

Spurgeon's Verse Expositions-Gospel of Luke

SPURGEON'S VERSE EXPOSITIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

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Luke 1

Luk 1:5-6. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

You have here a very interesting couple, Zacharias and Elisabeth, a priest with a wife. I have often marveled why the Church of Rome should think it wrong that priests should be married, when it is evident that the priests under the law were so. The priests had grown so numerous that there was not room for them all to work at the Temple at one time; they were divided into twenty-four courses, and Zacharias would, therefore, come up to Jerusalem for a fortnight to take his share of the service. Zacharias and Elisabeth were notable for excellence of character: "They were both righteous before God." Not only did they stand high in the esteem of men, but the great God, who reads the hearts of all, and sees how they live in secret, reckoned them to be righteous: "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments"-that is, in the moral precepts of the law-"and ordinances"-that is in the ceremonial rites-" of the Lord blameless."

Luk 1:7-9. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord,

Certain offices of the priest were considered to be more honourable than others; and so, to prevent any jealousy, they cast lots as to which they should take in turn. It fell to the lot of Zacharias to burn incense; this did not happen by chance. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord;" and there was a special reason why this good man should stand at the altar at this particular time.

Luk 1:10. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

While he, in the inner shrine, was burning incense, the multitudes in the outer courts were engaging in prayer. I think that is a very beautiful symbol,-the priest unseen, like the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy of Holies above, and the mass of the people engaged in prayer while the unseen priest is offering the sacred perfume before the altar of Jehovah.

Luk 1:11-12. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

He was a good man, yet he was troubled at the sight of an angel.

Consciousness of sin, even in an outwardly blameless man, makes us all tremble in the presence of anything heavenly. This bright spirit had come fresh from the courts of God; he was a courtier of the heavenly Temple, and he had come down on a sudden with a sweet and cheering message for the earthly priest; but the priest "was troubled, and fear fell upon him." Brethren, we cannot know much of heaven here below, because it would cause us trembling; we are as yet unfit for all the glories of that upper state. Good John Berridge wrote,-"

And now they range the heavenly plains,
And sing their hymns in melting strains;
And now their souls begin to prove The heights and depths of Jesus' love.
"Ah Lord, with tardy steps I creep,
And sometimes sing, and sometimes weep;
Yet strip me of this house of clay,
And I will sing as loud as they."

Yes, and so will we; we will be as much at home as the happy saints, who dwell in light, when once we are delivered from this hampering flesh and blood.

Luk 1:13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard;
The best quietus to fear is answered prayer. If God has heard thee, be not thou again afraid.

Luk 1:13. And thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

"The grace" or "the gift of God", so the name "John" signifies; and it is a sweet name for anyone to bear: "Thou shalt call his name John." I do not think the prayer alluded to here was so much a prayer for a son; if so, methinks that Zacharias had long ago left off praying it, and now his old prayers are heard, after he had discontinued them. I think that it alludes rather to his prayer for the coming of the Christ, the appearance of the Messiah; that prayer was heard, as we shall see further on.

Luk 1:14-15. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink;

I do not say that it is the duty of every man to drink neither wine nor strong drink, but I beg every man to notice that if anyone was to be peculiarly consecrated to a holy calling, it was always to be so; "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink." If there be nothing defiling about wine or strong drink, there is certainly nothing sanctifying about it; and the tendency seems to lie the other way, else it is a strange thing that men dedicated to God were so continually bidden to drink neither wine nor strong drink.

Luk 1:15-17. And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

In the third chapter of this Gospel, you will find the record of John beginning to fulfill this prophecy concerning himself.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 1:5-17; Luk 3:1-18.

Luke 1:18 "Whereby shall I know this?"

Zacharias had asked for a sign, and by a sign he was chastened. God often makes us gather the twigs from which he makes the rod with which he scourges us. Our own sins are the thorns which cause us to smart. Zacharias asked for a sign, and he has this sign: "Thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words" (Luke 1:20). "You did not believe what was spoken to you by the Lord, and now you are unable to repeat it to others, for the Lord will not employ an unbelieving messenger. If you will not believe when an angel speaks, you shall not speak yourself." Many a dumb Christian, I am afraid, has had his mouth sealed through unbelief.

Luk 1:5-6. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

There have been some good people who have lived in very bad times; never was there a worse reign than that of Herod; seldom or never a better man and woman than Zacharias and Elisabeth. Let no man excuse himself for sinning because of the times in which he lives. You may be rich in grace when others around you have none, even as Gideon's fleece was wet with dew when the whole floor was dry. God help us, in these evil days, to be "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless"!

Luk 1:7. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

We do not, at the present time, understand the anguish which filled the heart of an Eastern woman who had no child. It was considered to be a disgrace, and many suffered very bitterly on that account; as did Hannah, and Rachel, and others besides.

Luk 1:8-12. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

Zacharias must have been astonished as he saw that strange visitant; no wonder that "fear fell upon him."

Luk 1:13-17. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Happy is the father of such a child! Happy is that man whose office it is to be the herald of Christ! Brethren, many of us are called to that office in a certain sense as we come in our Master's name, and preach concerning him "'Tis all my business here below To cry, 'Behold the Lamb.'" And in this way we may be partakers of John the Baptist's joy.

Luk 1:18-20. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And, the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things —
These glad tidings —

Luk 1:20. Shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

Many a child of God is dumb, because of unbelief. Mary believed, and therefore she sang a holy, joyous song, — a sweet canticle of delight: "My soul doth magnify the Lord." But Zacharias, because of his unbelief, was unable to speak. I wonder whether there is a man here who might have spoken for his God with power, but whose mouth is closed because of his unbelief. If so, may the Lord hasten the time when his dumbness shall be ended!

Luk 1:21-22. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

By the signs he made, he impressed them with the fact that something extraordinary had happened.

Luk 1:23-25. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

I do not wonder that, in her solemn joy, she shunned the gossips of the neighborhood and kept herself in seclusion. I do believe that there is many a soul which, when it has found Christ, feels itself much too full of joy to speak, and asks not for a crowded temple, but for a quiet chamber where the heart may pour itself out before God.

