and grasps him by the neck, subjecting him to wanton rudeness and brutality. It seems that the Roman law authorized creditors to drag their debtors before the judge, holding them by the throat. Choking him, he demanded "pay what thou owest." The correct reading is *εἰ τι*. *Εἰ* does not have here its conditional force, nor can it be accepted in this instance as

the expression of Greek urbanity, nor as implying uncertainty as to the debt; for the certainty of the debt is implied in the terms of the passage, and, moreover, in the laying hold of him and choking him was necessarily presupposed on the part of the *δούλος*. No, *εἰ* is simply the expression of a pitiless logic. "Pay, if thou owest anything. From the latter the former follows as a matter of necessity. If thou owest anything (and such is the case), then thou must also pay." It is a strong expression for "since."

The unmerciful conduct of the servant who had experienced incalculable mercy from his lord, has, alas! too often its counterpart in the conduct toward his fellow-men on the part of the Christian, who has received measureless pardon. Yet what offense, of which one brother can be guilty toward another, is to be compared with the guilt in which we find ourselves toward God? What are one hundred *denarii* to ten thousand talents? The respective obligations cannot be weighed on the same scale. Luther: "The Lord would say, If you want to dress up your injuries to such a degree that you think you have ground for anger, remember that this is not even in the proportion of one florin to one hundred thousand to what your guilt is before God. Then if God shuts His eyes toward you and does not impute this debt to you or regard it, how can you be so unmerciful and hard as to make allowance for nothing, to exact the last reparation? Do nothing, then, respecting your neighbor's sins against you, other than your heavenly Father has done with your many and great sins, and you will be true Christians."

29. "So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him . . . Have patience with me, and I will pay thee."

The conduct of this servant towards the former one is almost exactly the same as was that one's conduct toward the lord. He does not, however, worship him, the two servants being on an equality. His prayer is literally the same as was the other's to his lord, wanting only *πάντα*. The fellow-servant is in the same plight as the other one was a few minutes before. Still, his situation is not so desperate. The other had to give an account to his lord, he only to his fellow-servant. The other could under no circumstances repay the loan, this one may, with a little time. The debt is not exorbitant, only for the instant he is not able to meet it.

As his own course which was so successful is followed by his fellow-servant, the pardoned debtor, it might be expected, would also imitate the generous action of his master. Certainly the

words of the fellow-servant must touch his heart, and the whole situation must strike him as the picture of his own late desperation. But though the situation and the words are identical with his own case, he enacts exactly the reverse of what he had himself experienced. He not only has no idea of forgiving the small debt, but he even allows the debtor no time to make payment.

30. "And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay" . . .

The great mercy he had received failed to teach his own heart mercy. Some men never learn, they only forget. He cannot even allow any delay. See the contrast between God's heart and man's. No wonder man cannot bring himself to believe the greatness of God's mercy. Contrast "he would not" with "the lord being moved with compassion," v. 27. A man keeps anger toward another but seeks grace from God, Sir. xxviii. 3 f. With the most heartless cruelty the servant proceeds against his fellow-servant. The lower the stage where one man gets another into his power, the more inhuman his treatment of him. Could he have sold him and his wife and children he would doubtless have quickly put them under the hammer. But since he was likewise himself a *δοῦλος*, "servant," he could not without the lord's permission expose him in the slave market, and he would hardly seek that permission. "He knows to what he is obligated before God and man by the mercy which he has received from their common lord." So he drags him into the prison, where he may languish and rot in misery until the paltry debt is paid. As it was in the prison system of those days impossible for the poor slave to earn anything, he must lie hopeless in his cell "till the angel of death will open for him the doors of the prison."

31. "So when his fellow-servants saw . . . they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done."

The servant's cruelty to his debtor took place in broad daylight and in the public gaze; as if he were unconscious of shame and regardless of restraint, he drags his victim before all eyes into prison. Nor would concealment have availed him. Everything comes ultimately to the light. "Even if thou forgivest thy brother with the lips but bearest the grudge in the heart, it cannot be concealed from the great Lord." The world teems with His servants, whose argus eyes discover what is hidden, and what they fail to perceive is naked and open to His own eyes.

These fellow-servants are not the church, which binds and remits sins, nor the angels, nor the preachers of the gospel, but simply "faithful ones." "The faithful servants of God, who yet

dwell amid this savage race, do not behold with indifference such violation of brotherly love." They are "exceeding sorry." "Sorrow frequently includes the idea of indignation." Nebe holds the latter idea unnecessary. Meyer: "They were grieved at the hard-heartedness and cruelty which they saw displayed in what was going on." It was their deep sympathy with their brother which, above all things, determined them to report to their lord what had happened. Sympathy is a nobler motive for their conduct than indignation, but both feelings may reciprocally strengthen each other. They themselves could not help. No one can by any means redeem his brother. They knew not whither to turn for counsel and help. They go and tell "their own lord."

Εαυτῶν. Meyer: "The reflective pronoun indicates that, as befitted their position, the σύνδουλοι addressed themselves to their own master. Their confidence in him led them to turn to him rather than to any one else." Nebe: "It explains that in their sorrow they proceeded to the right door; the lord alone could help them and their fellow-servants, for he is lord of all of them."

They "told," narrated minutely, διασάφησαν, and with sorrow what had occurred. Luther: "Such merciless conduct grieves the Holy Ghost in Christian hearts; more especially those who preach the gospel are deeply grieved; hence they sigh unto God. And such sighs are not unavailing. And as the intercession of saints is not fruitless, so the general curse, the general lamentation over the wicked, is not fruitless. The Lord is moved by such complaints and sighs to hasten punishment. We are warned here not to despise such a general curse, but to be merciful and kind to our fellow-servants."

32. "Then his lord called him. . . Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me :"

The king decides promptly. The culprit is summoned into his presence, and he cannot disregard the summons, nor escape the king's powerful hand. He must obey, and he stands now again in his presence. But oh, how changed is all! How dark and threatening now the countenance of the king! The servant had demeaned himself as if he had no lord, as if responsible to no one for his actions. And now the king can no longer exercise toward this thankless, heartless servant the highest monarchical privilege, the prerogative of amnesty, of pardon. The time for that is past. When grace has been wantonly abused the majesty of the Most High will be asserted.

He is accosted with crushing words: "wicked servant," thus uncovering his heart as base, malicious, atrocious. Mercilessness

is peculiarly wicked. "His sorrow had not been godly, his prayer had not proceeded from the heart, wickedness was so deeply imbedded in him that the grace he experienced made not the slightest impression upon him. He is an incorrigible, and, therefore, a lost man." His iniquity is held before his eyes; he has a short memory, hence he must be reminded of the great goodness which had been shown him, not only in answer to his prayer, but beyond it, and "he is to realize also that he is receiving justice, for the sentence which the king is about to announce is final for time and for eternity." "God does not judge a man so that he may possibly think that in some way injustice was done him; the mouth and the heart of the damned will acknowledge that they have but received what their deeds deserved."

"All that debt I forgave thee." What a debt! What forgiveness! *Ἐκεῖνον* calls back the debt to his treacherous memory; *πᾶσαν* accents its immensity. And this was freely granted to him in answer to his prayer, while a like prayer from his fellow-servant he treated with scorn, yea, answered it by twisting his neck and casting him into prison.

Note, it is not his former debt with which he is upbraided, but his conduct subsequent to the remission of the old debt.

33. "Shouldst not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?"

Doubtless one object of the king's great generosity was to furnish an example to his servants. If he could act so graciously toward them, how much more should they have forbearance with one another—a fellow-feeling should characterize fellow-servants! All his subjects should take his conduct for a model. *Qualis rex talis grex*. He showed his servant mercy that the latter might show mercy to his neighbor. This the latter could well afford to do after the munificence he had experienced. How we need such a lesson! God's mercy to us is a seed-corn from which a rich harvest should ripen. "God's dealings with us should be the norm of our dealing with our brethren, not only in general, but also as here in particular." It must be so. *Ἐδεῖ* points to moral obligation, "the highest rule of equity." The wicked servant should have known this. His lord was the king, the king's will is the law of the land, and what his will is he has just experienced in his own case. We see here that the two great commandments, Matt. xxii. 37 ff., have one root. "Love to our neighbor is not possible if we have not so experienced the love of God that we can say, we love Him who first loved us. The thought of the grace of God, which has glorified itself in us, sinners, impels us to conciliating,

forgiving love to our neighbor. Such a duty must be easy and sweet. Thankfulness is a precious thing. To the heart that has experienced grace it becomes a necessity to exercise grace. Yet our forgiveness bears no comparison to that of God."

34. "And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due."

Now comes the crushing catastrophe. The king becomes angry. He was not angry before, when through this servant he had sustained an incalculable loss; but now when not he but his servant has suffered from the wicked man, he becomes furious. And the greater the mercy he had shown the offender, the greater is now his wrath against him. "Those who have experienced the mercy of God, ought to be very careful of exciting His anger. Every favor received from God increases the claim of God upon us and our obligation to God."

God's anger is as fearful as His love is boundless. Heb. x. 31. He is a consuming fire at the same time that He is love. The former sentence on this culprit was that he should be sold, with his wife, etc., but, now that his lord is angry, a more terrible sentence falls from his lips. He delivers him to the tormentors, βασανιστῆς, to torture him, "not only to cast him into prison, which was only a part of their functions." Vengeance, frightful vengeance, is now decreed. The former command to sell him would have placed him simply in the power of another master, one doubtless less merciful and patient than the one to whom he had been so faithless; but he would still have a slave's measure of freedom, and suffer no particular punishment. Now he that would show no mercy receives no mercy. In the king's fury he is handed over to the rack. The "tormentors" were the deputies of the jailor. They were in charge of various forms of torture, and on them it devolved to torment him perpetually—"doubtless a reference to the unceasing torments of the damned."

Note, that there is no further trial or judicial process. He is at once made a prisoner and the tormentors are charged to execute their infernal office. Some: the tormentors are the wicked angels. Some: the torments of conscience. As God often uses wicked men to inflict judgment on the wicked, so wicked angels fittingly become the torturers of those in hell. To limit the idea to the accusing and condemning conscience is "to spiritualize the entire realistic eschatology."

The tormentors are to continue their awful inflictions without end. This, says Meyer, is the legitimate inference, for the man will never pay, and he cannot be released until the whole vast sum

he owes is paid. Not a glimmer of hope illumines the blackness of despair. The smoke of their torment ascendeth forever. "Εως οὖν is perverted by Romanists and some other expositors to mean that there will be an end, that men will at last be released. Cf. the Lecture on Matt. xxii. 44, Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity. The words, *per se*, admit of the Roman Catholic exposition. All depends on the connection. "If the wicked servant cannot be discharged from prison until he shall have paid the whole debt, he will never go out from it, for he could never earn and accumulate ten thousand talents there—a task which was confessedly impossible when he was at large. "Such is the enduring character of guilt, founded on the inexhaustible claims of God."

The objection that this king punishes a man for claiming his rights is refuted by the oriental sphere of the parable, where the monarch reigns as an absolute despot, and also by the thought that no parable is to be made to "go on all fours." The conclusion renders all clear.

35. "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

Cf. Matt. vi. 15. This is the moral of the parable. This is a comforting, as well as a formidable conclusion: God's dealing with us is made dependent on our dealing with our brother. "My" Father: not your Father, "for it is not meet that one so wicked and so hating his fellow-man should call God his Father." "God cannot in deed and in truth be called our Father so long as we have unforgiven sins resting upon us, and are not disposed to forgiveness; He is only then our Father when we put off our sins, and mercifully forgive sins, as He forgives us."

"Heavenly Father"—the only passage which names God thus. "Jesus purposely reminds us of the supermundane character of God. If He who dwells in the High and Holy Place condescends to grant forgiveness, how much more should we who live here upon earth and ourselves must beg for forgiveness, be ready to forgive." Deut. xiv. i.

Human forgiveness is to be reciprocal, "every one his brother," etc.; and it must be "from your hearts"—not uttering forgiveness with the mouth and cherishing the grudge in the heart, deferring vengeance to a favorable opportunity, "forgiving but not forgetting," when the essence of forgiveness is practical forgetting.

Meyer: "Out of true inward, heartfelt sympathy, not from a stoical indifference." Bengel: "A wrong is recalled to the mind; it must be dismissed from the mind and from the heart. Things which are thus done, are done with unwearied frequency," cf.

“compassion” v. 27. The “brother” ought to have a place in our hearts. A sin committed against me by a brother grieves and wounds my heart; hence I must forgive from the heart, so that all bitterness and revenge may be shut out from it. The stream of forgiveness must proceed from the innermost forces of my life, so as to sweep away every trace of malice.

“Divine forgiveness, then, is contingent (not *causaliter*, for God forgives from pure grace like the king) on our readiness to forgive our neighbor. Divine mercy obligates us to mercy toward our neighbor.” If forgiveness sets hard on our pride, as this threatening conclusion implies, let us think of the mercy of God. Certainly, a poor sinner who knows that he cannot get through life and death without the grace of God, will be merciful to his brother. Let this warning never be forgotten. Nebe: “God’s forgiveness is an act of grace and is therefore conditioned (pending). If we fall from grace the forgiveness received will also drop and the sins already forgiven fall back again upon our guilty head. The kingdom of God is not a kingdom of external rights, but of ethical relations.”

The wicked servant has been allegorized as the Jewish nation, the fellow-servant as the heathen, on whose neck the Jews determined to impose the yoke of the law.

The theme is the Duty of Forgiving One’s Brother. The duty may be considered in Its Ground, Its Content, and Its Promise.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE LESSON OF THE PARABLE:

1. God has forgiven thee a boundless debt.
2. Thou wilt not forgive thy brother a little fault.
3. This brings thee into eternal torment.

MOTIVES FOR FORGIVENESS:

1. Our own need of it from God.
2. Our forfeiture of God’s forgiveness if we refuse to forgive.

Or,

1. The grace we have so abundantly received.
2. The wrath of God to those who show no mercy.

THE UNFORGIVING MAN THINKS NOT

1. Of the greatness of his guilt.
2. Of the depth of divine mercy.
3. Of the affliction of his brother.
4. Of the wrath of the living God.

THOUGHTS MOVING US TO FORGIVE:

1. Our own great burden of sin.
2. The mercy of our God.
3. The hardness of our heart.
4. The terrors of judgment.

THE UNMERCIFUL ONE COMES TO JUDGMENT, BECAUSE

1. Of his wantonness toward God's grace.
2. Of his sin against his brother.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

1. How necessary to all men.
2. How easy to obtain.
3. How hard to keep.

THE PARABLE, A WITNESS TO EVANGELICAL TRUTH:

1. That righteousness is obtained alone through faith.
2. That righteousness obtained through faith prompts to good works.

Matt. xxii. 15-22.

LUTHER judged that the principal thing in this Gospel is that our dear Lord teaches the difference between the two domains which we are accustomed to call the spiritual and the secular. But Nebe holds to the eschatological import of the text. This Gospel may represent either how the Son of God will finally triumph over all His foes, or what a fate awaits His foes. Parallel passages are Mk. xii. 13 ff. and Luke xx. 20 ff.

15. "Then went the Pharisees . . . counsel how they might ensnare him" . . .

The Sanhedrin had despatched an embassy to Jesus who during His last Easter visit taught in the Temple as never before, to inquire, as formerly of John, by whose authority He was acting. He first pointed to His forerunner; His divine credentials before all the people were the baptism of John. Hereupon He related to them three parables, the last one being that of the wedding garment. "The enemies of the truth are outwardly and inwardly judged and annihilated. But they will not surrender to the triumphant truth. They are hardened sinners and they seek in some other way to attain their end." Meyer: "Now no longer in their official capacity, as deputed by the Sanhedrin, xxi. 23, 45, but on their own responsibility, and as representing a party adopting a still bolder policy, and proceeding upon a new tack."

"They took counsel," held a consultation, xii. 14, *ὁπῶς*, "expressly with a view to," not "how." They resolved that He should be caught. *παγιδεύω*: an Alexandrian term common in the LXX., 1 Sam. xxviii. 9; Eccl. ix. 12; only here in the New Testament. They proposed to lay a snare in order to entrap Him. They refrained from taking a hasty inconsiderate step, and adopted a measure which might be worked "until it hung like a rope around His neck." They were resolved to compass His ruin, the mask was thrown off; but it had become evident that they could accomplish nothing with open violence, they must resort to cunning and deception. "That is the way of the world against all faithful witnesses for the truth. If it fails by its authority to bring them to

silence, it employs the arts of guile, and if these do not prevail it proceeds to open force." The witness of the truth is never secure, least of all when he by his word and spirit has smitten the foe. Let him beware that neither in word nor work he lay himself open to assault. Having found no occasion in His life for any charge, they hoped that they might surprise Jesus in some unguarded expression, in an utterance which would serve as a trap or snare, "into which if He once fell they would hold him fast, with a view to further proceedings against Him."

16. "And they send . . . their disciples with the Herodians . . . we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth . . . for thou regardest not the person of men "

Crafty Pharisees! They form a resolve, which was unquestionably the most cunning one ever directed against Jesus, but in the execution of it they step into the background, perhaps from fear of the people. They select "some of the younger members of their order to coöperate with a party no less hostile than themselves to the Messianic pretender, with a view to betraying Jesus into an answer savoring of opposition to the payment of the tribute." Meyer: "Their treacherous purpose would be less likely to be suspected, their discomfiture would be less galling. His answer, it was hoped, would furnish the ground for an indictment before the Roman authorities," Luke xx. 20. Nebe suggests a pretense that these younger Pharisees and the Herodians had a dispute on this point and had concluded to submit their difference to His decision.

The Herodians formed a political party of Jews who supported the Herodian dynasty—"popular royalists in opposition to those who clung to the principle of a pure theocracy, though willing also to take part with the powerful Pharisees against the unpopular Roman sway, should circumstances render such a movement expedient." Meyer: "They may have cherished hopes of enthroning a Herodian prince independent of Rome." Schaeffer: "They were supporters of the alliance with the Romans and the political opponents of the Pharisees," in favor therefore of the tribute. No adherent of the Herodian administration maintained by Rome would dare to oppose the tribute. These hostile parties formed a coalition like Herod and Pilate, for the purpose of destroying Him whom both alike hated only more than they hated each other. "It is a powerful sign of the times that these sworn enemies now join hands against the Lord's anointed." If His reply should be negative, the Herodians could arrest Him on the spot and readily convict Him of treason, Luke xx. 20; xxiii. 2; if affirmative, it could be used to stigmatize Him as a traitor to His nation and to

alienate from Him the masses. Should He decline to give a positive answer, He would excite the suspicion of all parties. Cf. Luther on this Gospel.

"Master, we know." By flattery they attempt to ingratiate themselves with Him so as to betray Him into an answer that may be turned to His destruction. Διδάσκαλε, "Master," Teacher, is the flattering, hypocritical title with which they affect to recognize His authority. He, the wisest of the wise, is able to solve this great problem. As obedient children, they submit themselves to Him who is able to teach all men and to answer all questions. The title is further to remind Him that neither His office nor His duty will allow Him to deny an answer. It is followed up with further simulated praise, furnishing without being so meant "a splendid attestation to Christ from the mouth of His foes." "Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth." Schaeffer: "Sincere, always speaking Thy real sentiments." He is the truth, and He does not conceal the truth within Himself, but He radiates it. Bengel: "Truth is the agreement of things with the faculties of knowing, willing, speaking and acting." And "the way of God," the way prescribed by God, the behavior of men to each other which God requires, vi. 33; John vi. 28, He teaches truthfully, "as beseems the character of this way."

The truth of Christ and His doctrine is evident from the fact that He cares not for any one. He teaches without regard to the persons of men. From Him the truth proceeds directly, bends neither to the right nor to the left, and He is never concerned about results. "Jesus is a teacher who does not distort God's word and righteousness; He is the champion of truth, ready to suffer and to die for it." In His teaching there is no partiality, no time-serving spirit. "Thou dost count no man's favor and fear no man's frown." He is able to proclaim the truth so unequivocally, because He does not "regard the person of men" — a phrase derived from the Hebrew. Πρόσωπον, "person," denotes here the outward, "the outward manifestation in which men present themselves." xvi. 3. "To thee it is always a matter of indifference in regard to a man's person, whether he be powerful, rich, learned, etc., or the reverse." "Person of men" is sharply contrasted with "way of God." No fear of Cæsar, it is intimated, will deter thee from denying the right of paying the tribute. Thy devotion to truth has made thee absolutely fearless. When truth is at stake Cæsar is to thee no more than any one else.

All these adulatory expressions were but the bait intended to

conceal the hook by which it was hoped He might be caught, as if this confessed embodiment of the truth were so swayed by vanity and pride as to be betrayed thereby to utter rash and bold political opinions which would cost Him His life. With the same breath they declare Him *impervious* to selfish considerations, and yet seek to reach Him by an appeal to His vanity.

17. "Tell us, therefore . . . Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?"

"Therefore" connects with their fawning introduction. Since He uniformly tells the whole truth, He will certainly do this also in the present case, regardless of persons or circumstances. "Is it lawful," not must we, but may we? Does our duty to God allow it? It is a political question to which they demand a categorical answer, but "by ἐξῆστι they place it under the ethico-religious theocratic point of view." May an Israelite with a good conscience pay tribute to the Emperor, or not? Is it right for God's people to acknowledge subjection to a heathen power? Is obedience to Cæsar treason to God, or is it not? Dare we recognize any king but Jehovah Himself? It was a burning question which they propounded. The poll-tax and land-tax which had but recently been imposed were probably gathered at that very time. The Jews had often before paid tribute to foreign rulers, but a party of zealots maintained that such an acknowledgement of heathen sovereignty was sinful according to Deut. xvii. 15. This view was secretly embraced "by increasing numbers of the Jews and sustained by the Pharisees until it ultimately led to the last Jewish war and the complete overthrow of the Jewish state by the Romans."

Nebe assumes from the whole tenor of the introduction that the inquirers expect Him to declare against the tribute. "Had He done this it would have been up with His cause. We know what tension was already on the public mind and how passions were inflamed. But a few days previous the people had saluted Him as the Son of David and led Him in a jubilant, triumphal procession into the Holy City. One word from the mouth of Jesus and the revolt from Rome is an accomplished fact."

"Cæsar," a title borne by the successors of Julius Cæsar, Roman emperor. Tiberius was reigning at the time.

18. "But Jesus perceived their wickedness . . . Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?"

"Perceived." Bengel: "Without delay or instruction from any one." His possession of truth was more complete even than their address implied. Their serpentine and diabolical plot served only to reveal their wickedness and hypocrisy to Him who knew what is in man. To the eye of the Searcher of hearts obeisant flat-

tery is no mask for malicious designs. Hypocrisy avails nothing with Him. All weapons against Christ are not only futile, they are the undoing of those who forge them. True to their praise of Him that He not only knows but unreservedly imparts the truth, He speaks the truth, though in a way not to their liking.

"Why tempt ye me?" Meyer: "Try whether He might not be betrayed into returning such an answer as might be used in further proceedings against Him." "Hypocrites," men pretending to be just and conscientious while they engage in a wicked movement. He mercilessly pulls off the mask. He is indeed true, and careth not for any one. He calls their action by the right name. It is no innocent game they are playing, but a malicious plot by which they seek to destroy Him. He boldly teaches them the truth, what they **are** and what they seek, a truth of greater moment **than** the solution of the tribute problem.

19. "Shew me the tribute money. And they brought . . . a penny."

Our Lord's answer would have been sufficient, but "He recognizes it as a duty of His calling, to solve this burning problem, to subject it to the light of God's Word," since as King He reigns over all mankind, over all the kingdoms of the earth. Christ has a word for the state, even though His kingdom is not of this world. He turns here the weapon of His antagonists quickly against themselves. Instead of answering them He compels them to answer and convict themselves. He directs them to show Him the tribute money, and with the handing of the *denarius* they gave away their whole case. The tribute was paid in Roman, not in Jewish money. "You have your answer marked on every coin which you handle." The obverse of the Roman penny or *denarius* (a small silver coin) presented the portrait of the reigning Emperor; the reverse contained the name and title of the person whose image adorned the obverse.

20. "And he saith . . . Whose is this image and superscription?"

As if He did not recognize the Emperor's likeness and could not read the inscription, He draws from their lips the answer by which they will be confounded. They dare not refuse to answer after coming to Him so plausibly and so cunningly with their question. They conform to His simple request, and lo! those who digged the pit fall themselves helpless into it. Cæsar's image and title solve completely the problem.

21. "They say . . . Cæsar's . . . Then saith he . . . Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's . . . unto God the things that are God's."

"Render therefore," etc., as unmistakably required by "this

ocular demonstration of the actual existence and practical recognition of Cæsar's sway." These make obvious "not merely the lawfulness but the duty of paying to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar." The currency shows by its stamp the legitimacy of the existing rule. Here is the head, name and title of the Emperor. Render, therefore, return to him, his own. *Suum cuique*. Only Roman money appears to have passed as legal tender at that time in Judæa. Had the Jews not been subject to Rome, they would not have been likely to have employed its coin, stamped as it was with heathen, idolatrous images. The currency of the land furnished the indisputable evidence of the true situation of Judæa. The nation had by its disobedience forfeited national independence, 2 Chron. xii. 8; Ezra ix. 7; Neh. ix. 27, 30. Their use of the Roman coin was a daily reminder of their guilt. "Their question was equivalent to another: Is it lawful for us to endure the divine punishment of our sins, or not?" Since your just punishment has brought you under Rome's subjection, the sense of justice points out your duty, honesty meets its obligation to government. Only then do men fulfil all righteousness when they render to the powers that be the things which confessedly belong to them.

It required not a moment's deliberation for the Lord to give a decided and clear answer, the force and sweep of which underlie all the obligations of Christian citizenship. There is no conflict between your duties to Cæsar and your duties to God. It is not *either* the one *or* the other, whose claims must be met, but the claims of both must be acknowledged. The inquirers affected that the tribute was a matter of conscience. But the one duty does not exclude the other. Meyer: "He recognizes at the same time the necessity of attending to their *theocratic* duties, which are not in any way compromised by their political circumstances." To God also must be rendered—the same verb, to pay what it is one's duty to pay—"the things that are God's," those derived from Him in virtue of His dominion over you, those set apart to Him as belonging to Him exclusively; not simply the temple tribute, nor the repentance which foreign rule should awaken, "but everything, in short, of a material, religious and ethical nature, which God as Sovereign of the theocratic people is entitled to exact from them as His due." As the relations to Cæsar involve everything to which he is entitled as *de facto* ruler, so their relations to God comprehend every religious and moral obligation, the whole domain of duty. Luther: "God's things are love to God and man, faith in Christ and devout obedience to the gospel." Man is to give himself to God; since he bears the image of God he is em-

phatically God's property, His engraved gold. It is for man in faith and love to give his heart back to God.

Meyer: "In a quick and overpowering manner He disarmed His adversaries and laid the foundation for the Christian doctrine, which was afterwards more fully developed, Rom. xiii. 1 ff.; 1 Tim. ii. 1 f.; 1 Pet. ii. 13 f., 17, that it is the duty of the Christian not to rebel against the existing rulers, but to *conjoin* obedience to their authority with obedience to God." While Jesus, conformably to the question, directed His reply to the first point, "the second is to be regarded as the unconditional and absolute standard, not only for the first of the duties here mentioned, cf. Acts v. 29, but for every other." Meyer: "The second part of the precept serves to dispose of any collision among our duties," Rom. xiii. 5.

The Herodians were probably regarded as disloyal to the theocracy, the Pharisees felt compromised by the Roman yoke. Jesus declares: You ought to be subject both to God and to Cæsar. *Kai* unites the duties to both. The one duty is inseparable from the other. It is not a case of an alternative. The higher unity of the true theocracy embraces in itself also the Roman civil rule, John xix. 11. In case, however, Cæsar demands from us what belongs to God, then we must obey God rather than men and endure persecution.

The Protestant principle of the rights of the state is here clearly established. Christ recognized the state as a distinct, independent power ordained of God, just as He recognized marriage to be a divine institution. Loyalty to the state does not compromise true loyalty to God in spiritual things. The two distinct spheres can and shall coëxist. Christ, the foremost Statesman, fully acknowledged the authority of the Roman emperor over the Jewish nation, although it was obtained through craft and violence and blood. Christians are to submit to the existing rule, regardless of the unrighteous way in which it was secured, regardless of the character of the ruler.

The limits of the state's jurisdiction are also prescribed by the last injunction. The duties of a citizen are determined by his duties to God. You are not to give to Cæsar what belongs to God. The state has its rights, but not in the domain of conscience. The Divine government, further, is above the Roman; that comes first and is unconditioned, the latter is second, conditioned, appointed, and therefore also capable of being removed.

22. "And . . . they marvel'ed, and left him, and went their way."

They were amazed at the promptness, directness and wisdom of

His answer, which thwarted their cunning and malice. It, further, confirmed the truth of their own testimony, but it offered no ground for accusing Him of disloyal sentiments either towards the ancestral faith or the reigning Emperor. His questioners, not He, are caught in the snare, and an arrow has pierced their conscience, for neither Cæsar nor God had received from both parties what was due to each. Their amazement involved the confusion of shame and humiliation which His reply induced, but in spite of their conviction of its truth they were not led to believe in Him, but to depart. Those who are not drawn by the gospel are repelled, and, as hardened sinners, proceed the more surely to eternal destruction.

This Pericope exhibits the triumph of the Lord over all His foes, the end of those who set themselves against Him. It is proper also to draw from it lessons on the relation of the spiritual to the secular power, on the just claims of the state.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE LORD TRIUMPHS OVER ALL THE CRAFT OF HIS ENEMIES.

1. He notes their disguises.
2. He reproves their hypocrisy.
3. He catches them in their own words.
4. He smites them in their conscience.

JESUS HOLDS THE FIELD.

1. In spite of all wickedness.
2. By the power of His word.
3. In perfection.

THE LORD'S TRIUMPH OVER HIS FOES:

1. Unexpectedly. 2. Instantaneously. 3. Decisively.

THE CONTEST AGAINST THE LORD IS

1. Cunning. 2. Desperate. 3. Futile.

THE END OF THE WICKED. THEY ARE

1. Unmasked. 2. Dishonored. 3. Hardened.

THE FRUITLESS ASSAULTS OF THE WICKED AGAINST CHRIST.

1. They first seek counsel. He possesses it.
2. They mean to catch Him in His word. He catches them in their word.
3. They mean to condemn Him. He condemns them.

THE WICKED MUST PROMOTE THE GLORY OF THE LORD:

1. By the inquiry they address to Him.
2. By the overthrow they suffer from Him.

THEY WENT THEIR WAY, WITH

1. Their flattery unavailing.
2. Their hypocrisy exposed.
3. Their conscience smitten.

THE RIGHT OF THE STATE : THE LORD

1. Establishes it.
2. Places it alongside of His kingdom.
3. Subordinates it to His kingdom.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt. ix. 18-26.

THE Ancients made an eschatological interpretation of this passage: Jairus represents Moses with the law, his moribund child the Jewish nation, the woman with the issue of blood heathenism. The afflicted woman is healed before the daughter of Jairus is restored. The fullness of the Gentiles must be brought into the kingdom before the fullness of Israel is brought in. Nebe, rejecting this, finds another eschatological point of view. He makes this Pericope the counterpart of the last. "There unfaith fell under Christ's judgment of condemnation, our Lord's enemies bit the dust; here faith receives the promise, for Christ is the Deliverer from all evil, He awakens the dead."

Parallels of the narrative occur Mk. v. 22 ff. and Luke viii. 41 ff.

18. "While he spake . . . there came a ruler and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand . . . she shall live."

Meyer locates this incident in the house where Jesus sat at meat, v. 10, after the call of Matthew, and where He successively disposed of the Pharisees and of John's disciples. Nebe holds this inadmissible, and quotes Mark and Luke as representing the crowd around Christ so dense that the woman with the blood-issue found extreme difficulty in attaining her intense desire, and thinks it unlikely that this throng was besieging the house in which Jesus sat composedly enjoying a banquet. Those evangelists portray Christ "by the sea," surrounded by an enthusiastic crowd on the beach, and the ruler must therefore have sought Jesus and found Him near the city.

While Mark and Luke give the name of him who here approached Jesus, Matthew simply designates his rank as that of *ἀρχων*, not a Jewish ruler or member of the Sanhedrin, but, according to the other evangelists, a ruler of the synagogue, *i. e.*, of the synagogue at Capernaum (v. 1), one of the national hereditary elders, who were *ex-officio* rulers of the synagogue, supervising the distribution of alms and the local religious worship and discipline. Luke vii. 3; xiii. 14; Acts xiii. 17.

One of the elders was probably selected by his colleagues espe-

cially to discharge this office, to have as president the entire care of synagogal matters, including the execution of penalties, x. 17; xxiii. 34; Acts xxii. 19; xxvi. 11; John ix. 22; xvi. 2. Jairus was accordingly one of the foremost citizens of Capernaum. From the most respectable and influential quarter, what was quite unusual, John vii. 48, comes with great humility an application to Jesus for supernatural help.

“And worshipped.” This person of distinction, doubtless steeped in prejudice, fell prostrate before the Son of man, seeking a form of relief beyond the power of ordinary men, though not necessarily recognizing Christ’s divinity. The great ones of the earth cannot dispense with a Saviour, for rank, power, riches, cannot shield us from pain and distress. And the hand of God came heavily upon this man where he was sure to feel it most keenly.