Luk 1:26-35. And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man! And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

So was she thus visited, and thus she believed with a wonderful faith, much too wonderful for me to describe in this place. But now let us see what Mary said when she went to visit her cousin Elisabeth.

Luk 1:46-47. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. She needed a Saviour, you see. Though about to become the mother of Jesus, Mary did not think herself without sin. Her eyes still looked to him who should be her Saviour from guilt and condemnation.

Luk 1:48-55. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

This is one of the sweetest songs that was ever sung, and is equal to any of those which came from the inspired lips of the Hebrew prophets. Well might she sing who had been thus favored. Oh, if Christ Jesus should come to any of us by faith, what reason should we have for singing! And will not each one of us, who has been thus honoured, cry with Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord"?

Luk 1:56. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

What wonderful interviews those two holy women had! The one well stricken in years, and the other youthful; yet both highly favored of God. I wonder what they said; doubtless angels remember their charming conversation. May the day come when all that fear the Lord, both men and women, shall speak often one to another concerning their Redeemer, and all that relates to his glorious cause; and then the Lord shall write another Book of Remembrance concerning their hallowed fellowship and intercourse!

This exposition consisted of readings from Psalms 148; and Luk 1:5-35; Luk 1:46-56.

Luk 1:26-27. And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

It was by the temptation of an evil angel that man fell, and Paradise was lost, it was, therefore, most appropriate that good angels should be sent to announce the coming of the Restorer, through whom Paradise is regained: "Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth." Christ's coming to earth must be announced in the lowliest of cities, and he must be born in the small Judaeian town of Bethlehem; but it was also decreed that he must die at Jerusalem, — in the metropolitan city. Mark the simplicity, and yet the sublimity, of the arrangement by which the meek and lowly Saviour was to be born in our nature. The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin, whose name was Mary.

Luk 1:28-29. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

The best of news may sometimes cause the greatest perturbation of mind and heart. If you feel troubled when you receive a message from God do not be astonished, as though some strange thing had happened unto you. See how Mary, who was told that she was to receive the greatest honour and favor possible to a mortal being, was troubled by the angel's speech, perplexed by his extraordinary salutation.

Luk 1:30. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.

If we have found favor with God, there is no cause for us to fear. If God is gracious to us, we are raised above all reason for alarm. Some court the fickle favor of men; but, even if they gain it, they may well fear that they may shortly lose it, but the angel said, "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God;" and having found that favor, she would never lose it.

Luk 1:31-32. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great,

—
How true is that prophecy; "He shall be great." Christ is the greatest of all great ones. How great he is in our esteem! The tongues of men and of angels could not tell all his greatness. "He shall be great," —

Luk 1:32-37. And shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.

It seemed meet that the gospel dispensation should thus begin with two great wonders. The age of wonders has opened upon us now that the day of grace has dawned. Now shall the barren woman keep house, and be the joyful mother of children, according to the ancient prophecy.

Luk 1:38. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

Oh, that we all had such a spirit of submission as she had, that we might be willing to place ourselves absolutely at God's disposal, for him to do with us as he pleased!

Luk 1:38. And the angel of the Lord departed from her.

His mission was accomplished, so he might go back to the glory from which he had come at God's command.

Luk 1:39-43. And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

The most gracious people are always the most humble people. This question of Elizabeth, "Whence is this to me?" has been one that we have often put concerning ourselves. She was the older woman of the two, but she felt herself highly honoured by this visit from her younger relative, whom the Lord had so wondrously favored. It is well when Christian people have a high regard for one another, and think less of themselves than they do of others whom God has especially favored. It is one of the traits in the character of God's true people, that they have this mind in them; while they who think themselves great prove that they are not the Lord's. If you think much of yourself, he thinks little of you.

Luk 1:44-45. For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed:

Not only Mary, who believed the angel's message, and was therefore blessed; but every one of us, who believes in God, may share in this benediction.

Luke 1:46 "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

I should like to be able to say as long as I live, "My soul doth magnify the Lord." I should like to have this as the one motto of my life from this moment until I close my eyes in death: "My soul doth magnify the Lord." I would gladly preach that way. I would gladly eat and drink that way. I would even sleep that way, so that I could truthfully say, "I have no wish but that God should be great, and that I should help to make him great in the eyes of others." Will not you also make this the motto of your life?

Luk 1:45-46. For there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said, This humble Jewish maiden was a woman of great natural ability. This song of hers is worthy to be sung throughout all ages. It is true that it is mainly taken from the song of Hannah, and other songs of devout persons in former ages; but this shows how Mary had studied the Word of God, and laid it up in her heart. The best preparation that you young people can have for the highest honour and service in your future life is to bathe frequently in the Word of God, and to perfume your whole life by a familiar and accurate acquaintance with Scripture truth. Nothing else can make you so pure, or so prepared for all service which God may yet have for you to perform.

Luk 1:46. My soul doth magnify the Lord, —

That is a good beginning. Mary does not magnify herself in her Magnificat, she has nothing to say concerning her own dignity, though she was of a noble lineage; but she sang, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," —

Luk 1:47. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

She needed a Saviour as much as we do, for she was a sinner like ourselves; and though she was blessed among women, she here indicates that she owed all that blessedness to the grace of God, who had become a Saviour to her, as well as to us.

Luk 1:48. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden:

The family from which Mary sprang had become poor, and she dwelt in lowliness at Nazareth.

Luk 1:48-49. For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

She was indeed a blessed woman to have such holy thoughts, such reverence for God, such a true idea of his might and majesty, and of the marvellous favor which he had shown to her.

Luk 1:50. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Remember this, it was not mercy to Mary only; it was mercy to us, and mercy to all, who truly trust the Saviour in whom she trusted.

Luk 1:51. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Sometimes, we read of God's "finger," That refers to a part of his great power. At other times, we read of his "hand." That is a more brilliant display of his power. But here, as elsewhere, we read of his "arm." This is the majesty of his omnipotence. Pharaoh's magicians told the king that it was the finger of God that wrought the plagues of Egypt, but it was with his outstretched arm that he divided the Red Sea, and overthrew Pharaoh and his hosts: Mary felt that, in the work of salvation we see God's arm; not merely his finger, or his hand.

Luk 1:52. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

This is what God is constantly doing, — casting down the high and mighty ones, and lifting up the meek and lowly.

Luk 1:53. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

They who are self-satisfied shall sooner or later be cast out; but those who look to God alone, and are hungry after him, shall be satisfied with his favor.

Luk 1:54-56. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy: As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. And Mary abode with her about three months and returned to her own house.

Luk 1:39-41. And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

We do not read that Mary was filled with the Holy Ghost, possibly because she was always in that condition, living very near to God in hallowed fellowship. Some of us have occasional fillings with the Holy Spirit, but blessed are they who dwell in him, having been baptized into him, and enjoying continual nearness to God as the blessed result.

Luk 1:42-43. And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Those who are most holy are most humble; you will always find those two things go together. Elisabeth was the older woman, but, inasmuch as Mary was more highly favored than she was, she asked, "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Genuine Christians do not exalt themselves above their fellow-believers, but they have a self-depreciatory spirit, and each one esteems others better than himself.

Luk 1:44-45. For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

What a benediction that is! If any of us truly believe God's Word, we are blessed from that very fact, for God's promise never misses its due performance. Men find it convenient to forget their promises, but God never forgets; he takes as much delight in keeping his promise as he does in making it.

Luk 1:46. And Mary said, —

We do not read that she spoke with a loud voice. Occasionally, the visitation of the Spirit causes excitement. Thus, Elisabeth spoke with a loud voice; but Mary, though full of a rapturous joy, spoke calmly and quietly, in a royal tone of holy calm. "Mary said," —

Luk 1:46. My soul doth magnify the Lord, —

She was weary, for she had come a long journey, but she was like Abraham's servant, who said, "I will not eat, until I have told mine errand." So Mary will not eat until she has sung the praises of her God: "My soul doth magnify the Lord," —

Luk 1:47-48. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Some have done so to the grief of genuine Christians, for they have apostatized from the faith, and made Mary into a kind of goddess, and, therefore, Protestant Christians have gone to the other extreme, and have not always given to her the respect which is due to her.

Luk 1:49-50. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Notice how Mary quotes Scripture. Her mind seems to have been saturated with the Word of God, as though she had learned the books of Scripture through, and had them "by heart" in more senses than one; and it is significant that, though the Holy Spirit was speaking by her, yet even he quoted the older Scriptures in preference to uttering new sentences. What honour he put upon the Old Testament by so continually quoting it in the New Testament, even as the Lord Jesus also did. Let us, too, prize every part of God's Word, let us lie asoak in it till we are saturated with Scriptural expressions; we cannot find any better ones, for there are none.

Luk 1:51-53. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Mary's song reminds us of the song of Hannah, yet there is a different tone in it. Hannah's has more of exultation over enemies cast down, but Mary's is more becoming to the new dispensation as Hannah's was to the old. There is a gentle quietness of tone about the Magnificat all through, yet even Mary cannot help rejoicing that the Lord "hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away."

Luk 1:54-56. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

Wondrous as her future was to be, she would not neglect the duties of her home. When any of you are privileged to share high spiritual enjoyments, mind that you always return to your own home not unfitted for your domestic duties. We read that David, after he had danced before the ark, "is returned to bless his household." We must never set up God's altar in opposition to the lawful duties of our home. The two together will make us strong for service, and enable us to glorify the name of the Lord.

Luk 1:46-47. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

The burden of Mary's Magnificat is very similar to Hannah's song, though there was one respect in which she could raise an even loftier note, for she had been chosen to be the mother of our Lord.

Luk 1:48-55. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

You see that the theme of the song is the same all through, -the casting down of the proud and the mighty, and the uplifting of those that are bowed down and despised; and all this is ascribed to the sovereignty of God.

This exposition consisted of readings from 1Sa 2:1-10; and Luk 1:46-55.

Luke 2

We WILL now read the story of our Saviour's birth as it is recorded in the Gospel according to Luke.

Luk 2:1-6. And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the City of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Little did any idea enter into Caesar's head that he was accomplishing the purpose of God by bringing Mary to Bethlehem, at that particular time, so that her child might be born there. But God can accomplish the purpose of his providence, and of his grace, in any way that he pleases and although Caesar is not aware of all that is involved in his action, his decree, which he intends simply to be a means of registering his subjects, and of filling his exchequer, is to be overruled by God for the fulfillment of the prophecy, uttered centuries before the event happened, that Christ must be born at Bethlehem. It may seem, to some of you, a strange thing that there should be an imperial edict, issued from Rome, which should have an important influence upon the place of birth of the Child; yet I do not doubt that, in God's esteem, the whole of the great Roman Empire was of very small account in comparison with his Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; and today, the thrones and dominions of the mightiest monarchs are only like the small cogs of the wheels of divine providence where the welfare of even the least of the Lord's people is concerned. He reckons not events according to their apparent importance; the standard of the sanctuary is a very different measure from that which worldlings use. When any purpose of God is to be accomplished, all other things will be subordinated to it.

Luk 2:6-7. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now hath heavenly glory wedded earthly poverty; and, henceforth, let no man dare to despise the poor and needy, since the son of the Highest is born in a stable, and cradled in a manger. How low the King of glory stoops, and how gloriously he uplifts the lowly to share his glory!

Luke 2:7 "There was no room ... in the inn."

Have you room for Christ?

"Well," says one, "I have room for him, but I am not worthy that he should come to me."

I did not ask about worthiness. Have you room for him?

"Oh, but the room I have in my heart is so base!"

So was the manger.

"But it is so despicable!"

So was the manger.

"But my heart is so foul!"

So, perhaps, the manger may have been.

"Oh, but I feel it is a place not at all fit for Christ!"

Nor was the manger, and yet there he was laid.

"Oh, but I have been such a sinner. I feel as if my heart had been a den of beasts and devils!"

Well, the manger had been a place where beasts had fed. Have you room for him? Never mind what the past has been. He can forget and forgive. It matters not what even the present state may be if you mourn it. If you have room for Christ, he will come and be your guest. Do not say, "I hope I shall have room for him." The time has come that he shall be born. Mary cannot wait months and years. Oh, if you have room for him, let him be born in your soul today!

If Jesus Christ was born in a manger in a rock, why should he not come and live in our rocky hearts? If he was born in a stable, why should not the stable of our souls be made into a habitation for him? If he was born in poverty, may not the poor in spirit expect that he will be their Friend?