Sorrow is a messenger which leads him to Jesus. He pours out his troubled heart in the language, “My daughter is even now dead.” A more crushing affliction can hardly be imagined. She was an only daughter, a maiden of twelve years, just passed from childhood to blooming youth. As the age of twelve was epoch-making in the development of boys, so also of girls. Mark has the father say, “at the point of death.” He may have used both expressions. The tension of his mind caused by her extreme illness would fear the very worst. As the death-struggle seemed to be at hand when he left, the worst, he imagined, had by this time taken place. Efforts to revive her may have followed, and the message of the servant later (Mark and Luke) announced their futility. In the overwhelming apprehension of losing his dear child and the instantaneous interposition he sought, he may easily have given such expression to his fears as if they had already been realized. But though she is in the last article of death, not to be rescued from the inexorable enemy, yea, though death itself has by this time triumphed, all is not over as long as Jesus is within reach. And to Him the distracted father flies.

“Come and lay thy hand.” His personal presence is deemed necessary and the imposition of His hand, “the symbol and medium in the communication of a divine benefit.” Some: the exertion of His power, xix. 13; Luke iv. 40; xiii. 13; Acts vi. 6; viii. 17 f.; xiii. 3; xix. 5; Gen. xlv. 14; Num. xxvii. 18. Some recognize in the ruler’s words a wonderful intermingling of faith and unbelief, and some censure the weak faith which requires personal presence and bodily contact, but Luther’s clear eye and sympathetic heart discover what is only commendable: “When others have lost all hope of finding relief, he does not despair, but while

the rest of the household have given her up and weep and lament and think only of making the sad preparations for her burial, he hastens to Christ with the confidence that if he can bring Him to his little daughter, she will live again. This was a marvelous example of faith, especially at that time, when the like had never happened or been heard of (excepting perhaps the case at Nain, Luke vii. 11 ff.). His faith regarding the person of Jesus shows unmistakably the recognition of Him as the true Messiah sent of God, not a political monarch to seize the throne amid pomp and splendor, as was expected by the mass of the Jews, but one sent of God to relieve in straits where man cannot help, namely, to redeem from death and the power of Satan, yea, to create and to give life out of death. He views this Man as one who truly possesses divine, eternal power over all creatures, since he believes that He hath both life and death in His hands, that He is the true Son of God according to the Scriptures."

19. "And Jesus arose, and followed him, **and so** did his disciples."

Without delay Jesus complies with the earnest, humble petition, and rises at once to follow Jairus to the bedside of his child. To help, to heal, to deliver, to bless, are always His delight. Yet since this man's faith is lacking in strength, the Lord means doubtless to subject it to a trial, to teach him the hard lesson through which faith reaches perfection. No record is given of a single word of encouragement or promise to the anxious suppliant for help. "Silently He arises, silently He follows the father." "He remains silent in order that by silence He may develop the faith of the father." The disciples accompany Him, yea, a great, motley, stifling multitude, moved by the interest they felt in His work, by the instincts of kind-heartedness toward the afflicted family, by idle, vulgar curiosity. "The father leads the procession, he hastens his steps, but the progress with such a throng is slow, for him far too slow, and a new hinderance finally blocks the way altogether."

20. "And behold, a woman . . . came behind him, and touched the border of his garment:"

With the three evangelists a new scene opens before our eyes, introduced by Matthew with the word "behold," attracting the attention of the reader to something extraordinary. Wonder crowds upon wonder. What manner of man is this? Preaching, stilling the tempest, putting demons to flight, healing the sick, raising the dead! Is it a marvel that as by magic power He attracts to Himself all hearts susceptible of noble impulses?

“A woman.” The names of those healed by Christ are mentioned only in special cases. The specific nature of her hæmorrhage is not given, only its long continuance and incurable nature. It may have been excess of menstruation or hæmorrhoids. As a rule we find those brought to Christ for relief to have been cases of extreme distress. For twelve long years she had been a sufferer from the dreadful disorder, and her sufferings had been increased, Mk. v. 26, rather than relieved by medical treatment, the outlay for which had reduced her to poverty, Luke viii. 43. There was a medical profession, of which she had availed herself, but her physicians had made her worse, and had made her poor. From her they got her all, from them she received nothing save an increase of pain, an aggravation of the disease—illustrating the vanity of all human specifics for our spiritual maladies. After consulting in vain all physicians far and wide, she makes her application to the one great Physician, who heals all our diseases. But how humbly, how modestly! Not before Him does she come, but from “behind” she approaches Him. Not with words does she address Him, but ventures only to touch “the border of His garment.” What she had heard (Mark) concerning His cure of the sick inspired in her the confidence that the slightest and most superficial touch was sufficient. She may have meant to escape the observation not only of the Lord, but also of the crowd. Had she prostrated herself before Him she must have named to Him the character of her malady. From this, modesty restrained her. “There are maladies, as there are sins, which are not to be imparted to all ears.” Her disease, furthermore, rendered her ceremonially unclean, Lev. xv. 25–29, and excluded her from the public assemblies and from the temple courts. Any one touching her was thereby defiled till evening. But our Lord can be touched with all our defilement, and yet, like the all-purifying fire, He cannot Himself be defiled.

“The border,” *κράσπεδον*, fringe, not the hem of His garment. How scrupulously the Lord observed every part of the law! According to Num. xv. 38 f., the Jew wore a tassel or tuft of dark blue fringe or ribbon on each of the four extremities of his outer garment to remind him of Jehovah’s commands, xiv. 36; xxiii. 5. The outer garment was a square piece of cloth, and was worn in such a manner that two of the tassels hung from the back and were thus in easy reach of the woman threading her way through the crowd. Her faith is superior to that of Jairus, yet as she, like him, deemed an actual touch essential, it did not rise to the height of the centurion’s faith, to whom a word was sufficient. Long the

victim of a wretched disease and deterred from coming openly like others to the Fountain of relief, such is her faith that in the face of all obstacles it finds access to the Helper.

21. "For she said within herself, If I do but . . . I shall be made whole "

In true humility she would avoid display. She wanted relief, and not a sensation. Her own impurity will be swallowed up by His absolute purity. But the exact quality, the unclouded genuineness, of her faith, is subject to criticism. It is not likely that, after the manner of relic worshipers, she attached a healing virtue to the tassel itself, sacred as that emblem was as the insignia of the church of God. Olshausen: "She entertained the idea of a sacred atmosphere encircling the heavenly visitant, and this tassel would, like a magnet, serve as the conductor of power." We need not assume that her faith was strictly pure or absolutely correct. It is the faith of the heart, not the correctness of the creed, which saves. Nebe: "She resolved to touch 'the border,' because approaching from behind that was the part she could manage to touch with the least difficulty and with the least observation." Through this touch she would come into actual contact with the Lord Himself, and thus healing virtue would be transfused into her. She was evidently of the opinion that the power of healing which emanated from Jesus was physical, inherent in His body, not conditioned simply by His knowledge and will. There must be, she thought, some mediating agent between her faith and His person, consequently she did not rely on the healing power of His word or His will embodied in word, but in her unenlightened faith she deemed physical contact indispensable. Luther appreciates her faith: "It overcomes two mighty obstacles: *first*, in that it is assured that she will be cured as certainly as she touches but the border of His robe. It is not necessary that she be seen of Him, and she is not worthy to have Him speak to her, yet is she so confident toward Him in her heart that she does not for a moment doubt of immediate relief. This is equal to believing that this man is possessed of divine, almighty power, that He knows the secret thoughts and intents of the heart even though nothing be said to Him." He recalls that her faith had been awakened by His word, and that besides this word she has nothing, and desires nothing, further than the touch of His garment, which she regards as an outward sign or medium, "just as we have nothing else in this life and in the realm of faith than the external Word and sacrament wherein, as in His outward raiment, He suffers us to touch and to embrace Him." He sees two wonderful people in the lesson: the father

whose daughter had expired conceives the thought that if Jesus will but lay His hand upon His dead daughter she will be restored to life; the woman who in all the world can find no cure conceives the thought that she will recover her health if she can but get near enough to the Lord to touch the outermost corner of His robe. "The *second* masterpiece of her faith is that she can overcome her own unworthiness and roll from her heart the great stone which has so heavily oppressed her and deterred her from going like others openly before His face. Being ceremonially unclean, her presence in society was forbidden. Her uncleanness was an expression of God's curse, resting upon her before all the people and excluding her from their fellowship; and having for twelve years vainly tried all means of recovery, she might conclude that God had on account of her sins punished her especially. Hence it was not without a sore struggle that her faith secured that which she sought from Christ."

"I shall be made whole," literally saved. The word, three times repeated in this narrative, implies here recovery from sickness, viii. 25; Acts iv. 9, but almost invariably it refers in the New Testament to deliverance from sin, the salvation of the soul. "Jesus" means Saviour. He is the One who makes us whole.

22. "But Jesus turning . . . said, Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Jesus, fully conscious of what was transpiring, and perceiving the woman's object and her faith, affectionately assures her "thy faith hath made thee whole." Meyer: "On account of thy faith thou art saved," but the Perfect expresses what has taken place, the completed action. What Jesus assured her as having happened because of her faith, is immediately confirmed by the evangelist. She is not censured for the method she adopted, but addressed by the condescending, endearing term of "daughter," which is not used thus elsewhere in the New Testament. The other evangelists record that Jesus, having felt power going out from Him, turned about in the dense throng and by the inquiry, "Who touched me?" brought the modest, shrinking woman before Him. But Matthew states only that He turned around and most kindly encouraged and rewarded her faith—granting her not only the cure she sought, but words of blessed comfort. Various reasons for this are suggested: that she might not afterwards reproach herself as if she had secured the cure by stealth; that her faith might be strengthened through knowing that she could not conceal herself from Him; that she might be presented to others as a heroine of faith, "a fearless and public confessor;" that she might realize that

it was not the outward touch of His garment, but His holy and gracious will moved by her faith, that saved her. To one coming to Him thus, Christ manifests Himself beyond all that we ask or think; and when she sees grace beaming from His eyes before whose glance she fain would have sunk into the ground, and hears from those lips, whose reproof she dreaded, only sweet words of cheer, her mind undergoes a sudden change. She no longer fears publicity. She no longer dreads detection, she is made courageous and happy as she is singled out from thousands, and not only relieved from sickness, but favored with the smile and the salutation of the Lord. A spiritual cure as well as a physical one has intervened. Bengel suggests that some persons came to know that they had faith only when the Saviour announced the fact. "He praises and confirms their faith; He ratifies the gift and commands it to remain; and at the same time intimates that if others continue without help, unbelief is the only cause."

"Thy faith." Faith is the hand that takes the heavenly gift, which itself is always unmerited and free. Thy faith, not thy touch, was the medium of thy deliverance. It was the touch of that on His heart, not the touch of her finger on the border of His robe, that drew forth the healing grace. Faith reaches its hand into the bosom of divine Love, and from that moment the distressed are made whole. Even when that hand is weak and trembling, as here, it yet seizes the divine help. "The result was instantaneous and complete. The moment of her believing touch was the moment that 'she felt in her body that she was healed from her plague' (Mark), 'the fountain of her blood was dried up.' " From that hour onward she was relieved of the inveterate malady which for twelve years had baffled all medical skill.

23, 24. "And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw . . . he said, Give place: for the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed . . ."

How long a time was taken up by the preaching of the gospel to this woman we are not informed, but to the father of the dying or dead maiden, suspended between hope and despair, every moment of delay must have seemed an age. It was while thus kept waiting in agony till the woman was dismissed that the servants arrived, Mk. v. 35, announcing that all was over, that it was useless for the Master to continue His journey, the child had gone beyond all reach of help. But painful beyond expression as must have been at first the ordeal to the anxious father, when all might depend on one moment of time, he nobly sustained the trial of his faith. The servants with marked positiveness urge the futility of any further efforts, it is too late even for Christ to bring relief, but

he is apparently uninfluenced by their advice as well as by their message. His faith has just received the strongest encouragement from this case of extraordinary healing and from the words of Christ in his presence respecting the power of faith. He who told the woman, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," could also say to the waiting father of the now dead child in "words of unchanging preciousness and power," "Fear not, only believe, and she shall be made whole." Luke viii. 50.

The nearer the approach to the house of Jairus, the clearer become the signs and evidences, confirming the report of the servants. Familiar dirges interrupted by heart-rending wails resound from the house. The funeral minstrels had begun their death-strains before the Prince of Life appeared. "Flute-players" accompanied the singing of the dirges by hired mourners, a funeral custom which prevailed also among Greeks and Romans. "The crowd," Luke vii. 12. Meyer: "Consisting partly of the women hired to mourn, partly of the friends and relatives of the ruler." Nebe limits "the crowd" to the female mourners, who with the flute-players formed the troupe of hired mourners. It is a question whether this action of the mourners was intended to heighten or to soften the grief of the family. The appearance and behavior of the women would probably excite grief more and more, the soft strains of the flute would soothe it. The record of this "tumult," lamentation and wailing (Luke), leaves no doubt that all believed death to have actually occurred.

As the lamentation over the dead is at its height Jesus enters and says: "Give place, for the damsel is not dead;" withdraw, depart ye, you are not needed here. Death has not triumphed. There is no cause for lamentation. "The interment which they expected to attend will not take place." They can repair to some other place where some one is really dead. Bengel: "Our Lord proceeds with entire confidence to work a miracle." But beforehand He dismisses the whole assemblage, funeral minstrels, curiosity-seekers, miracle-devotees, friends and disciples, suffering only the parents and the three chosen disciples, "a three-fold cord of testimony," to witness the miracle, Mk. v. 37-40. Some think this was done to assure quiet, so that the resuscitated child might in the stillness of the death-chamber contemplate her Deliverer. But the chief reason is doubtless that which caused His miracles as a rule to be wrought in secret. He would avoid ostentation and publicity, and while these flute-players and wailers might be expected to trumpet and shout forth His mighty work, that was not His method of advancing the kingdom. The fact that "they laughed

him to scorn," shows further that they lacked the faith and reverent docility which qualify men for the appreciation of the supernatural in word and work, although by this derisive laughter, the index of unbelief, Gen. xviii. 2, they confirm the truth of both the death and the miracle.

Meyer, like all the FF., interprets the declaration, "the damsel is not dead," etc. : "She is not to be regarded as permanently dead, but only as sleeping and certain to come to life again, like one who awakens out of sleep. Thus, from the standpoint of *His own purpose*, does Jesus clearly and confidently speak of her death." He says, "the hypothesis of *a mere apparent death* is as incompatible with the view of the evangelists as it is inconsistent with a due regard for the character of Jesus." Olshausen holds the child to have been in *atrance*—a case similar to that of Eutychus, Acts xx. 9, and deems the act of Jesus in this light to be no less significant than a resurrection miracle would be. The real moment of death is known to God alone; Christ knew that it had not come—literally, "she has not died"—knew it before He even saw the child, and assured the father of her recovery when told she was dead, and herein consists the miraculous element of His act. The denial of the death, however, the contrast of sleep with death by Christ, offers a difficulty that cannot be overlooked. Luke speaks of the minstrels positively "*knowing* (not supposing) that she was dead," and likewise says, "her spirit returned." Jesus, as also profane writers do, applies the term "sleepeth" to an unquestionable case of death in John xi. 5, 11, 14. There He explains its mystic sense to the disciples, here to an audience unsusceptible to divine truth He offers no explanation. To them, heartless and profane, it is not given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, to witness exhibitions of divine power and grace. Bengel: "The dead all live to God," Luke xx. 38. So brief is the state of death to her that it is rather a sleep from which she is soon to awaken. Nebe claims that Jesus used the term sleep to express the maiden's condition in order to conceal the miracle from the eyes of the profane mass. "Into the heart of the father the word fell as a precious balm, with the people to whom it was addressed it was a ground for mockery," for the world does not believe in death being vanquished, but knows only inexorable destruction. Nothing so excites the scorn of the world as the doctrine of the resurrection.

25. "But when the crowd was put forth, he entered . . . took her by the hand; and the damsel arose."

"Put forth," put out unceremoniously, xxi. 12, the request to retire (24) not having been complied with, Mk. i. 43; Acts ix. 40.

The Prince of Life now "entered" into the castle of death, and not only took hold of her hand, but (Mark and Luke) addressed her, "Damsel, I say unto thee arise," and the dead child feeling the touch of Life, hearing the word of Life, receives back her vanished spirit, the soul is reunited with the tabernacle it so lately deserted. Luke v. 55. Claspings the hand which has the power of life and death, she arose. Jesus raised the dead from the bed, from the bier, from the grave. Luke vii. 14; John xi. 44. Nebe: "In the Lord is the fulness of life; the maiden arose: so He will one day again stand at the graves of the dead, and at His word they shall all arise."

26. "And the fame hereof went forth into all that land."

Bengel: "St. Matthew, therefore, did not write his book in that land," xiv. 34, 35; iv. 25. Into all the land spread the fame, the report, of the miracle. "How like the world. First it laughs and mocks at the word of life. Then when this word; transcending all they ask or think, is fulfilled, then they rejoice over it and spread it abroad. In man's innermost essence is found a longing and a sighing to be delivered from the ban and fear of death and to live forever." The scornors may be still laughing, but His fame sweeps over all lands and all times. Death is swallowed up in victory, and this victory is sung in the tabernacles of the righteous, for this victory of life is also the victory over our own death. It is now true of all our departed ones: "They are not dead but sleep." Christ has converted death into a peaceful slumber. The dead sleep. After the toil and turmoil of life they have entered into rest. But "the sun of the resurrection breaks into the night of death." Our sleep is to gather new strength for the work of a new day. So there will come from the sleep of the dead an awakening to a new life.

The Lord shows Himself in this Pericope as the true Helper; our faith is the victory which overcometh the world.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE LORD OUR ONE COMFORT:

1. In life. 2. In death.

JESUS IS THE TRUE HELPER.

1. Every hour suits.
2. Every occasion is favorable.
3. Every degree of faith is acceptable.
4. Every form of distress is overcome.

THE KINDLY HELP OF THE LORD:

1. Sought. 2. Unsought.

ONLY TAKE HEART, THE LORD REJECTS

1. Neither the faith which is weak.
2. Nor, the faith which is not wholly pure.

ONLY TRUST IN THE LORD.

1. No faith is for Him too poor.
2. No hour is for Him too late.
3. No distress is for Him too great.

THE BELIEVER OVERCOMETH ALL THINGS:

1. Himself. 2. Every affliction of life. 3. Death itself.

THY FAITH HAS SAVED THEE.

1. Dost thou also desire help?
2. Dost thou desire help from the Lord?
3. Dost thou desire help from the Lord in faith?

ACCORDING TO OUR FAITH IS THE LORD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD US.

1. To the unbelieving He says, Depart.
2. To those of little faith, Fear not.
3. To the believing, Come, behold My glory.

A MIRROR FOR THE TESTING OF OUR FAITH.

1. Faith is to grow in affliction.
2. Faith is to come to the Lord in humility.
3. Faith is to cleave to the Lord with entire confidence.
4. Faith is to find a gracious hearing.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt. xxiv. 15-28.

The Pericope series of the last eschatological cycle leads us finally into the last great eschatological discourse of Christ. The last things, heretofore presented only in a general way, now specifically confront us. This Lesson does not yet strictly treat of them, but only of the last signs of the last things, of the last day. Concerning this final discourse of Jesus, Nebe refers us to the fuller exposition of the Gospel for the Second Sunday in Advent, and he repeats here only the fact that in this discourse we have His answer to a two-fold question, that relating to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and that relating to the time of His second appearance. "His answer does not confound the boundaries of the two occurrences, rather does it distinctly separate them from each other. Here the subject is the destruction of Jerusalem: the period immediately preceding the last day of the Holy City is described with historical fidelity. But since Jerusalem is the foreground and the mirror for the end of the world, this text suits well as an introduction to the termination of all things."

Parallels are found in Mk. xiii. 14 ff. and Luke xxi. 20 ff.

15. "When therefore ye see the abomination . . . which was spoken of by Daniel . . . standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand),"

"Therefore" connects with what precedes, but not necessarily with the last clause—"then shall the end come"—for that would make the end of the world coincide with the fall of Jerusalem. Wieseler: "It is used by way of resuming the thread of conversation interrupted by the warning, 4-14." Nebe: "The theme here is the preaching of the gospel to all the nations, but the times of the Gentiles begin only with the fall of the Holy City." The hearers are pointed to the abomination of desolation described by Daniel: this shall serve them as a sign. Meyer: "The predictions respecting the Messianic woes become more threatening till just at this point they reach a climax."

"The abomination of desolation" Meyer renders as showing that the abomination "consists and manifests itself as such in the desolation," the former produces the latter, the idea, "the abomi-

nable desolation," being expressed by the use of another substantive instead of the adjective in order to bring out the characteristic attribute of the leading idea. Expositors are not agreed whether the citation is from Dan. xi. 31; xii. 11, "The abomination that maketh desolate," or from ix. 27, "upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate." The Greek expression is not exactly identical with the LXX. of either citation. Meyer, repudiating any reference of a special kind, is satisfied "with what the words themselves plainly intimate: *the abominable desolation on the temple square* (v. 2), which was historically realized in the doings of the heathen conquerors during and after the capture of the temple, though at the same time, no special stress is to be laid upon the heathen standards detested by the Jews." Bengel understands the Roman army to be meant, and claims that the Romans attributed divinity to them. Nebe rejects Meyer's view, because after the occupation of this last stronghold by the Roman legions it would have been too late for the Christians to seek to escape. They fled as soon as the war began. Meyer reminds us that the occupation of the temple area is to serve as a signal for the flight, not to the people in Jerusalem, but to "them that are in Judæa." Jesus means to say: "When the abomination of desolation will have marred and defaced the symbol of the *divine guardianship of the people*, then everything is to be given up as lost, and safety sought only by fleeing from Judæa to places of greater security among the mountains."

It has been held according to an interpretation in Josephus, Bell. Jud. iv. 3, 6, 12, that the temple was horribly desecrated by wild swarms of Jewish zealots, who with the aid of the Idumæans enacted horrible butcheries within the temple precincts, or "by the corrupt state of the Jewish hierarchy," but this has no warrant in the context. This "abomination" has had innumerable misinterpretations, as *ex. gr.*, Antichrist, the statue of Titus supposed to have been erected on the site of the temple, that of Caligula (Tiberias), said to have been set up within the temple, or the equestrian statue of Hadrian. Josephus asserts that the governor was obliged by a tumult of the people to remove these effigies from the city.

"By Daniel the prophet"—an acknowledgment by Christ that Daniel was a prophet, and an implication that what he predicted must be fulfilled.

"Standing in the holy place," "already firmly standing and destined long to stand." It is not an evanescent phenomenon, but the horrid desolation stands there like a spectre, as one who ex-

pects to remain. Note the tragic contrast between the "abomination" (profanation) and "the holy place," Mk. xiii. 14. Bengel: "Punishment generally begins in the more holy places, and thence spreads to other parts."

"Let him that readeth." The reader's special attention is invoked, some think by Christ, some by the evangelist. As Mark (xiii. 14) has the same passage, it seems to have been Christ's own admonition. Bengel, referring it to the evangelist, observes: "Both evangelists, writing before the siege of the city, warned their readers to observe the accurate advice of the Lord concerning the place and the rapidity of flight," "the precise point of time indicated by Jesus at which the flight is to take place." Cf. Dan. xii. 10. Meyer: "The reader of Daniel, not the reader of the gospel, is meant." Nebe: "The Lord would call attention to the prophetic word. Centuries before He had revealed His holy and unalterable will, but Israel as a whole has not heeded these warning voices. May at least they, God's chosen ones, have an attentive ear for God's Word, and a sharp eye for the signs of the times, that they may not be swept away with the great mass in the day of the great recompense."

16. "Then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains:"

Bengel: "Not all the Jews, nor Christians dwelling elsewhere, but those who, believing the word of Jesus, should be in Judæa," in the country, John iii. 22, "in contradiction to Jerusalem with its holy place, the abominations in which are to be the signal for flight." No other form of escape is thenceforth possible. Nebe: "As God has beforehand foreseen His judgments, so He has also even from eternity provided a refuge for those who hope in His name." The judgments which will profane and desolate the most sacred locality, will sweep from those desecrated heights down over the whole country. "The Christians, alone," says Nebe, who holds to the profanation of the temple by the Jews themselves, "could with enlightened eyes contemplate 'the abomination of desolation,' and every Israelite who recognized the abomination of desolation in the holy place, would through this recognition be driven forth from the temple and the synagogue into the bosom of the Christian Church." Cf. "Your flight," etc., v. 20.

"Unto the mountains." Mountains are natural defences and places of safety; those of Judæa, with their forests, glens and clefts, would offer excellent hiding places. Such a flight did take place. "When Cestius had to retire from Jerusalem, many Jews, terrified by the end in prospect and determined to escape, abandoned the

Holy City.” Cf. Josephus. The Christian church, the mother Church, obeyed her Lord’s admonition with admirable wisdom, composure and resolution.

Ewald says: “When, towards the end of autumn A. D. 66, the war fever was at its height, and no one who would not be influenced by it against the Romans could remain undisturbed in Jerusalem, what was to be done by the mother Church? Some of its members advised that they should consent to be used as instruments of Jewish pride and thirst of power. But although Christianity had at the time, far more than Judaism, the strongest justification for hatred of the Roman dominion, it had long ago learned too deeply, over against all injustice in the present world, to depend alone upon Jesus Christ its true Deliverer, and had, besides, in the latter years too much taken to heart the admonitions of Paul and other great teachers respecting the right attitude toward the pagan government, to allow of the Christians being drawn into this war. We know of a certainty that not a single Christian of prominence yielded to the passion for this war. The mother Church formed its resolution, kept together and withdrew beyond the Jordan, to Pella, a mountain city.”

17, 18. “Let him that is on the housetop not go down to take out . . . that are in his house . . . him that is in the field not return back to take his cloke.”

The apodosis closes with v. 18. “Not go down,” Bengel: *sc.* “let him go down, not by the inner, but by the outer stairs.” Others: Let him flee over the roofs till he comes to the city walls. Let all, wherever they may find themselves, hasten to the sheltering mountains as quickly as possible. The slightest delay will involve fearful perils. The people whom Jesus warns to flee are non-combatants. They are devoted to the enjoyment and the labor of life: some are on the roofs of houses, where the Oriental loves to pass his time in the cool of the evening, others are toiling in the fields. “As Lot’s wife turned into a pillar of salt, when she looked back as God destroyed with fire and brimstone the cities of abomination, so will He overwhelm with destruction those who delay to escape when the abomination of desolation shall stand in the Holy Place.” Without looking round, without turning round, they are to make their escape, not lose a moment by trying to snatch some fond treasure stored away in their house, or securing some provisions to sustain life in their flight. There is only one thing for them to do, to fly, abandoning everything. They will be fortunate if they can escape with their lives.

“Him that is in the field.” Nebe: “If the inhabitants of the

city behind the walls which would shelter them from the first assaults of the enemy are to make their escape as quickly as possible, what remains for the people at their work in the open fields? There is no possible defense for them in their dwelling-places, they must fly at once into the wooded hills, and though their upper garment was left in the house, they must with their scant apparel simply and suddenly flee for their lives." John i. 27.

19. "But woe unto them . . . with child and . . . that give suck in those days."

How motherhood and infancy ever touch the Savior's heart! Bengel: "A prediction of misery, not by way of imprecation, but of indication." Flight in their situation will be so much more difficult and attended with peculiar trials. "Godly women will share the common calamity." Luke xxiii. 29. Nebe rejects the theory that women with child and nursing mothers cannot flee at all, or that the latter will have to leave their infants to their fate. They simply cannot flee with the swiftness demanded by the crisis. They can only move slowly, and what may the poor women expect if they fall into the hands of the soldiery, who are desolating their land! Along with the fruit of their womb, they will perish by the truculent lust and fury of their conquerors. Nebe in calling attention to the depths of sympathy for these hapless women uttered here, observes: "He sees, before His eyes, what He again beholds in spirit when on the way to Golgotha He turns round to the women of Jerusalem, who with tears were following Him, Luke xxiii. 28 ff.; all their misery presses upon His great heart and forces from it this cry of pain and anguish." There may be recognized also in this plaintive alas, the love of native land.

20. "And pray ye . . . flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath:"

They are to make it the object of their prayer that they may escape everything calculated to interfere with their hasty flight. Bengel: "Many things are rendered less grievous in answer to the prayers of the righteous." He who orders the seasons can also time the judgments and catastrophes which fall upon His people.

"Winter" refers not simply to the time of the year, but to the state of the weather, xvi. 3, "foul weather," when hiding in the mountain fastnesses was impracticable and when roads would be impassable. Their prayer was heard. Their flight took place in the spring.

"On a sabbath." Meyer: "On the Sabbath the rest and the solemnities enjoined by the law, as well as the limitations of a Sabbath journey (2000 yards, Exod. xvi. 29), could not but inter-

fere with the necessary haste." He further notes that Jesus is speaking "from the standpoint of *His disciples*, such a standpoint as they occupied *at the time He addressed them*, and which was destined to be outgrown only in the course of a later development of ideas (Rom. xiv. 5; Col. ii. 6)." Nebe quotes the canon: *Omne periculum vite tollit Sabbatum*, and claims that only very scrupulous Jews would have been kept from fleeing on the Sabbath before an approaching foe; but this consideration falls before the fact that as the days of Jerusalem were nearing their close, the Zealots who held strictly to the letter of the law were in the ascendant. Lange claims accordingly that these Jewish Zealots would have visited with condign punishment the hated Christians who by attempting flight on the Sabbath would have thus trampled down the law. This view becomes the more probable when we remember how the Zealots were embittered against the Christians because, although bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, they would not make common cause with them against the Romans. "For them to have attempted flight on the Sabbath would have been pouring oil on the fire." Ptolemy Lagus is said to have taken Jerusalem by surprise on the Sabbath.

21. "For then shall be great tribulation, such . . . not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be."

Note the threefold negative. They cannot be too urgent and importunate with their prayers for a suitable day and a favorable season, since a catastrophe is impending which bears in its womb unheard-of distress and misery, surpassing even the flood and the destruction of Sodom. There was a literal fulfillment of this prophecy. Luther, for proof that no greater woe has ever befallen the earth than the destruction of Jerusalem, quotes the histories describing the terrible butchery of the Jews by the Romans and by each other; how they sprang into the fire, and had themselves strangled by one another, how hunger became so intense that men ate the strings of their cross-bows and even devoured their own children. Three plagues united their horrors: the enemy without, besieging the city; the pestilence within; and in addition, a frightful famine. Above all this was the horrible discord among the Jews themselves. Josephus estimates that during the siege and fall of the city 1,000,000 people perished by the sword or otherwise, and 97,000 were taken captive, for the Romans made their attack at the Easter festival, when the Jews had come in multitudes to Jerusalem. Josephus estimates the number present at 3,000,000. "This unparalleled distress came not upon the heathen, the people among the hedges, but upon the nation that had crucified

the Lord of glory, and had slaughtered His disciples, willing neither to see nor to hear them. These awful sufferings we should well lay to heart, that we may the more carefully mark what is the sin which brought about this gruesome distress, and learn to shun it."

Josephus records how Titus, moved by his well-known humanity, did all in his power to move the Jews to a voluntary surrender and thus save them from the fury of his legions. All was in vain. "They would not listen to the most heart-moving representations, and by their passionate resistance inflamed the fury of their enemies." Nebe adds: "This incomparable calamity which overwhelmed the Jewish nation came upon them because no nation had sinned like the Jewish nation against the living God, the righteous Judge of men and nations. This people with whom God had from the beginning instituted a covenant, which for centuries and for millenniums had been the subject of His saving grace, had not only failed to yield the fruit, to which He was entitled from His vineyard, but had despised and stoned His messengers and had slain the Heir of the kingdom, His Only-Begotten Son. As the sin of Israel surpasses all bounds, so must the 'tribulation' of those days: unique is the sin, unique, therefore, also the judgment executed upon it." See also on the exposition of the Lesson for the 10th Sunday after Trinity.

22. "And except those days . . . shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Nebe: "Yet even this tribulation has its bounds, and alongside of the inexorable righteousness of God, there is at work incessantly the mercy of His heart to defend and to bless." Even in His judgments God has His eye fixed on the salvation of the world.

"Those days," namely the great tribulation (29). Meyer understands this of "the *reduction of the number of the days*, over which, but for this shortening, the tribulation would have extended." The destruction would have been universal had not the time in which it will rage been reduced beforehand. The days themselves are not made shorter, nor is the tribulation lessened. Meyer: "The Aorist *ἐκολοβώθησαν* conveys the idea that the shortening was resolved upon *in the counsels* of the divine compassion (Mk. xiii. 20), and its relation to the Aorist *ἐσώθη* in the apodosis is this: had the shortening of the period over which the calamities were to extend not taken place, this would have involved the utter destruction of all flesh." The Future, "shall be shortened," leaves no doubt that a shortening of that period has actually taken place in the divine counsels, and that, therefore, the melancholy conse-

quences which would otherwise have necessarily followed have been averted.