Luk 2:8-9. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

For such is the condition, even of gracious souls, that the near approach of the divine glory begets in them trembling and alarm. Oh, how wondrously changed shall we be when we are able to bear even the glories of heaven! Have you ever thought of this, dear friends? The beloved apostle, John, saw Christ in his glory, and he wrote, "When I saw him, I fell at his feet, as dead; "and these shepherds, even at the sight of "the angel of the Lord," "were sore afraid." You and I, beloved, must undergo a marvellous change before we shall be able to be at home with God in his glory; but that change shall, through his abundant grace, take place ere long.

Luk 2:10-12. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

"This shall be a sign unto you," said the angel to the shepherds; and this is the ensign of the Christ of God even unto this day. There are some, who are constantly bringing discredit upon religion by their pompous ritual and gorgeous ceremonies, and it is buried beneath the weight of their sensuous worship, but the living Christ is still found in simple, lowly guise, "wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Luk 2:13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host —

They had heard the heavenly herald's proclamation, and hurried down to join him in publishing the glad tidings. They could not bear that only one angel should announce the birth of the Christ; so, "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host"

Luk 2:13-19. Praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Mary laid these things up in store, and pondered them, giving them their due weight and value. Oh, that we did the same with every truth that we learn!

Luk 2:1-9. And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was,

that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

These men were probably poor and illiterate, but that did not hinder God from revealing himself to them, nor prevent the coming of his Son to them. They were engaged in their ordinary calling, "keeping watch over their flock by night," when this great blessing came to them. Seldom does such a blessing as this come to idlers. It was not while they were gadding abroad, and wasting their time, but while they kept watch over their flock that "the angel of the Lord came upon them." First one angel led the way, and then a multitude of the heavenly host followed and these poor men, perhaps troubled with the common superstition of the Jews that the appearance of God, or any supernatural visitation, would always be followed by death, "were sore afraid."

Luk 2:10-11. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

The anointed Saviour has full power to save, for he "is Christ the Lord;" and therefore he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

Luk 2:12. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Not in marble halls, wrapped in purple and fine linen, and welcomed by the great and mighty of earth, nay, this greatest of all princes is born amid the poverty of our ordinary manhood. He is One chosen out of the people, the people's Saviour, and a manger receives the people's King.

Luk 2:13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God,--

They could not stay behind. The news spread through heaven that an angel had gone to announce the birth of Christ, and the others flew through the pearly gates, and hastened to overtake the herald, and reached him just as he had concluded his message: "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host." These cohorts of the Lord came riding post haste, Praising God,--

Luk 2:13-17. And saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

Good news is not to be kept to ourselves. When we have ascertained its truth we are to tell it to others, and we are especially to tell the goodness of salvation. Tell it, O ye who know it in your own hearts by blessed experience! Tell it, though it will sometimes be with broken accents in the feebleness of your flesh yet even then tell it in the ardor of your heart's affection, and God will bless your testimony, and others will learn the good news through you.

Luke 2:16 "And they ... found ... the babe lying in a manger."

we never find that the shepherds lost their way. No, God guides the shepherds, and he did direct the wise men, too. But they lost their way. It often happens that while shepherds find Christ, wise men miss him.

Luk 2:18-19. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them--

Weighed them, estimated them at their right value,^{3/4}

Luk 2:19. In her heart.

The best of coffers to lay up anything in is the heart. Happy are those who, like Mary, store up the things of Christ, not in their brain though that would make them orthodox; but in their heart, for that will bring them salvation.

Luke 2:19 "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

There was an exercise on the part of this blessed woman of the three great parts of her being: her memory—she kept all these things; her affections—she kept them in her heart; and her intellect—she pondered them, considered them, weighed them, turned them over. Memory, affection, and understanding were all exercised about these things

Luk 2:20-24. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

Our Saviour put himself under the law for our sakes, and in every jot and tittle he observed it. So we are delivered from its dominion; for if Christ hath fulfilled the law on our account, it hath no more claim upon us. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Luke 2:20 "Glorifying ... God for all the things that they had heard and seen. ..."

They praised God for the agreement between what they had heard and what they had seen. Observe the last sentence: "... as it was told unto them." Have you not found the gospel to be in yourselves just what the Bible said it would be? Jesus said he would give you grace. Have you not had it? He promised you rest. Have you not received it? He said that you should have joy and comfort and life through believing in him. Have you not had all these?

Luk 2:25. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout,⁹⁴ This combination makes up a complete character, "just" towards man, "devout" towards God. There are many who think they are just, but their justness does not extend to their fellow-creatures, and they forget the claims of the Most High upon them. On the other hand, I have known men who have pretended to a vast amount of devotion, but who have never been just. Such persons are hypocrites, as the others are robbers of God; but he who is just and devout, just towards man and devout towards God, hath the character of a true man. Such was Simeon, "just and devout," —

Luk 2:25-29. Waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

You see, dear friends, he was not afraid to die, and he knew that he could not die until he had seen the Messiah. Some of us, if we had a revelation that, on the occurrence of a certain event, we should die, might be filled with alarm or anxiety, but it is not so with holy Simeon; he rather longs to depart in peace. He looks upon the coming of "the Lord's Christ" with great joy, because now he knows the battle of life for him will soon be over, and that he will enter into his victory.

Luk 2:30-34. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; There were many who fell through their offences against Jesus: but blessed be his name, there are still many who rise through him, rise first to newness of life on earth and afterwards to resurrection life in glory. Jesus is set for both, he must be to one the savor of death unto death, and to another he must be the savor of life unto life.

Luk 2:34. And for a sign which shall be spoken against;
How true has this been. The cross has been to many a stumbling block, and to the worldly wise it has been foolishness; and so will it be to the world's end.

Luk 2:35. (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also,)
Great privileges often involve great troubles. Mary was highly favored, and truly blessed among women, yet no woman ever had

greater sorrow than she had.