“Those days”—doubtless the same as in v. 19, when the Jewish army shall have penetrated the Holy Place, v. 15. The fall of Jerusalem was hastened in God’s decree. Otherwise “no flesh would have been saved,” all flesh, every mortal man, would have perished. The context, referring to the calamity sweeping over Palestine, does not allow us to understand here the human race in general, but the Jewish nation. Meyer limits “flesh” to the Jews and Christians belonging to town or country who are found *in immediate contact with the theatre of war*,” and he includes among them “the elect.” But Nebe: “The Lord does not speak of a judgment, which is to fall upon all without distinction, but only of a judgment which is to strike the Jewish nation, which has rejected its Lord and Saviour.” He makes believers=“the elect,” the Jewish nation=“all (no) flesh.” Not a single Jew could have escaped with his life had the period of distress not been shortened. The holy race would have been exterminated in the Holy Land, would have disappeared from the list of nations. But for the sake of “the elect” this shortening has been determined by God. Meyer holds “the elect,” xxii. 14, to be those who, at the time of the destruction of the Capital, are believers in Christ, and are found persevering in their faith in Him (13). Bengel includes both those already converted and those hereafter to become so, or, as yet unborn, Mk. xiii. 20. He adds “where the force of temptation exceeds the ordinary strength of the faithful, election is mentioned, xxiv. 31; Luke xviii. 7, and the faithfulness and power of God, 1 Cor. x. 13; 1 Pet. i. 5; Rev. xiii. 8.” The elect are safe at all events, yet for their sake the period of tribulation is reduced, perhaps because of their prayers. Or, the longer the distress lasted the fiercer the rage against the Christians, or, the longer the Romans had to fight the bitterer would be their determination to extirpate the Jewish race. “In seeking to save the righteous God purposely adopts a course by which He may save others at the same time,” Gen. xviii. 13 ff. For the sake of delivering a few righteous individuals, He in long-suffering spares a whole city full of sinners.” The godly, often regarded with abhorrence by the children of the world, are the real bearers and preservers of the world; were it not for them the world would long ago have perished.

Israel was not wholly obliterated. A holy seed remained. “The tree which God’s own hand had planted and nurtured was not to be torn up by the roots, there must remain a trunk which in its own time will send forth shoots.”

23. "Then, if any man shall say . . . Lo. here is the Christ, or, Here; believe it not."

Ancient expositors recognized here a transition to the end of the world, but this view seems forbidden by "then," "for this cannot point to a later time, but refers back to those days which have formed the theme of the discourse." Ebrard interprets "then" of the interval between the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world. But it doubtless points directly and precisely to the impending destruction of the city and nation, cf. v. 29 with 21 and 22.

Besides the outward distress just portrayed there will be an extreme inward danger. Times of distress are wont to be attended with peculiar spiritual perils. It is then that the longing for deliverance becomes the most powerful, and with this comes the propensity to lend a ready ear to every promise of help. This distracted state of mind will be taken advantage of by impostors with pretensions to miracle-working. The heart is ever the seat of expectation and looks for something extraordinary, thereby offering to deceivers easy access. And these come in troops. Meyer: "Then, when the desolation of the temple and the great tribulation has arrived, false Messiahs such as falsely represent themselves to be prophets, will again come forward and urge their claims in the most seductive ways possible." He distinguishes these seducers from those in vv. 4 f. Nebe: "In those days of tribulation the people will remember to their ruin the promises, in order that the stone which the builders rejected may now grind them to powder." Not once only, but again and again, it will be announced "The deliverer has come." "Now hither, now thither, will men direct their eyes, now leading those yearning for deliverance to this person, now to that one. There will be a tossing to and fro, but all will be imposture and lying: "believe them not." Bengel: "For from that time forth the Son of Man will not be seen until His advent."

24. "For . . . false Christs, and false prophets, and . . . great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."

This announcement, as shown by *ῥάρ*, accentuates the foregoing statement. Or, it may be taken as a more precise prophecy: "Before the destruction of Jerusalem false Christs and false prophets will appear in Judæa. Meyer knows nothing of the historical fulfillment of the prophecy respecting such as falsely claimed to be Messiah, Jonathan and Bar-Cochba coming later. Nebe finds the fulfillment in the fact that certain prominent leaders were regarded by others as Messiahs. Josephus, Bell. Jud., 6, 5, 4, says: "What did most elevate them in undertaking this war was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, about

that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth. The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination." This shows that the ancient prophecies of the coming King were applied to one in their midst, probably to several specific notable individuals. The "false prophets" were not in this instance Christian teachers, v. 11—the false Christs also were not in the Church—"but such as pretended to be sent by God, and inspired to speak to the people in the season of their calamity, deceivers like those who appeared in earlier periods of national misfortune." Jer. xiv. 14; v. 13; vi. 13; viii. 10. Some regard these false prophets as "emissaries of the false Messiahs." Cf. Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 13, 14; 2, 13, 5; *Antt.* xx., 8, 6; *Bell. Jud.*, vi. 5, 2.

"Show great signs and wonders." xii. 39; Deut. xiii. 1. "All the forces of seduction are now active: not only attractive, overmastering personalities, with their inflammatory and captivating eloquence, but also signs and wonders, miracles which blind the minds of men as if they were the seals of almighty power. "Signs," says Bengel, "affect the intellect; wonders, prodigies, fearful sights, Luke xxi. 11; Acts ii. 19, trouble the mind." Meyer does not admit a material difference between the two classes of miracles. Cf. on Rom. xv. 19. The former, however, emphasizes their meaning, the latter their appearance as something calculated to inspire terror. Josephus relates that before the fall of the city wicked men "deceived and deluded the people under pretense of divine inspiration," *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 13, 4. "They pretended to exhibit manifest wonders and signs," *Antt.* xx., 8, 6.

These phenomena, which would excite the people to arms, as recorded by Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 13, would give timely warning to the Christians. The product of Satanic agency, such miracles, "lying wonders," would work the ruin of unbelievers and at the same time promote the deliverance of believers. Their seductive power threaten indeed the safety of even "the elect," for whose sake the time of the miseries attending the siege of Jerusalem was shortened (22). The very chosen ones, whom God preserved from being overwhelmed and destroyed by a longer continuance of the calamities, would now be led astray, if possible, by the deceivers. Nebe: "The elect themselves are not wholly secure, even they may be swept into the universal delirium." Bengel speaks of the "utmost endeavor, yet made in vain," Acts xxvii. 39, respecting which Nebe observes: "The futility of the attempt is not due to the believer, it is the work of God's grace. What Jesus declares to be

possible, He does not at once take back as impossible." Wetstein: "If it were altogether impossible that an elect one should be led astray from Christ, there would be no occasion for the admonitions which follow." Schaeffer: "While the word 'if' frequently introduces a doubt, it also frequently indicates that a particular circumstance may easily occur, or really does exist, as in chap. v. 29; vi. 30; vii. 11; xii. 28." "The sense of the words is very clearly given by one of the four disciples to whom they were spoken," 1 Pet. i. 1, 2; cf. 2 Pet. i. 1; Mk. xiii. 37. The fall of the elect is possible. God's protective arm needs to be stretched over us continually.

Nebe: "The more intense the love to the Lord in the early Church, the more dreadful the revelations of divine judgment, the deeper the birth-throes of a new era felt in the Orient and in the Occident, the more believers must anticipate the great day of the Lord as near. Even those Jewish pseudo-Christes and pseudo-prophets might lead them astray, for they professed in various ways to be reformers of holy things."

25. "Behold, I have told you beforehand."

There must be need for this warning, which is emphasized and impressed on the disciples by "behold." Schaeffer: "So that when all shall come to pass, your faith may not waver, but rather be confirmed," John xiii. 19; xiv. 29.

26. "If therefore they shall say . . . Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold . . . in the inner chambers; believe it not."

"Therefore," in accordance with my prediction. This verse is a rhetorical amplification of v. 23. After justifying His admonition there by the language of v. 24, He returns to the thought, "in order to bring to light the absurdity of such directions," and makes an emphatic close by the repetition of "believe it not." To "Lo, here" or "Here," correspond "in the wilderness," "in the inner chambers." These constitute more than "apocalyptic imagery." The pseudo-Christes will have two localities for their appearance, directly opposite in character: in the desert, iii. 3, where one might draw the deluded masses after himself, Acts xxi. 38, and where actually false prophets collected an army against the Romans, Josephus, Bell. Jud., iv. 9, 3; Antt., xx. 8, 6; in the inner chambers, where men are secretly and craftily hatching conspiracies. "While the former point to a specific individual in the desert as Christ, to whom the people may flock, the others mysteriously whisper about a Messiah, who is still concealing himself in a corner, but will soon come forth from his hiding place. Neither of them are en-

titled to credit." Schaeffer: "Whatever character the impostor might assume, he was not *the Christ* whom the disciples had known, and must be instantly and unhesitatingly disowned."

27. "For as the lightning . . . from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so . . . the coming of the Son of man."

Jesus now exposes the unwarrantable pretense of those who would direct men "here" or "there," to the most public or to the most secret places. His appearance will be as unmistakable as the lightning's flash. Men will not require to be directed here or there in order to see Him. The moment the lightning appears, it itself announces its presence everywhere. So the coming of our Lord, "the Son of Man," "will all of a sudden openly display itself in a glorious fashion over the whole world."

It is generally accepted that this refers to the personal advent, the resplendent, actual return of the Lord from heaven at the last day. From the nature of his Parousia which is like lightning, Christ shows the absurdity and the falsehood of those assertions which locate Him in the desert or in secret retreats. The lightning flashes from the eastern horizon to the western. It is not here, nor there, a local phenomenon, but instantaneously everywhere. So when the Parousia shall take place, it will not be restricted to a locality, but will suddenly and unmistakably comprehend the whole earth. Nebe emphasizes *φαίverαι*, "is seen," it is not concealed, it streams forth, it reveals itself. So the Advent will not be something concealed in a corner, but will be openly manifest in the sight of all, everywhere conspicuous, "distinguished from every other luminous appearance." As "cometh forth" and "is seen" are united, coincide, "so the appearance at the end will take place suddenly like lightning, like a snare." The suddenness involves unexpectedness. Thus the concomitants of His final appearing will be wholly different from those circumstances against which they are warned, wholly unlooked for, marked by transcendent glory, which all can "distinguish unerringly from the appearance of any pretender or false Christ."

28. "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

This emphasizes the idea of universality. Meyer: "Wheresoever the carcass may happen to be, there." etc. He finds here "confirmation of the truth that the Advent will announce its presence everywhere, and that from the point of view of the retributive punishment which the coming One will be called upon everywhere to execute." On no spot where there is a carcass will the gathering of the eagles fail. "When the Messiah shall have

come He will reveal Himself everywhere even as an avenger," according to the proverb. Meyer, Nebe and others: The carcass denotes "the spiritually dead," viii. 22; Luke xvi. 24, who are doomed to the Messianic judgment, while the words "the eagles will be gathered," etc. (at the Advent), convey the same idea as that in xiii. 41, "they (the angels) shall gather out of His kingdom," etc.. the only difference being that in our passage the prophetic imagery is not that of consuming by fire, since that would not harmonize with the idea of the carcass and the eagles. The Advent is now the theme, and Jesus shows that it will not be hidden, but open, not particularistic, but universal. The carcass can, therefore, not refer to Jerusalem or to the Jews, neither the eagles to the standards of the Roman legions, as vv. 23-27 have warned against the delusion which locally circumscribes the Advent. The sudden advent of Messiah with his angel-hosts will everywhere "by the brightness of His coming" destroy the unbelieving, 2 Thess. ii. 8. As the carcass draws together the eagles ("carrionkites") still unseen and at a distance, the angels of destruction, the executioners of God's judgment, will be found wherever moral rottenness prevails.

This Gospel treats of the portents and preparation for the Advent of the Lord.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE PORTENTS OF THE ADVENT ARE,

1. The abomination of desolation, standing in the holy place.
2. Great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world.
3. Powerful errors, disseminated through false Christs and false prophets?

WHEN WILL THE SON OF MAN COME AGAIN?

1. When the true worship has been profaned to the utmost, and
2. Replaced by a false worship with great signs and wonders.

WILT THOU NOT FLEE?

1. The abomination of desolation stands in the Holy Place.
2. Heavy judgment is falling upon the land.
3. Seduction threatens the very elect.
4. But here is the mount of the living God.

DEFEND US, DEAR LORD AND GOD!

1. From disregard of Thy Word.
2. From clinging to the possessions of this world.
3. From a too long continuance of the tribulation.
4. From being led astray by false doctrine.

FOR WHAT SHALL WE PRAY IN THE LAST TIME?

1. For clear eyes.
2. For swift feet.
3. For strong hearts.

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION ADMONISHES US,

1. That the days of tribulation are coming.
2. That the powers of seduction are mightily at work.
3. That the coming of the Lord is certain.

IN THE LAST TIME WE SHALL PROPERLY RECOGNIZE THE GRACE OF
OUR LORD :

1. How long He has warned us against the abomination of desolation.
2. How long He has provided for us a place of refuge.
3. How mercifully He has long ago shortened the days of tribulation.
4. How faithfully He has long ago warned us against all temptation.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt. xxv. 31-46.

Nebe: "Eschatology culminates in the separation of the righteous and the damned, in the judgment of the world. This Pericope is the most minute and the most impressive exhibition of this consummation." Luther: "This Gospel is, *per se*, clear and luminous. It is, however, given alike for the comfort and encouragement of believers, and for the warning and terror of others. And as most of the Gospels almost exclusively teach faith, this has to do only with works, which Christ will bring forward at the last day, in order that it may be seen that He has not forgotten them, but that He will have them performed by those who are Christians and who would be found in His kingdom."

31. "But when the Son of man shall come . . . and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne" . . .

On the day of the ascension the second coming of the Son of Man was announced by the two men in white apparel to take place "in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts i. 11. The words, "this same Jesus," prove that He will appear at the end "not in a superhuman, but in a divine-human, form of existence." Nebe warns against the error of presenting the relation of the two natures after they have formed a personal union, in such an external and mechanical manner, that they separate again into two unequal parts. "The union between the two natures which took place in history, is to be viewed as so energetic and vital that its result continues forever."

"Son of man" is not to be pressed as teaching that Christ will come to judgment as man. It is simply a title of the Messiah: "He who bears it and stands and speaks now before His disciples will one day stand and speak before all the world." He will, however, not appear as now, but "in his glory," so often foretold. By this Nebe understands not the accompanying angels and saints, but Christ's own unique distinctive glory, John xvii. 5, "His primordial glory, of which He divested Himself at His first coming." "He will present Himself in full possession and enjoyment of the transeunt attributes by which the Godhead is related to the world."

"All the angels with him," not as a retinue shedding forth the majesty of the Coming One, and causing a universal recognition of it, but taking a necessary part in the consummation aimed at by the Parousia. They do not act as judges, but "by their trumpet blasts will summon from all the ends of the earth those who are to be judged, and they will execute the judgment of damnation." Some regard them as witnesses, for, commissioned by God, they had ministered to individual salvation.

"On the throne," as an earthly sovereign is seated on the judgment-seat, enthroned in great majesty. "His throne will attest His glory." "The judge sits and thereby causes Himself to be recognized by those for whom He sits in judgment." "These stand before Him and therefore the Son of Man must be seated upon a throne, and as He comes in glory this throne must itself partake of His glory." Meyer calls this the grand closing scene in which the eschatological predictions are all to be realized, the judgment of all nations presided over by the Lord when He returns in His glory.

32. "And before him . . . all the nations: and he shall separate them . . . as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats":

Bengel: "All angels, all nations. How vast an assembly!" Nebe: "The whole of heaven comes down to earth in the persons of the angels, and all the nations of the earth are assembled *en masse*." This does not of necessity imply a specific locality. "They will all be brought before the Son of Man and so all must recognize the Lord in Him who is in enthroned in glory." "Then," as has been foretold, not immediately as the disciples had expected.

Three interpretations are offered for "all the nations:" the non-Christian world, the Christian world, the whole world of mankind, Christian and non-Christian, *i. e.*, "all human beings that ever lived on earth, irrespective of their Jewish or Gentile origin," even those who had passed away before the birth of Christ. Rom. i. 18 ff.

Against the first, v. 34 is decisive, since the kingdom has not been prepared for them, but for the elect, from the foundation of the world, nor could non-Christians be properly designated "the righteous," v. 37. Besides, "those things which Jesus represents, vv. 35, 36, 60, as manifestations of love toward Himself cannot possibly be conceived of as done by those who, nevertheless, continued to remain outside the Christian community." Furthermore, both sides use such language "as compels us to acknowledge their belief in the Judge before whom they now stand."

"Nations" is not to be pressed as limited to the heathen. It means the nations as a whole, the totality of the nations, irrespective of religion. Meyer accepts the view of certain FF. that the judgment of Christians exclusively is meant. The phrase "all the nations" he takes "as assuming the realization of the *universality of Christianity* by the time of the Advent, when all the nations of the earth will have heard the Gospel (John x. 16; Rom. xi. 25) and (to a proportionate degree) received Christ (xxiv. 14; Rom. xi. 25). Jesus, then, is here describing the universal judgment of *those who have believed in Him.*" Nebe rejects this view in favor of the third rendering, that "what is here exhibited is a judgment of all men, believers and unbelievers alike." That believers also shall be judged, was distinctly set forth by Christ in the foregoing parables, and the apostles proclaimed it throughout the world, chap. v. 25; vii. 21 ff.; xii. 36; xvi. 27; John v. 29; Rom. xiv. 10; 1 Cor. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 10. They shall, however, be able to stand in the judgment, and will not fall under condemnation. In Ezek. xxxiv. 31 the whole human race is presented as the flock of God. Before the judgment takes place the gospel will have been offered to all the nations, hence it will be feasible that all be judged according to the love they have shown to those who are Christ's brethren. For it is not love in general that forms the standard of judgment, but the love manifested to the disciples of Jesus.

"And he shall separate them," shows that the separation was previously not complete. Sheep and goats, Eccus. xlvii. 3, are represented as having been pastured together, Gen. xxx. 33 ff., a promiscuous assembly, another proof of the universality of this judgment. The wicked appear under the figure of goats "because those animals were considered to be comparatively worthless." Luke xv. 29. In v. 33 the diminutive form, *ἐρίφια*, "kids," is used with a view to expressing contempt. Their temper is less tractable than that of the sheep, and they are a filthy animal, hence they represent those who are disobedient to God. All were sufficiently endowed to constitute them responsible agents.

Schaeffer finds in this act of separation "the whole process of the judgment, namely, the trial of each individual and the decision of the Judge in each case." This separation, the promise of which was often given to cheer believers, is of infinite import to them. They are henceforth secure from all the persecutions, assaults, and temptations of the wicked. But what a result for the lost! "The righteous, who by their prayers and intercessions held back the judgments of God, have been removed from their midst. They stand now without an intercessor before the throne of the righteous Judge."

This separation will bring out clearly the inner distinction between the judged. Nebe refers to Ezek. xxxiv. 17 ff., and finds the distinction in this, that those rejected had wantonly wasted the pastures and fouled the waters, and thrust the other sheep and scattered them; obstinate, malicious persons who take delight in doing injury and violence to others instead of kindness for God's sake; while the sheep represent innocent, meek and peaceful souls.

"As the shepherd, etc." The Good Shepherd, Jno. x. 18, who gave His life for all, 2 Cor. v. 14; Rom. v. 18, is the Judge as well as the Saviour of all men. Humanity is His flock, the object of His everlasting love and self-sacrifice.

33. "And . . . the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."

Nebe: "The separation which the Lord will effect between the good and bad will not be confined to an inner realization of it, nor to a mere declaration of the fact as discovered; an outward separation is in prospect." Hitherto the kingdom of God was a field in which wheat and tares grew together, but finally the field shall be made absolutely pure. The "right hand" and the "left" indicate both in the Scriptures and in profane literature, essential distinctions. The right is ever the place of higher honor, Gen. xlviii. 13-19; Eccl. x. 2; cf. xx. 20; xxii. 24. Augustine reminds us that no third class is mentioned: those not found on the right must be found on the left.

34. "Then shall the King say . . . Come, ye blessed . . . inherit the kingdom . . . from the foundation of the world:"

"What was symbolically expressed by their being stationed at the right hand, is now announced in clear and distinct language" by "the King," the Son of Man now come in His glory, v. 31; xvi. 28, "an appellation full of majesty, and joyful only to the godly," v. 40. "Since everything is now to be unveiled, Jesus Himself appears unveiled as the King of kings invested with the fullness of might and glory before the eyes of all nations." He appears in such regal majesty that all, willing or unwilling, are compelled to acknowledge Him, Phil. ii. 10.

He addresses first "them on His right hand." They are nearest His heart. The language of the King, as befits royalty, is brief and terse. "Every word of it is weighty, bears a deep, inexhaustible meaning." "Come" is the felicitous invitation to those appearing on His right. They are to draw closer to Him. The King of glory will have them in the closest proximity, forming a crown around Him. "They are indeed His crown and glory." "At His ascension, where the disciples were overwhelmed by what was

but the dawn of His resplendent glory, His chosen witnesses fell upon the ground adoring Him, xxviii. 17; how shall the saints be able to stand before His glory, when at that day it shall break forth in its meridian splendor. They shrink from the view as the very heavens are said to vanish before it, Rev. vi. 14, but the High and Lofty One who would dwell with them, graciously calls near to Himself the contrite ones. They are familiar with this gracious 'Come,' xi. 28. They recognize in the Lord of glory the merciful High-Priest who on earth bore and refreshed them." Now He invites those "blessed of my Father" to enter into eternal rest. Bengel: "We have been chosen in Christ." The Perfect shows that they have been already the subjects of blessedness, but they have enjoyed only its earnest, or first fruits. "Now they are to receive the pleroma of blessedness into their bosom."

They are reminded of the source of this blessedness, the heart of the King's Father. Schaeffer: "Whom my Father blessed on earth, Eph. i. 3, and blesses now." "Not the Son alone blesses them, but the Father through the Son; they now enter into a closer relation to the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24 ff." The blessing to be bestowed is more precisely defined: "inherit," says the King, "the kingdom prepared for you." "Till then it was not revealed what the children of God truly are to be and what they are to have; now this is for the first time revealed." "Inherit" excludes all merit—*γὰρ* (35) is not to be pressed—and shows our share in the kingdom to be the free gift of God's grace. How could the bliss of glory be viewed as a recompense, an eternal kingdom for trivial acts of kindness to Christians?

"Prepared for you." Meyer: "Not merely *destined*, but *put in readiness*," xx. 23; 1 Cor. ii. 9; Jno. xiv. 2. What blessedness! Not take, but possess as your own, like a patrimony, as children receive their paternal inheritance. You are the beloved of the Father, enjoy henceforth what He has so richly bequeathed to you, Rom. viii. 17. These righteous are not to guard the boundaries of the kingdom, they are not to dwell in it as blessed subjects, they are to enter as heirs upon the possession of the kingdom, they are now to become kings and rulers, to reign from henceforth and forever.

"The kingdom." Apart from this kingdom there will then be no other, for the kingdoms of this world have all become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. The kingdom is now in process of development, but there it is the perfected, consummated kingdom, for there the will of God reigns alone and absolutely.

"From before the foundation of the world," stands in intimate relation to "prepared." The plan of salvation for fallen men was devised even before sin and death entered the world. Eph. i. 3-5; 2 Thess. ii. 13 f.; Jas. ii. 5; 1 Pet. i. 2. "For you" shows that elect men do not supply the place of the angels who fell. Nebe denies that predestination is taught here. Jesus does not say that "the Father has foreordained the righteous to the kingdom, but that He has prepared the kingdom for them, that He had their salvation in mind before the foundation of the world." The beginnings of salvation antedate the creation, xiii. 35; Luke xi. 50; Heb. i. 2 ff.; ix. 26; Rev. xiii. 8; xvii. 8; Eph. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 20. Nebe: "The prehistoric, supermundane distinctions in the Deity made possible alike the creation and the redemption of the world."

35, 36. "For I was an hungered, and . . . meat: I was thirsty, and . . . drink: I was a stranger . . . took me in; naked . . . clothed me: I was sick . . . visited me: I was in prison . . . came unto me."

After the kingdom is adjudged to the righteous as an inheritance, there follow explanations which go to prove that the Judge has proceeded according to the strictest justice and not from partiality. Kind works of mercy shown the King's friends are adduced to justify the awards He has made. These works "presuppose faith and love towards Jesus Christ and His brethren, and involve confession of His name, which are most frequent and remarkable and conspicuous; and then from the manifest glory of the Lord, the dignity of His brethren and the character of good and evil actions towards them, will be manifest, x. 40 f." A man is indeed justified by faith without the works of the law, Rom. iii. 28; Gal. ii. 16; Eph. ii. 8, 9, but faith is a living, active principle, it works by love. It cannot possibly exist without producing a holy and beneficent life, supreme obedience to God, and a genuine, never-failing love to man, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Love is the indubitable evidence of the existence of faith. The Saviour represents it, John xiii. 35, as the characteristic of His disciples. It demonstrates the presence of that faith which in Mk. xvi. 16 is declared to be essential to salvation.

Schaeffer: "The doctrine that men shall be judged hereafter according to their works, vii. 21; xvi. 27; Rom. ii. 6; 2 Cor. v. 10, is founded on the principle that these works, as indications of the spiritual state, derive their good or evil character solely from the presence or absence of a living faith in the soul." Works of mercy, living streams emanating from an inner life-spirit, are accordingly mentioned here as evidences and effects of the justifying or saving faith of those whom the Judge addresses. Nebe sees

both in the idea of "inherit" and in that of "the kingdom being prepared," the unmistakable declaration that participation in the kingdom is the gift of God's grace. "Works are indeed here spoken of, but the Lord does not designate them as works of love, . . . but as works of faith, for they were not performed towards others from the natural impulse of the heart, nor for the sake of those to whom they were directed, but they were rendered to them as brethren of Jesus Christ, and because of His will. The faith in the Lord who came in the flesh first produced such fruits of love." These works of mercy are confined to alleviations of bodily distress, "which are both more despised in the world; and will then be a more evident specimen of faith." So Bengel; but the Judge in deciding by the love or absence of love, which existed towards Him, could not speak of spiritual benefits done to Him, inasmuch as He was necessarily free from spiritual distress.

Little exposition of the individual words of vv. 35, 36 is needed. "Gave me" presupposes faith. This was the ground of the kindness shown. Συγγάγετε, "took me in," Meyer renders: "*have taken me along with, introduced me, i. e., into your family circle, along with the members of your family.*" Others: "sheltered me when I was a homeless wanderer." "Naked" means insufficiently clad, Jas. ii. 15; Job ii. 26; half-naked, without the upper garment, John xxi. 7; Acts xix. 16, as well as entirely nude, Mk. xiv. 51. "Visited," for the purpose of aiding me, and alleviating my distress. "In prison," no motives of fear, no lack of sympathy, deterred you from ministering to me in persecution and captivity. The lot of the faithful in this life is found largely in hunger, thirst, exile, nakedness, captivity; not, however, wholly deserted, or left to perish.

37-39. "Then shall the righteous answer . . . Lord, when saw we thee an hungered . . . or athirst . . . And when saw we thee a stranger . . . or naked . . . And when . . . sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"

Neither the righteous any more than the wicked, v. 44, estimate the moral import of their service or want of service, "according to the lofty principle of Christ's unity with His people," xviii. 5; x. 40. So far from being self-righteous are they, or from making any claim of merit, that they even disclaim the good works imputed to them by the King. In becoming humility, not mere modesty, they decline to receive any credit, "on the ground that they have never rendered the loving services in question to Christ Himself." Olshausen thinks that the righteous must have known that the Lord regarded the kindness shown to the least of His brethren as kindness to Himself. Nebe: "In that moment when the king-

dom of glory shall burst upon the raptured vision of the righteous, and they hear with their own ears that they are to inherit the kingdom, not indeed on account of their works, yet also not without these works, those works of mercy which they had rendered must shrivel and shrink into nothing." Christian humility cleaves to the Lord's admonition, vi. 3; it develops the sharpest contrast to the work-righteous laborers, xx. 12, and to the Pharisees, Luke xviii. 11 ff., and cherishes the feeling demanded by Jesus, Luke xvii. 10. It "knows nothing of its own good works, thinks of no merit, and is resolved to ascribe all to the grace of God in Christ Jesus."

"When saw we thee?" occurs three times—"earnestly, honestly." It is not necessary to assume that such a conversation literally takes place. These are the thoughts or sentiments entertained by those here described.

Schaeffer recognizing this language as "proceeding from unaffected surprise," "their amazement at the glory and honor bestowed upon them" far exceeding all their hopes, is reminded of "the many unexpected discoveries which believers will make on the Day of Judgment." He adds: "The true disciple of Christ is conscious only of his defects and sins, while he has through grace become free from all spiritual pride arising from the performance of good works."

40. "And the King shall answer . . . unto them . . . Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

The King replies most lovingly to the objections offered by the righteous, "each phrase and word of the answer being highly significant," the King solemnly, emphatically vouching Himself for the truth of what He has said regarding the righteous.

"In as much as." *Ἐφ' ὅσον* is not temporal but quantitative, *in quantum*, to the extent of, in as far as, Rom. xi. 13. Whether the service rendered our neighbor was on a large scale or on a small one, it shall be recompensed. All things are accurately noted down in the heavenly record. No individual act, however small or however humble the person to whom it was directed, shall go unnoticed in the great heart of the King. "Unto one," unto a single one of these, even if he be the most insignificant of them, occupying the lowest or most obscure position. In God's kingdom great and small lose their distinction. Bengel: "Even a solitary occasion is frequently of great importance in either direction," v. 45.

"These my brethren," says the King, pointing to those on the right. The righteous had rendered kind services one to another,

treated each other as brethren since all alike had been recognized as the brethren of Jesus Christ. The eternal and only-begotten Son assumed our nature, Heb. ii. 14; through His atoning work and the gift of the Spirit we become the children of God, and are partakers of the divine nature, Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6; 1 Pet. i. 4. "My brethren" comprehends, therefore, all believers. Cf. 1 Jno. iii. 2. This language in which the King affectionately identifies Himself with His followers, "is expressive of the highest degree of infinite love." Any service rendered to one of them on earth, even to one outwardly or inwardly most insignificant, "pleases Him as if He had been in want and distress and had been personally relieved." Meyer: "As during His earthly life Christ is always surrounded by the obscure and despised (the poor, publicans and sinners, and such like) who seek their salvation through Him; so He also represents Himself as still surrounded by such as these on the occasion of the Judgment." . . . "They here come crowding around the throne of His glory; and to these He now points." Bengel: "They constitute a certain species in the whole genus of saints." They stand alongside of, intermingle with, the righteous, and the King points to them individually by His hand and His word. Nebe refers to the distinctions among the blessed implied in "these least." "Not all stand on the same plane of spiritual perfection. As there are among the multitudes of the heavenly hosts, Archangels and Angels, Thrones, Principalities, Powers, as well as ordinary spirits, so there will be also in the ranks of the perfected saints such as will lead the heavenly choir in song and worship, and such as but softly with heart and voice join in the anthem pitched by those elect ones."

Bengel: "Men, the more that they are honored, treat so much more proudly those with whom they are connected: not so Jesus; at the commencement of His ministry He frequently calls His followers *disciples*; then when speaking of His cross, He once calls them *little ones*, Jno. xiii. 33, and *friends*, Jno. xv. 15; after His resurrection *children*, Jno. xxi. 5; and *brethren*, Matt. xxviii. 10; Jno. xx. 17; cf. xiii. 1, and this appellation He will repeat at the judgment day." In the etiquette of the heavenly court the honor of Jesus Christ is so guarded that His divine dignity is never forgotten. He calls His followers "friends," but He is never so addressed by them. Cf. Bengel *in loco*. Yet, as Nebe says, "He calls the righteous His brethren in the full, deep sense of the word, for through Him they have come to God, the Father, and become distinctly children of God, yea, joint-heirs with Christ" Rom. viii. 17.

"Unto me," "not merely to me also, but to me absolutely," v. 45. "If it be true that when one member suffers, all the members suffer, so all the members, and preëminently the head of the whole body must rejoice, when one member is honored or relieved from its misery."

41. "Then . . . also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire . . . prepared for the devil and his angels:"

After assigning to the righteous their everlasting kingdom the Judge turns to those on His left, but how changed His tone! What crushing words of condemnation! The parallelism of the two sentences must not be overlooked:

Come:	Depart from me:
Ye blessed of my Father:	Ye cursed:
inherit the kingdom:	into the fire:
prepared for you:	prepared for the devil and his angels:
from the foundation of the world:	the eternal.

"Now the word is, 'Depart.' They shall go, for they have no part here. And since the Judge must first command their going, it is implied that they would fain stay, that they shrink from what is now to ensue." "Away from me" is the decisive order—henceforth they are to be excluded from all communion with the Lord. "Not only is His love withdrawn from them, they are not even allowed the sight of His glory." He will never more have ought to do with them, vii. 23. "Ye cursed" *vs.* "ye blessed." But the words "of my Father" are omitted, "because the idea of father accords only with the loving idea of blessing." The curse like the blessing is, however, a reality, an act of God, the exercise of holy wrath and the consequence of human guilt, the consignment of the wicked irremediably to punishment and ruin. Mk. xi. 21; 2 Thess. i. 7-10.