Luk 2:35. That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Christ's death revealed the thoughts of many hearts. It revealed the thought in the heart of Pilate, that he loved popularity better than the truth. It revealed the thought of the heart of Judas, that he loved gold better than he loved his Master. It revealed the thought in the heart of Caiaphas, that he would keep to old customs rather than to the right. It revealed the thought in the hearts of the disciples, and showed what poor timid, trembling hearts they had. Peter's impulsive spirit, too, was revealed in all its weakness by the death of the Saviour. The cross is the great touchstone; wherever it comes, it tests and tries us, ³/₄even as the crucible tries the metal that is put into it,³/₄ and lets us know what manner of men we are. Dost thou love Christ? Dost thou glory in his cross? Then it is well with thee. But dost thou despise the cross? Dost thou set up thine own righteousness in opposition to it? Art thou depending upon anything beside Jesus Christ and him crucified? Then his cross reveals thee to be self-righteous, and dead in trespasses and sins. Our Saviour was not only to be received by men, but he was to be welcomed by women also, so now we read:³/₄

Luk 2:36-40. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Luk 2:21. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Although the old law ends with Christ, it is very instructive to notice that he came under the law, and conformed to all its appointments. Jesus, therefore, had to be circumcised. In him the law was fulfilled in every point, even to the jots and tittles; nothing was omitted. Behold, how perfect is the righteousness which he wrought out for his people!

Luk 2:22. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

Everything was done that was required by the Jewish law, you see. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "Being found in fashion as a man," and a man under the Jewish law, Jesus and his parents were obedient to all its requirements.

Luk 2:23-24. (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

This proves the poverty of our Lord's parents. If they had been able to bring a costlier sacrifice, they should have done so. The law required the offering of a lamb for a burnt offering; but there was a gracious provision in the case of the poor mother: "If she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean." Even in the case of a working-woman, the birth of her first-born son required from her a sacrifice; but it might be of the smallest kind: "A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons." Think of your Lord himself redeemed by a sacrifice, a pair of doves offered in his stead! What a wonderful coming down to our condition and position was this!

Luk 2:25. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, He blended in his character his duty to man and his duty to God, he was just and devout."

Luk 2:25. Waiting for the consolation of Israel:

His devotion was not that of a blind devotee. He had eyes of expectation, he was expecting the Messiah to come, who is "the consolation of Israel."

Luk 2:25-26. And the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

That which the Holy Ghost reveals will assuredly come to pass, as it did in the experience of old Simeon.

Luk 2:27. And he came by the Spirit into the temple:

Men who have the Spirit will be led by the Spirit. Simeon came into the temple at the right moment. Just when a young man was entering, with his wife and new-born child, "He came by the Spirit into the temple."

Luk 2:27-28. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms,

He came in, I say, at the right time. Did ever anybody, who was not led by the Spirit, find Christ? Somebody has come in here tonight, and he does not know why he has come; but he has been led here by the Spirit that he may see Jesus, and may have such a sight of him as shall be his salvation. God grant that it may be proved that many an aged Simeon has traveled here this Sabbath night, led by the Spirit for this purpose, to find the Saviour in his own house!

Luk 2:28; Luk 2:32. And blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Simeon had studied the ancient prophecies to good purpose, and he perceived from them that "the Lord's Christ" would be "a light to lighten the Gentiles" as well as "the glory of" God's ancient people, "Israel."

Luk 2:33. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

We may be very near to Christ, and yet know very little about him. Joseph and the virgin mother did not understand "those things which were spoken of him." One wonders it was so after all that had been revealed to them; we marvel that they marvelled.

Luk 2:34. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel;

Do you understand that? Whenever Christ comes to a man, there is a fall first, and a rising again afterwards. You never knew the Lord aright if he did not give you a fall first. He pulls us down from our pride and self-sufficiency, and then he lifts us up to a position of eternal safety. He is "set" for this purpose; this is the great design of Christ's coming: "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel."

Luke 2:34 "This child is set for the fall and rising ... of many."

Never does a man hear the gospel but he either rises or falls under that hearing.

Luk 2:34. And for a sign which shall be spoken against;

Christ and his gospel will always be spoken against. If you know a gospel which is approved by the age, and patronized by the learned, that gospel is a lie. You may be sure of that; but if it be spoken against, if it be slandered, if it be called absurd, unscientific, and I know not what, all that is in its favor.

Luk 2:35. (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,)

This favored woman had the greatest smart to go with her great honour. She saw the suffering and anguish of her son; and the nearer you are to Christ, the more of sorrow it will cost you, sorrow which you may be well content to bear. You know how it is put in that hymn of which many of us are very fond, —

"If I find him, if I follow,

What his guerdon here?

Many a labour, many a sorrow,

Many a tear."

Yet, I say again, you may be well content to bear it all for his sake; for you remember what the next verse of the hymn is, —

"If I still hold closely to him,

What hath be at last?

'Borrow vanquished, labour ended,

Jordan past.'"

Luk 2:35. That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Christ and his cross are the revealers of the thoughts of men's hearts. Men's hearts can conceal their thoughts until Christ's cross comes near; then the old enmity rises up, the heart rebels, and we see what is really in men's hearts.

Luk 2:36-37. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. It would have been a pity for Christ to have been received in the temple only by a man. There must be a woman there, too, to join in Simeon's swan song, and to unite her testimony with his.

Luk 2:38. And she coming in that instant —

God knows how to time what we call our accidental walks: "She coming in that instant" —

Luk 2:38. Gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

So that the song of Simeon was sweetened by the voice of Anna, and they both rejoiced in God their Saviour; and their joy was shared by "all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." May many of us have a share in that same joy as, by faith, we lovingly gaze upon "the Lord's Christ."

Luke 3

Luk 3:1-7. Now in the fifteenth yea of the reign of Tiberias Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; as it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned yea to flee from the wrath to come?

Does not John the Baptist speak like Elijah? Here are no honeyed phrases to delight the popular ear. The prophet of the wilderness talks like one who is all on fire with zeal for God, and indignation against evil.

Luk 3:8-11. Bring forth therefore worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn is laid down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

John was wonderfully practical in his advocacy of a holy charity and benevolence. His words cut against all greed, all hoarding, all hardening of the heart towards our fellow men.

Luk 3:12-13. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

They were accustomed to gather the taxes unfairly, and to increase the rates by oppressing the people, getting, perhaps, twice or even ten times more out of them than they could legally claim. John speaks to the point, does he not?