They are to depart "into the eternal fire," which like the kingdom has been "prepared," not, however, "from the foundation of the world." The rabbins were divided on the question whether Gehenna came into existence before or after the first day of creation. Nor is it now said "for you," but "for the devil," etc., "because the fall of the angels, Jude 6; 2 Pet. ii. 4, which Scripture everywhere presupposes in its doctrine of the devil and His kingdom, took place *previous* to the introduction of sin among men." John viii. 44; 2 Cor. xi. 3. Cf. viii. 29. Men were destined to life and joy, but as they "became partakers in the guilt of demons, so now are they also condemned to share in their punishment."

Bengel: "At the time of this judgment the devil will be already

in hell." Rev. xx. 10-13; 2 Pet. iii. 7. On "his angels" which followed him in apostasy, cf. 2 Cor. xii. 7; Rev. xii. 7. Men did not like the angels fall from an inward impulse, nor are they cast into the fire because they yielded to sin coming from without. They may be recovered from that fall. They only became subject to this sentence when the saving grace of God had in their case vainly been exhausted. Ultimately those who yield to Satan's seductions become like Satan. "They have definitively cut loose from God and have with a clear, conscious act of the will chosen evil for their good."

42, 43. "For I was an hungered . . . no meat; I was thirsty . . . no drink; I was a stranger . . . took me not in; naked . . . clothed me not . . . sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."

As the King assigned reasons for His favorable sentence respecting the righteous, so He gives to the wicked a justification for their sentence to convince them that He has followed strict justice. "The grounds of their rejection are not sins that cry to heaven, not gross transgressions, remediless iniquity, not even sins of commission, but sins of omission." The absence of manifestations of Christian love evinces the want of faith, without which it is impossible to please God. Heb. xi. 6. Mere sins of omission, which are not expected to be taken account of, demonstrate clearly that men are not the children of God, that they are without true faith, vv. 44 f. "The Judge is exact. What the world prefers to regard as no sin at all, He views as so dreadful a sin that it will sink a man into hell." "The lack of love, the neglect of a work of mercy, makes us accursed before God." "The unmerciful cannot enter the kingdom of God, a kingdom founded on mercy and animated by it; the unmerciful one would find himself an alien there if mercy were to admit him."

44. "Then shall they also . . . Lord, when saw we thee an hungered . . . or a stranger . . . or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?"

"They also." In exact correspondence with the answer of the righteous, who did not appreciate the full import of their benefactions, the wicked likewise, not aware of the extent of their derelictions, offer objections to the Judge's sentence. Nebe denies that there is reasonableness or modesty in their protest. They do not bow before Him whom they address "Lord." Their objection is tantamount to self-justification. They repel the accusation against them as unwarranted and as unjust. Bengel: "The ignorance of the wicked and their endeavor to justify themselves, will remain up to that time." Men descend with their self-delusion into the grave, only to learn that they had wholly mistaken the true nature of religion.

Their failure to repeat exactly the words of the Judge some interpret as proof of their sin and guilt. Had they been ready to test themselves by the words of the Judge they would doubtless have been careful to use His identical language.

"When saw we thee," etc.? When did this happen of which Thou dost accuse us? Meyer: "Such an occasion never occurred; as we have never seen Thee in such circumstances, so can we never have refused Thee our good services. In this self-justification it is assumed that if they had seen Him, they would have shown their love toward Him." They pretend that they lacked opportunity to show their faith in Christ by deeds of love to His brethren.

45. "Then shall he answer . . . Verily I say . . . Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least . . . not unto me."

In the negative form the Judge repeats to the cursed, as in the case of the blessed, word for word, the justification of their sentence. Only the phrase "my brethren" is omitted. Bengel: "The wicked are ignorant of the relation in which the righteous stand to Christ, and will remain so." "One of these least." The Judge points to those at His right hand, who must have stood in sight of the cursed. Love withheld from the least of these is the same as love withheld from Himself, xviii. 5; x. 40. It would contradict the plain teachings of the Scriptures to deduce from this that kindness and help are to be extended exclusively to Christians. Gal. vi. 10.

46. "And these . . . into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life."

The sentence is pronounced; now follows its execution. No word of mercy or grace resounds. The sentence of the Judge is final, inexorable, with both classes. "Shall go away." Bengel: "The place of judgment is distinct from the places into which the two classes will severally depart." Although the righteous were first addressed by the Judge, the unrighteous are the first to depart, "in the sight of the righteous." xiii. 41, 49 f. They go "into eternal punishment." Bengel distinguishes punishment, *κόλασις*, from vengeance, *τιμωρία*: "Punishment is inflicted for the sake of him who suffers, *vengeance* for the satisfaction of him who inflicts." "Eternal punishment" = "the eternal fire", v. 41; chap. v. 22; 2 Thess. i. 8; Dan. xii. 2. Meyer: "The absolute idea of *eternity*, in regard to the punishment of hell, is not to be got rid of either by a popular toning down of the force of *αἰώνιος*, or by appealing to the figurative character of the term fire, and the supposed incompatibility between the idea of eternity and such a thing as evil and its punishment, any more than by the theory that the whole repre-

sentation is intended simply by way of warning; but it is to be regarded as exegetically established in the present passage (cf. iii. 12; xviii. 8) by the opposed *ζωὴν αἰώνιον*, which denotes the everlasting Messianic life." Since the same term is applied to the eternity of God and to the duration of the life of the blessed, "no objections from the meaning of *αἰών* (eternity) will hold good against the everlasting duration of punishment." This word accordingly determines in each case the final, endless condition of men. After the day of judgment there remains no prospect of any change, to the wicked not a glimmer of hope. Rev. xiv. 11.

To the objections that it is incompatible with the idea of God that a creature of His hand should endlessly persist in obstinate rebellion against Him, that God as the absolute Good could not possibly condemn forever a creature of His, and that this is irreconcilable with the eternal blessedness of the righteous—for how could a soul have bliss when even but one brother according to the flesh is suffering unending woe? Nebe replies: "Notwithstanding these demurrers, the biblical doctrine of eternal damnation, variously attested throughout the Holy Scriptures, must be maintained . . . God is an ethical Being, who as He guards His own personality recognizes also the rights of the personalities created by Him and therefore also their personal freedom. This dualism of good and evil, of heaven and hell, which will not disappear according to the course of nature in the lapse of ages, by the wicked consuming or annihilating themselves, is not an eternal reproach to God, but on the contrary conduces to His praise, to the praise of His self-denial, . . . to the praise of His patience and long suffering, and therefore to the eternal praise of His love and grace even from the mouth of the damned." Augsburg Confession, Art. XVII. Cf. Lectures on the Augsburg Confession.

When the justice of God has been displayed toward the wicked, His grace is also glorified in the case of the righteous—"those declared to be so by this very judgment"—who now enter into eternal life.

"The subject of this Pericope is the judgment of the world, the glory of the universal Judge, the decisions of His judgment, the standard by which He will judge," etc.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

THE LORD WILL COME AGAIN!

1. As the Son of Man in His glory.
2. As the Shepherd, who divides the sheep from the goats.
3. As the King, who rules over His friends as over His foes.

THE LORD SITS UPON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY.

1. All the angels have come with Him.
2. All the nations are gathered before Him.
3. All men will be judged by Him.
4. All through eternity His sentence remains in force.

HOW GREAT IS OUR KING!

1. Great is His day.
2. Great is His judgment.
3. Great is His reward.
4. Great is His punishment.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD AS JUDGE OF THE WORLD:

1. In His power.
2. In His omniscience
3. In His grace.
4. In His justice.

BEHOLD THE JUDGMENT! BEHOLD

1. The Judge of all the nations.
2. The standard of judgment.
3. The fate of the judged.

THE SENTENCE OF THE GREAT JUDGMENT.

1. Every man is responsible for his own sentence.
2. The Lord proclaims it to him.
3. And it remains forever unalterable.

ACCORDING TO WHAT WILL WE BE JUDGED?

1. According to our works.
2. And especially works of mercy.
3. Wrought for the sake of the Lord in behalf of our neighbor.

JESUS, THE KING OF THE AGES.

1. His kingdom is prepared from everlasting,
2. And it endureth to everlasting.

WHERE WILT THOU STAND ON THE GREAT DAY?

1. To the right or to the left?
2. Thou mayest yet decide.
3. Remember the end.

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Matt. xxv. 1-13.

WITH this Pericope closes both the eschatological circle and the ecclesiastical year. Nebe: "The last circumstance explains the choice of this selection. According to Matthew the close of the great eschatological discourse of Jesus was presented in the last Pericope. In reversing the order of these two lessons, the Evangelical Church did certainly not mean to improve on the original order; she followed in this inversion a purely practical interest. The history of the church does not terminate with the Church Year; we pass from the old year of grace into a new one. . . . This Pericope suits admirably for this Sunday. Since there is coming again a new year and the end is not at hand we might grow careless and lukewarm, hence the warning to-day is, 'Watch.' The whole time of our life, the whole time of the church, is nothing but a waiting for the Lord, a going out to meet Him."

1. "Then shall the kingdom . . . be likened unto ten virgins . . . their lamps . . . to meet the bridegroom."

"Then," at the time referred to in chap. xxiv., "on the day on which the Master will return, and inflict condign punishment on His worthless slave." xxiv. 50. This parable is "an additional exhortation to watchfulness, in consequence of the day and hour of the Advent being unknown." Nebe: "A new picture out of that great future judgment."

"Shall be likened," will be made like, vii. 26—points to the future, the end of all things. The kingdom of heaven will at the end resemble ten virgins (Meyer) "in respect of the principle of admission and exclusion that will be followed," when that kingdom comes to be set up in its pure and heavenly character. Nebe finds it certain in advance from the designation "virgins," "that the persons treated of are not to be regarded outright as children of the world. The term virgin indicates emphatically separation from the world and its lust." "To be and to remain virgin is the destiny of the Christian, Rev. xiv. 4. . . . The world is to be kept at a distance from the Christian man; if he falls into its snares he has lost his virginity and has fallen into adultery and whoredom."

Schaeffer denies a spiritual meaning to virgins. Bengel recognizes a mystery in the number "ten," Luke xix. 13, "and in its division here into two equal parts." It indicates completeness or sufficiency, the all-comprehensive number. Hence there were ten commandments, ten strings on a harp, ten men were required for a synagogue, ten persons for a funeral cortege, ten virgins for a bridal escort. Luthardt: "An image of the church, the bride, awaiting her bridegroom from heaven, an image of the totality of the church." The decimal system of numbers was in vogue.

"Which took their lamps," burning. These lamps, or torches, Jno. xviii. 3, "consisted of a rod, to one end of which a small vessel or pan containing a wick saturated with oil was attached." Such torches were used in escorting a bride to her husband also among Greeks and Romans. "And went forth to meet," not from their respective homes but from the bride's house, out to meet the bridegroom. The marriage does not take place in the house of the bridegroom as was the usual practice, but, by a clever exception, in that of the bride, Judges xiv. 10, "from which the ten bridesmaids set out in the evening for the purpose of meeting the expected bridegroom. Meyer: "The *reason* why the parable transfers the scene of the marriage to the home of the bride, is to be found in the nature of the *thing* to be illustrated, inasmuch as at the time of His advent Christ is to be understood as coming to the earth (to the house of His bride) and as setting up His kingdom here below, and not in heaven." Cf. vv. 14 ff.; Ps. xlv. Schaeffer: "The judgment is represented as a joyful event, since it transfers the faithful to scenes of joy and glory."

"The bridegroom," the Lord Jesus. His coming as the Great Judge at a future but uncertain time is implied. Nothing whatever is said of the bride, only of her attendants, the bridesmaids, the theme to be illustrated being the preparation of the heart for the marriage-supper of the Lamb and the uncertainty of the solemn occasion. Cf. Luth. Comm. on Matt. xxii. 1 ff.

2. "And five of them were foolish, and five were wise."

Schaeffer argues from v. 13, explaining the intent of the parable, that such details as "five," "they all slumbered," etc., "do not respectively represent spiritual things." Subjective opinions may exceed the limits indicated by Jesus in 13. Nebe: "The ten virgins have undertaken one task; it is one and the same goal toward which they are moving; they have the same faith, the same love, the same hope. Believing, loving, hoping, these ten virgins

go together hand in hand to meet the bridegroom, yet a mighty distinction divides these closely connected friends: even the souls that have separated from the world do not all form one class." Five and five=some, others. There is a general division into two groups. "Five of them were foolish," inconsiderate, they aimed at what was right, but not consistently and steadily, 2 Pet. i. 5 ff. The rest were wise, prudent, thoughtful, showed practical wisdom, vii. 24; xxiv. 45. Their folly and their wisdom are strikingly brought out by the contrast of their conduct.

3, 4. "For the foolish . . . took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."

On setting out from the bride's house to meet the bridegroom they took no oil, "except that with which the lamps were then burning" (cf. 8), making no provision for the future. Nebe: "Viewed externally, they appear altogether like the wise ones: a bright light streams out from them in the darkness of the evening; they shine like stars in the dark night, they carry burning lamps in the one hand, but the other hand lacks the oil-cruze, with which to replenish their lamps." They forgot the source of supply which is indispensable to keep lamps burning, unmindful that the lack of oil-vessels would defeat the whole design of carrying the lamps, while those having a reserve of oil are ready at any moment. The oil is so conspicuous and momentous a feature of the parable that it must be an essential part of its immediate purpose. The whole parable may be said to hinge upon it. Some understand by it "the word of doctrine;" others: mercy, kindness, good works. Still others: the grace of the Spirit. Luther: "Good works without faith are like lamps without oil, which are soon extinguished." Nebe: "The foolish ones who took no oil in vessels with them, were real virgins; they have the appearance of true Christianity, they have the right doctrine, good works, even faith. This outward moral conduct ("lamps") was correct, but it was not animated by the Christian spirit ("oil"). Thiersch: "The oil is in prophetic language the symbol of the Holy Ghost, so the oil in the seven-shafted candlestick, and the oil with which Saul and David were anointed; hence the gift of the Spirit is called an unction, and oil in the anointing of the sick means the quickening and healing power of the Holy Ghost." Whatever other purpose oil may subserve, its obvious use is in this instance for illumination. "As oil produces light in the darkness of the house, so the Holy Ghost is to produce light in the darkness which is within and around us. He is to cause the eyes of our

understanding to be enlightened, and put us in a condition to let our light shine before men."

The lamps may signify "good works," "sanctification," or "the light of the Spirit as reflected in their confession, their walk and worship." They had the true form of godliness. Certainly the lamp as that which appears to the eye may be contrasted with the oil as the invisible source of supply, which keeps the lamp aflame. The foolish ones, like the wise, had the former in hand as they went forth toward the bridegroom, and could not be outwardly distinguished from the latter.

No special significance attaches to the vessels: "the recesses of the heart" (Bengel). The oil could not be carried without them. The idea to be conveyed is simply that the wise virgins with wise forethought carried oil with them in order to replenish their lamps when the stock in them was consumed. Nebe: "They were breathed upon by the Spirit, moved, awakened, but the Holy Spirit did not fully penetrate them, was not shed abroad in their hearts, they were not thoroughly converted." "The foolish are to a hair externally like the wise: they are baptized, they profess Christ, they are moved to go out to meet the Lord." There is lacking only a supply of oil in their vessels, in addition to what was originally in the lamps. The wise show their wisdom in knowing that "the oil in the lamp is consumed by the light burning, that the flame must be continually nourished with oil if it is not to die. They know, to drop the figure, that flesh and blood easily absorb the drop of holy oil wherewith we are anointed, and that the world with its sorrows and joys, its cares and toils, temptations and conflicts, so soon obliterates the anointing of the Holy Spirit, that we need daily renewal in the spirit of our minds, that with each new morning we need new inflows of grace, if we would endure to the end. It is inexcusable folly to suppose that having once tasted of the powers of the world to come and made a good beginning, all is well."

Thiersch: "As the oil must continuously be replenished in the lamp, so must we steadily draw from the fullness of Christ's grace, we must remain in living communion with heaven, we must constantly pray for the Holy Ghost, seek Him and appropriate Him. We must constantly keep our hearts in such a state that the good Spirit can dwell therein and multiply His gifts. We dare not stand still. He who does not move forward in the spiritual life is certainly going backward. He who does not seek to become ever richer is becoming poorer, as the oil in the lamp, unnoticed and unhindered, is growing less and being consumed." It was not a

deadly sin, not flagitious wickedness, which brought the foolish virgins too late to the closed door, at which they vainly knocked. "Their sin is not called wickedness, nor impurity, but folly." "It is thoughtlessness, indifference, carelessness, through which, after having received the highest grace and coming so near the goal, we bring upon ourselves so terrible a sentence, that at the coming of the Lord while others are received we are shut out, we arrive too late and lose the heavenly crown destined for us—a fate more terrible than death."