Luk 3:14. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, Those rough Roman soldiers, as they had conquered the country, were very apt to treat the people as though they were their slaves; so John says to them, "Do violence to no man,"^¾

Luk 3:14. Neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wage^¾

"With your rations, your allowances," so it runs. They were very apt to be contending for an increase in their pay, and to drag civilians before the courts with false accusations unless they chose to give them bribes to let them go. John does not mince matters with any of his hearers; he speaks with wonderful plainness and courage, and therein proves himself to be a true herald of his Master.

Luk 3:15-18. And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.'

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 1:5-17; Luk 3:1-18.

Luke 4

Luk 4:1. And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness ^¾

"Full of the Holy Ghost" ^¾and then led "into the wilderness" to be tempted. You would not expect that. Yet it is a sadder thing to be led into a wilderness when you are not filled with the Spirit, and a sadder thing to be tempted when the Spirit of God is not resting upon you. The temptation of our Lord was not one to which he wantonly exposed himself, he "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." The Spirit of God may lead us where we shall have to endure trial. If he does so, we are safe; and we shall come off conquerors even as our Master did.

Luke 4:1, 2 "Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost ... tempted of the devil."

He was full of the Holy Ghost, yet he was tempted. Why? Because the Holy Spirit is never given in vain, and if given to us, it is as a preparation for conflict, in order that we may have strength proportioned to our need.

Luk 4:2. Being forty days tempted of the devil.

Six weeks of temptation. We read the story of the temptation, perhaps, in six minutes; but it lasted for nearly six weeks Forty days tempted of the devil."

Luk 4:2. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

It does not appear, therefore, that Jesus hungered while he was fasting. He was miraculously sustained during that period. After fasting, one looks for deeper spiritual feeling, and more holy joy; but the most prominent fact here is that "he afterward hungered," Think not that you have lost the benefit of your devout exercises when you do not at once feel it. Perhaps the very best thing that can happen to you, after much prayer, is a holy hunger; I mean not a natural hunger, as it was with our Lord; but a blessed hungering after divine things. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Luk 4:3. And the devil said unto him, "If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread."

Satan met the hungry Man, and suited his temptation to his present pangs, to his special weakness at that moment: "If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." The devil suspected, and I think he knew that Jesus was the Son of God; but he began his temptation with an "if." He hissed that into the Saviour's ear: "If thou be the Son of God." If you, believer, can be led to doubt your sonship, and to fear that you are not a son of God, Satan will have begun to win the battle. So he begins to storm the fort royal of faith: "If thou be the Son of God." Our Lord was the Son of God, but he was then suffering as our Substitute; and in that condition he was a lone and humble man; what if I call him "a common soldier in the ranks"? Satan invites him to work a miracle of

an improper kind on his own behalf; but Jesus wrought no miracle for himself. Now, it may be, that the devil is trying some of you tonight. You are very poor, or business is going very awkwardly, and Satan suggests that you should help yourself in an improper manner. He tells you that you can get out of your trouble very easily by some action which, although it may not be strictly right, may not be so very wrong after all. He said to Jesus, "If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread."

Luk 4:4. And Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written,"

That is Christ's sword. See how swiftly he drew it out of its sheath. What a sharp two-edged sword is this to be used against Satan! You also, believer, have this powerful weapon in your hand; let no man take it from you. Believe in the inspiration of Scripture. Just now there is a fierce attack upon the Book of Deuteronomy. It is a very curious thing that all the texts Christ used during the temptation were taken out of Deuteronomy, as if that was to be the very armoury out of which he would select this true Jerusalem blade, with which he should overcome the tempter, "It is written," "It is written," "It is said."

Luk 4:4. That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

"God can sustain me without my turning the stone into bread. God can bring me through my trouble without my saying or doing anything wrong I am not dependent upon the outward and visible." If you can feel like that, if you can appropriate the promise of God, and quote it to Satan, saying, "It is written," Using it as Christ did, you will come off conqueror in the time of temptation even as he did.

Luk 4:5. And the devil,

Now he tries him again. There is wave upon wave trying to wash the Son of man off his feet.

Luk 4:5. Taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Skeptics have asked how that could be done. Well, they had better ask him who did it. He knows more about them, and they know more about him, than I do; but he did it: I am sure, for here it is written, that he "shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time."

Luk 4:6. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me and to whomsoever I will I give it.

Does not he talk proudly in the presence of his Lord and Master? What an audacious dog he must have been thus to howl in the presence of him who could have destroyed him by a look or a word, if he had wished to do so!

Luk 4:7-8. If thou therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan:

The temptation annoyed him, it was so foreign to his holy nature, it vexed his gracious spirit, so he cried out indignantly to the tempter: "Get thee behind me, Satan."

Luk 4:8. For it is written,

Here flashed forth the sword again.

Luk 4:8. Thou, shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Then let us pay no reverence, no worship, to any but God. Consciences and minds are made for God alone; before him let us bow; but if all the world were proffered us for a moment's idolatry, let us not fall into the snare of the tempter.

Luk 4:9. And he brought him to Jerusalem,

Satan now takes Christ to holy ground. Temptations are generally more severe there.

Luk 4:9. And set him on a pinnacle of the temple,

The highest point of all; elevated high above the earth.

Luk 4:9-11. And said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Now Satan tries to quote Scripture, as he can do when it answers his purpose; but he never quotes it correctly. You young brethren who go out preaching, mind that you do not imitate the devil by quoting part of a text, or quoting Scripture incorrectly. He did it, however, with a purpose; not by misadventure or from forgetfulness; he left out the very necessary words, "In all thy ways." "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Satan left out those last four words, for it was not the way of a child of God to come down from a pinnacle of the temple headlong into the gulf beneath.

Luk 4:12. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Do nothing presumptuously. Do nothing which would lead the Lord to act otherwise than according to his settled laws, which are always right and good.

Luk 4:13-14. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee:

He had not lost anything by the temptation, the power of the Spirit was still upon him.

Luk 4:14-15. And there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

He became popular; the people resorted to him, and were glad to hear him. He who has had secret temptation and private conflict is prepared to bear open success without being elevated by it. Hast thou stood foot to foot with Satan? Thou wilt think little of the applause or of the attacks of thy fellow-men.

Luk 4:14. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee:

Ah, dear brethren, if our Lord Jesus needed "the power of the Spirit", how much more do you and I need it! We have no power of our own, but he was the Son of God. He was a divine Teacher, and yet, when he went to his work, it was "in the power of the Spirit." Tarry, brother, till you have that power; it is of no use for you to go without it.

Luk 4:14-15. And there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

There was a wondrous power about his teaching: "Never man spake like this man." Perhaps his hearers did not understand what the power was; but they glorified the new Teacher who had come into their midst.

Luk 4:16. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up:

It is always a difficult thing for a young man to begin preaching in His own native town. A prophet is not without honour save in his own country, yet Jesus "came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up."

Luk 4:16. And, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

It was the custom to read parts of Holy Writ in the synagogue, and then to say a few words by way of exposition; and this the Saviour did.

Luk 4:17. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah.

And when he had opened the book, that is, unrolled the parchment containing Isaiah's prophecy, —

Luk 4:17. He found the place where it was written,

You will find the passage in the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah.

Luk 4:18-19. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

There he stopped; it was all of the passage that then seemed suitable.

Luk 4:20. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down.

In those days, the preacher sat down, and those who listened stood up, I daresay that practice tended to keep the hearers awake, and it was all the easier for the speaker. Well might the Saviour sit down, weighted as he was with a burden of holy instruction that he was about to impart to the people; or, perhaps, sitting down as if himself at rest, he appeared the more ready to give rest to them also.

Luk 4:20. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

The young Nazarene, who had quitted them for a while, and had come home again, was the center of his fellow-townsmen's attention.

Luk 4:21. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

He thus declared that he was the anointed Messiah.

Luk 4:22. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious word which proceeded out of his mouth.

They did not at first cavil at or deny what Jesus said; his doctrine was pleasing and comforting; and they were ready to accept it.

Luk 4:22. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

Now they began to question: "Is not this the son of the carpenter?"

Luk 4:23. And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me the proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

"You have been doing great things over yonder at Capernaum, do the same at Nazareth. You should not leave your own native town without working miracles here." Now there was an opportunity for Jesus to ingratiate himself with the people, and win their good word. If he would only perform miracles among them, he should be highly exalted in their esteem.

Luk 4:24-25. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the day, of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

Many husbands died, and many widows in Israel were left desolate in those terrible days of trial.

Luk 4:26. But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

This was as much as to say, "It is not because I lived here that I shall work miracles in this place. There were many widows round about Elijah, but he was not sent to one of them, he was sent to a widow in Sarepta, a city of Sidon, a heathen woman in another country." Mark the sovereignty of God; he bestows his mercy where he wills, according to his declaration to Moses, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." We dare not ask God why he does this, "for he giveth not account of any of his matters." He acts wisely; but he acts according to the good pleasure of his own will.

Luk 4:27. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman; the Syrian.

He, too, was a heathen from a distant country. Healing came unto him, but unto none of the lepers of Israel. God will do as he pleases with his own mercy and grace. The question that he asks is, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" "This doctrine of divine sovereignty was not according to the taste of these people, they did not like it, and some of you, I fear, do not like it. They grew very angry, they began to gnash their teeth, and to say, "This young man must be silenced; we will not listen to such doctrine as this from him."

Luk 4:28. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

They did not mind hearing the first part of his teaching; but now that he exalts the sovereignty of God, and lays the sinner low, he speaks too plainly for them: "They were filled with wrath."

Luk 4:29-30. And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

They could not destroy him at that time. His work was not done, and he was immortal till it was fully accomplished.

Luk 4:31-32. And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath day. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

God grant that his Word may be with power tonight! Amen.

We will read three short passages of Scripture, all relating to Christ's service. The first concerns the ministry of the Lord Jesus himself.

Luk 4:16-19. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been, brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered into him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when, he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord, is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

What a glorious passage! This was the text of Christ's whole ministry not only of that day at Nazareth, but of all his life ever after.

Luk 4:20. And he closed the book,
Rolled up the sacred writing, —

Luk 4:20. And he gave it again, to the minister, and sat down.

Their practice was to sit down to speak, while the people usually stood to hear; a very good custom, indeed. If we did the same, perhaps we should have fewer of our hearers going to sleep.

Luk 4:20-21. And the eyes of all them that were in, the synagogue were fastened on, him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

That is the way to preach; bring home the Scripture to the present time, show its application to every-day life, especially point out its connection with Christ, and prove how it is fulfilled and verified in his sacred person. Doubtless, Jesus said a great deal besides what is here recorded; but there were no shorthand writers there to take down every word he uttered.

Luk 4:22. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

There! Did it matter whose son Jesus was? Yet, in order to abate the force and even the blessedness of divine truth, men turn their thoughts to the Speaker rather than to what he says. How foolish!

Luk 4:23. And he said into them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

"Begin at home, work miracles here. You are the Son of the carpenter who lives here; now, do some wonderful work among us."

Luk 4:24-26. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

Elias did not feel bound to labour always among the Jews, but he went right to Sidon, to a heathen woman, and he sojourned with the widow in the far-away country. God is a Sovereign; he can save whom he wills; and he will exercise that sovereignty, and bless some of those who appear to be most hopeless, and to have the least signs of good about them, and to be the farthest removed from the means of grace.

Luk 4:27. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

Only the stranger and foreigner was cured of the disease of leprosy; another instance of divine sovereignty. Men do not like this doctrine of sovereignty; they are willing to have a god if he is not God; they do not mind believing in a god who is not King, and who

does not do as he wills with his own. They believe in free will, they say. Yes, yes, free will for everybody but God! Man is to be the god of man and of God, too, according to the talk of some. But this is the thunder from the divine throne: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Blessed is he who humbly boweth his head, and saith, "Be it so, my Lord!" Absolute power cannot be in better hands than in those of the God of love.

Luk 4:28. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, They were at first very pleased to have a promising young Preacher out of their own town, and they said one to another, "Did not he speak well?" Now they have changed their note; he has been too faithful for them. He has exalted God instead of man; and now they are filled with wrath.