Nebe: "A wide difference obtains, then, between these virgins. Some are content with the beginnings, the others are intent on progress; the former think they have enough, they are full, while the latter know that much is yet lacking with them, and that they cannot dispense with the strengthening and growth of the inner man."

5. "Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept."

Meyer: "The virgins who have left (1) the house of the bride, and therefore are no longer there, have betaken themselves to some house (or any spot) on the way ('Come ye forth,' 6), in order there to await the passing by of the bridegroom," whose coming was delayed until midnight. Even if He were coming quickly the Bridegroom would be tarrying, for to ardent, yearning souls wait for Him His coming is ever slow. But He does actually delay. "The apostles predicted His advent in the near future. Luther loudly proclaimed the imminence of the last times." Others have failed to take account of the great long-suffering of the coming Judge. Nebe: "For millenniums the world waited for the promised seed of the woman who was to crush the head of the old, wicked serpent; millenniums the church must wait for the arrival of the Bridegroom, who has given His word that He will not suffer her to sit in misery and distress, in mockery and shame, but that He will come again to conduct her home into the kingdom of His glory. In joyful exultation and with jubilant voices the bridal virgins went out to meet the bridegroom, but the longer they had to wait for who was to come, the more faint grew the yearning of their heart; 'they all slumbered (dozed) and slept.'" As they sat waiting they fell asleep. Meyer: "They nodded (Aorist) and slept (Imperfect)." Nebe notes a progress from slumber to sleep: "They are flagging, growing weary; partially overcome by sleep they hold out a little longer, the head nods and drops and soon they are lying down in a sound sleep," the prudent as well as the thoughtless, but to the former sleep was without serious peril, while to the latter it was fateful. It wrought their ruin. When they awoke their oil was consumed.

This falling asleep may only belong to the details of the parable without any spiritual meaning, as "the exemplary wise ones" also slept and no reflection is cast upon them for yielding to the claims of nature as for a moral shortcoming, neither do any evil results follow their sleep unless that greater vigilance on their part might have been of service to the foolish ones to secure in time the needed oil. Nebe holds the sleeping to be an essential part of the parable. Some: prevalent laxity and lukewarmness. Calvin: "the distraction of the occupations of this world," the portion of time given to lawful secular pursuits which belong to this life, and occupy the Christian while he is waiting for the coming of the Lord. 1 Cor. i. 7; 1 Thess. i. 10. Luther: "The wise also, true Christians, sin by times," overcome by temptations.

To this it is objected: Since the wise also slumbered, this sleepiness does not conflict with their wisdom, it is not equivalent to lack of spirituality. It is not the relaxation of the Christian life, but a relaxation of the specific expectation of the very imminent advent of Christ. This expectation declined for obvious reasons during the centuries, and it is to-day found by no means among all Christians, of whom perhaps not one is ready to believe that we shall see the last day. But this drowsiness does not exclude faith and love. The oil of the wise did not fail, even though the expectation of the near approach of the bridegroom had become faint. So Heubner, against whom Nebe maintains that the faith-life of the wise did suffer deterioration, the bright light which they ought to shed around was somewhat dimmed, otherwise they would not have had occasion to trim their lamps, v. 7. He finds it hard to admit that in this parable, which closes with the admonition "Watch, therefore," the sleeping described is not the object toward which this warning is directed. "In that period of waiting, as may be gathered from other utterances of the Lord in these last discourses, there will be a sad decline in the churches: love will in large part grow cold, and in the sphere of faith the most dangerous seductions are threatened. Experience has shown how in the course of time, when the return of the Lord is believed to be remote, even believers sink into spiritual languor and carnal security, and are very far from seeking the salvation of their souls with the self-consuming zeal, with the fear and trembling, which the Lord demands. Christian hearts grow lukewarm the more they lose faith in the nearness of the Advent; *per contra*, they become fervent in spirit the nearer they recognize the day of the Lord. There is no greater temptation than that of becoming spiritually weak and faint. While the Lord delays, while the

enemies mock, 'where is the promise of His coming?' the joy of the hope and expectation of the Lord is easily lost."

6. "But at midnight . . . a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him."

The coming One shall come, Heb. x. 37, and despite His tarrying He comes like a thief in the night, suddenly, unexpectedly, xxiv. 44. "At midnight," when all the virgins were held in deep sleep, "there is a cry, namely of the people who see him coming a little way off, made aware of his approach from seeing the light of the torches borne by those who accompanied him in the procession." Figuratively this cry may refer to the blast of the archangel's trumpet—louder than the most terrific artillery, 1 Thess. iv. 16. Some: The faithful watchman on the walls of Zion, faithfully proclaiming in trumpet tones the coming of the Lord, Isa. lxii. 5 ff. Calvin represents the whole universe, sun, moon and stars, seas and mountains, all powers, all places, uniting in the proclamation, Behold the Bridegroom! What a counterpart to Behold the Man!

Nebe lays symbolic stress on "midnight:" "When it has become darkest upon earth, when the darkness has become so powerful that it seeks to quench altogether the light of truth and life."

7. "Then all . . . arose and trimmed their lamps."

Literally: "they were aroused," etc., from sleep. Such a cry as that will startle and wake up every sleeper, not the wise ones only, but also the careless and the inconsiderate ones. "All those virgins arose." "How strangely they had forgotten their task: they who were not only to watch for the bridegroom, but to go out to meet him, they must first be roused from sleep that has fallen on them like an armed warrior." Nebe denies that the resurrection is referred to, and reminds us that the subject is not wicked, but "foolish virgins," and hence it is to be presumed "that not the fear of the coming bridegroom, but love to him excites them to hasty action." All ten dress their lamps. This is indispensable. The lamp-snuff must be removed regularly. Lamps must again and again be put in proper order, if they are to give a bright light. Certainly, as the bridegroom is drawing near, the lamps should be in a condition to shed the fullest light. Nebe: "The trimming of the lamps can have no other meaning than that all of the virgins desire to present themselves as bright, shining lights before the bridegroom; they desire to be found as men who are radiant with the light of faith and who burn with the fire of love."

8. "And the foolish said . . . Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out."

Meyer: "are just on the point of going out," the very moment

when they should have shone the brightest, as the bridegroom was coming into view. Nebe: "The difference between the wise and the foolish hitherto concealed is now made manifest; the foolish recognize it themselves, yea, they are the first to recognize it, for the wise virgins are so occupied with the dressing of their own lamps, with their own preparation, that they can throw no testing, searching, critical look toward their foolish friends. The foolish ones recognize and now confess what is lacking to them: all self-deception vanishes in the awful seriousness of the last hour: as the Lord will then bring to light the hidden things of darkness, so to many there will have arisen of itself an undesired light upon them. The judgment of the world is so brief and compendious, because every one bears already in his bosom and anticipates in his spirit his own judgment."

The eyes of the foolish have been opened, but to what a desperate plight! Their lamps are flickering, on the point of being quenched altogether, and it was with these they expected to meet and escort the bridegroom. What they are lacking they see possessed by their companions who have their affections set on things above, and they appeal to them, "Give us of your oil." This the Romanists interpret of the good works and intercessions which the more favored ones share with those who are lacking. But the treasury of good works had in this instance nothing of supererogation whose merit could be awarded to those in need. The wise ones had nothing to spare, v. 9.

The oil symbolizes the Holy Ghost. Nebe: "The foolish virgins desire no more, and no less, than that the wise will impart to them of their Spirit [Acts viii. 18 ff.], that they will communicate to them a power, which will enable them to stand before the Lord as shining lights. Herein they show outright their folly. They might have known that the Holy Ghost is not imparted by the hands of men, that He proceeds only from the Father and the Son, that we must pray for Him in the name of the Son. They have failed altogether hitherto to recognize and to experience the Holy Ghost as a power of God; as they have thus far relied on themselves—on their faith and their love—and consequently had no oil-vessel with them, so they now again in this decisive hour have recourse to men who are flesh." How moving, how urgent their entreaty! Ah! it is dreadful to have all through a life-time hoped in the Lord and to have anticipated the hour of appearing before His presence, and then in the last decisive moment, when it is too late for a remedy, to have to discover and to confess, our lamps, that in which we trusted (our earthly all), are going out in darkness. An evil end awaits us.

Heubner interprets the going out of the lamps as the painful consciousness of the void in heart and spirit which overtakes the unconverted in the near prospect of the judgment. Before that, men regard themselves as full, as having need of nothing; now they realize the absence of all inward strength and comfort. "We must in time provide the oil within, the Holy Spirit, that this may not be wanting when it is most needed. What a discovery! Just as the Bridegroom comes and they are to receive the end of their faith, their lights go out, and it becomes dark before their eyes, dark in their hearts," just at the moment when the lamps should flash forth their brightest light.

9. "But the wise . . . Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather . . . and buy for yourselves."

Meyer punctuates the text accepted by him so as to read: "*never* (shall we give you of our oil): there will certainly not be enough for us and you." Here again the wise show themselves prudent. It is sage, sensible counsel which they give to their companions. "A deep sadness overtakes them as they discover the fateful situation of their foolish friends." Bengel regards the broken sentence as "suitable to the hurry of that event," but Nebe sees in it also the pain which distracts their hearts because they are in no way able to come to the relief of their foolish companions. The doctrine of good works breaks down utterly here, and there comes out in the clearest light the Reformation doctrine that the just live by faith. "This," says Luther, "is a thunderbolt to those who rely on the merits of the saints and others, inasmuch as none have enough themselves, to say nothing of having a surplus from which to impart to others." Bengel: "The prudent now have hardly enough for their own use."

"The relation between the Lord and His believing ones is personal; thou must thyself believe, thyself live in personal relation and communion with the Lord, if thou wouldst maintain thyself before Him." Bengel: "Every one must live by his faith." "The righteousness of one mortal will not save another."

The wise ones send their partners to the merchants from whom they may buy oil. This feature belongs only to the furniture of the parable, not to its spiritual import. "The thought that the wise virgins cannot spare ought whatever from their oil is to be expressed as explicitly as possible." "Go ye," etc. Schaeffer: "Resort to the same source which had supplied them," do what they did. Were a spiritual interpretation of "them that sell" admissible, we should expect to hear the wise direct the foolish to the bridegroom himself, who is ever the gracious Dispenser and

Lord of the Holy Ghost. Some surmise "a feeble hope of success before the actual arrival of the bridegroom"—"a charitable judgment of those whom the judgment finds unprepared."

10. "And while they went . . . the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in . . . to the marriage feast: and the door was shut."

The foolish desire to share the joy of the marriage supper; "they do not give up their portion in the inheritance of the kingdom. They love the Lord; they go to procure that which is needful for their preparation." But in the meanwhile, "whilst they were going," the bridegroom arrives and enters along with those "that were ready" into the marriage feast, v. 34.

This feast takes place at the home of the bride, "whither the bridegroom was on his way, and to which the maids were conducting him." The two clauses, "the bridegroom came" and "they went in with him," settle this. Nebe: "The bride had sent the virgins out to conduct the bridegroom to her home."

The wise entered the house with the bridegroom to celebrate the marriage, and "the door was shut" behind them, it is not said by whom. Nebe: "As God shut the door of the ark after Noah with the souls who were to be rescued had entered in, so will also the hand of God, after the Bridegroom along with the virgins who were ready has come to His bride, shut the door behind these, and that door will remain closed."

11. "Afterward come also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us."

"The other," the five foolish ones who, when it was too late, had proceeded to procure oil. There is not a shadow of an implication that any of them secured entrance. True, the "Lord" does not address them as "fools," a circumstance which leads Nebe to note the pain of His heart over the fact that souls who had gone out to meet Him could not be admitted. The door is closed never to be re-opened. An eternal exclusion from heaven could not be more plainly taught. Luke xvi. 26. The foolish come afterward; come too late. Having failed to enter with the Bridegroom, they cannot be admitted apart from Him who is Himself the door. Souls enter heaven because they are in Christ, in union with Him, members of His body, and there is no other way than through and with Him. It is not said that they obtained oil, still they repair to the scene of the wedding, prepared or unprepared. They manage to get to the house wherein the wedding is celebrated—its brilliant lights and its festal songs resounding in the still night would guide them to the door, even had they not previously known the bride's house well enough to find it in the dark. They stand before the

door, but to their surprise and horror it is shut and they are shut out. In their distress they cry, "Lord, Lord:" "expressive of most urgent and anxious entreaty." vii. 21. With a crushing disappointment they realize that they have forfeited their inheritance. Nebe: "Oh! how dreadful! to be a virgin, to have all through life with a yearning heart awaited the coming of the Bridegroom, and now when the blessed hour has come to be compelled to stand without." Bengel: "By how very little the foolish missed of entering in, and yet they are shut out." How often a mere trifle forms the boundary between wisdom and folly: and yet the decision formed has the most momentous importance for us.

Vainly they now implore admittance.

12. "But he answered . . . Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

Nebe: "What the trembling heart of the foolish ones had already told them, falls now from the mouth of the Bridegroom: He who now celebrates His day of triumph and rejoicing, cannot speak otherwise than He does, fain as He would have all shout and exult on the day when His own heart is full of joy and gladness." He seals His word with an Amen, "verily." It is no extravagant rhetoric but the naked truth: "I know you not." Meyer: "Because ye were not amongst the bridesmaids who welcomed me, ye are to me as entire strangers whom I do not know and who, therefore, can have no part in the marriage." All who had appeared in the procession and were entitled to enter were within. "The knowledge of experience arising out of the intercourse of life, vii. 23; 1 Cor. viii. 3; xiii. 12; Gal. iv. 9, is the point intended to be *illustrated*." Nebe: "Oh what wretchedness will now burst upon them! Excluded forever from the festive hall and banquet! Virgins are shut out, those who had closed their hearts and kept them closed against the allurements and seductions of this world, who had confessed the Lord with hand and mouth! . . . It is a terrible end. To-day, to-day, if you will hear His voice see whether you have oil in your lamps, whether you are going forward to your Lord with the cruse of oil. If you have no oil, seek it in time, this very day. It may be bought without money and without price." Let there be no delay in the preparation for the Lord.

13. "Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."

"Therefore." Meyer: "Because the foolish virgins were shut out and because something corresponding to this will happen to you unless you watch," xxiv. 42. Thus Jesus Himself explains

the purpose of this parable. Eccl. ix. 10. Bengel: "He who watches will have not only his lamp burning, but also oil in his vessel." Nebe: "Had the wise and foolish virgins known when the bridegroom would come, they would hardly have slept, but with the utmost tension and most fervent prayers have kept themselves awake." Thus, too, the foolish ones might have been saved from their irretrievable fate. Had they known that the bridegroom would delay till midnight, that the lamps would have to burn a long while, they would have provided themselves with the necessary oil. We know not when the Son of Man will come. "Only this one thing we know, that we must wait, must wait long for the blessed and glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a long and severe period of trial. And this we know, that only he will be accepted who is prepared for the appearing of the Lord. Hence, let us all lay to heart the admonition, 'Watch!'"

Meyer: "The moral preparedness that continues to maintain itself up till the moment of the Advent, which cannot be determined, will lead to participation in the Messianic kingdom, whereas those in whom this preparedness has not been maintained till the end will, when surprised by the sudden appearing of the Lord, experience in themselves the irreparable consequences of their foolish neglect, and be shut out from His kingdom."

The keynote of this Pericope is watchfulness.

HOMILETICAL OUTLINES.

WATCH!

1. Strong is our inclination to sleep.
2. The coming of the Bridegroom is sudden.
3. The door will be finally closed.

HOW IMPERATIVELY WE NEED THE ADMONITION, WATCH!

1. We fall asleep, even as we go out to meet the Lord!
2. Our lamps go out, even after burning brightly for a season.
3. The door remains closed, even when we cry, Lord, Lord, open to us!

WHY WATCH?

1. Because we know not when the Son of Man will come, but we well know that we are only too prone to sleep.
2. Because we know not whether our lamps will burn to the end, but we well know that then no more oil is to be secured.

BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH !

1. Go ye out to meet Him.
2. Trim your lamps.
3. Have oil with you.
4. Enter in to the marriage.

CONSIDER THE END.

1. The Bridegroom tarries.
2. Sleep sets in.
3. The lamps go out.
4. The door will be closed.

ANXIOUS QUESTIONS AT THE CLOSE OF THE CHURCH YEAR.

1. Are we virgins before the Lord ?
2. Does our light shine before men ?
3. Are we truly expecting the advent of the Lord ?
4. Have we the Holy Ghost in earthen vessels ?

OR,

1. Didst thou go out to meet the Lord ?
2. Didst thou not grow sleepy on the way ?
3. Is thy lamp burning ?
4. Canst thou enter with the Bridegroom into the wedding ?

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