Luk 4:29-30. And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down, headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

With that holy calm in which he always dwelt, with wondrous self-possession, he passed through the midst of them, and escaped their malice. Now let us read what Christ says to those who would be his followers. Turn to —Luk 9:57 -

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:16-30; Luk 9:57-62; and Mat 28:16-20.

We will read, from the Revised Version, two passages which record attempts made to kill our Lord before his time had come. You will see, from the sermon, why we read them.

Luk 4:16-21. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.

Alas, not in their hearts. They had heard Christ read the prophecy that related to himself, but they had not accepted its message.

Luk 4:22-27. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son? And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country. But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.

Thus the Saviour taught God's absolute right to deal out his mercies as he pleases. To that great doctrine of divine sovereignty, Christ's hearers would not submit, even as many in the present day will not yield.

Luk 4:28. And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue,—

They admired Christ's style of speech, but when he came to that man-humbling and God-glorifying doctrine, they were filled with wrath,—

Luk 4:28-30. As they heard these things; and they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:16-30; and Joh 8:37-59. (R.V.)

We are going to read the inspired records of several of our Saviour's Sabbath cures, for they are very instructive.

Luk 4:33-36. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst,

he came out of him, and hurt him not.

And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! For with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out, This was a very remarkable cure wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ on the Sabbath-day. Now let us turn to another, which is recorded in the sixth chapter of this same Gospel. (See Luk 6:6-11)

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:33-36; Luk 6:6-11; Luk 13:10-17; Luk 14:1-6; Joh 5:1-9; ND 9:1-14.

We are going to read some verses in the fourth and fifth chapters of Luke's Gospel, — hospital chapters, I may call them, for they record many marvellous cures which were wrought by the great Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall begin at the 33rd verse of the fourth chapter.

Luk 4:33-34. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?

There are many people, at the present day, who have this evil spirit in them and they also say, "Let us alone." They do not want to have their consciences disturbed; they would rather sleep on until they wake up in another world where their awaking will be too late to avail for their repentance.

Luk 4:34. Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

That is an old trick of the devil, to acknowledge the excellence of the Preacher that he may avoid the personal application of the sermon; and there are many people, who are quite satisfied when they have said concerning the Word which they have heard, "Yes, it was all true, and it was very well put." But that is not the purpose of a true minister of the gospel, — simply to win the compliment of your approbation; he wants to see the devil cast out of you, and to stir up your hearts so that you will no longer let religion alone, but will flee to Christ to save you.

Luk 4:35-36. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

Ah, dear friends! when we see what the gospel can do, — how it can re-claim the thief, how it can make chaste the harlot, how it can lift up the very vilest of men from the lowest depths of degradation, — we may well say, "What a Word is this!" The power of the gospel does not lie in the preacher, but in the truth which he proclaims. What a Word is this, which not only knocks at the door of the human heart, but which carries on its girdle the key with which it can open that door? It does not simply invite the sinner to trust the Saviour, but there is a power, which goes with it, which sweetly woos the heart until the unwilling become willing, and those who have hitherto despised God and his great salvation, cheerfully yield themselves to him. Christ not only comes to those who seek him; but, in the splendor of his grace, he is often found of them that sought him not; yea, those who cried "Let us alone," are not let alone, for grace brings them beneath her blessed sway.

Luk 4:37-39. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. And he arose out of the synagogue and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

Here is a type of another form of the disease of sin. This time it is a hot and burning fever, and there are many men who have the fever of pride, or the fever of ambition, and some who have the fever of impetuous lust. Yet we have never read of such a cure as this in the lives of the doctors of ancient or modern times. They have wrought remarkable cures by long dosing the patient with various drugs, but Christ just stood over Peter's wife's mother, and rebuked the fever, and instantly it fled.

Luk 4:40. Now when the sun was setting,

Ah, it is setting with some of you! Those gray hairs are like the streaks of light upon the horizon as the sun goes down; but blessed be God, he who heals the spiritually sick in the early morning, by bringing children to himself, does not cease to work until the sun goes down.

Luk 4:40. All they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

Oh, that he would do that just now! Still is he mighty to save; oh, that he would now display his ancient power, and lay his healing hands on every one of you! What fame he would get if he would do so! What joy there would be if all of you should now be turned to

God! And why should it not be? Christ is able to do this; then, let us ask it of him in earnest believing prayer

Luk 4:41. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and, saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

Perhaps they thought that their testimony would tend to blacken his character. We are, in a sense, pleased when bad men find fault with us, for that is really the best commendation that they can give us; but when they begin to praise us, we feel suspicious that there is something wrong. We think of how Christ acted when the devils said to him, "Thou art Christ, the Son of God," and we would fain have them hold their tongues. What a vile thing sin is, for it makes even good words to be evil when they come out of sinful lips!

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:33-41; and Luk 5:12-17.

Luke 5

Luk 5:1-2. And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. Before folding them up, as if they intended to do no more with them just then, as they had been working all night in vain.

Luk 5:3. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. It is very difficult to speak effectively when the people come too close to the speaker; and, sometimes, a little inconvenience like that may interfere with the flow of the speaker's thoughts and words. Even the Saviour seems to have felt that he needed a little breathing space between himself and his audience.

Luk 5:3. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

That was what some people would have called an unconsecrated place, but Christ's presence consecrated it, as it does every place where he condescends to meet with us.

"Where're we seek him, he is found,
And every place is hallowed ground."

Luk 5:4. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

Whenever he borrows a pulpit, or anything else, he pays good interest for the loan. Christ will not be in even a boatman's debt. For every cup of cold water given to his disciples in his name the Master will take care to pay.

Luk 5:5. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

Out of personal respect and obedience to Christ, having perhaps but a slender hope of any good coming of it, yet, nevertheless, he will let down the net.

Luk 5:6-7. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them.

For they had launched out so far into the sea so scarcely to be within hearing, so they beckoned to their partners in the other ship, and they rowed out to them.

Luk 5:7. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

We can have too much of a good thing, aye, too much even of the best things, for our poor frail vessel cannot hold all that God would be willing to put into it.

Luk 5:8. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Not knowing what he said, though he knew what he meant; feeling as if he, so sinful, had come too close to the Lord who was so gracious, so he must not dare to keep near to him. Have you never felt the same as that? If not, methinks you have neither known your Lord, not yet yourselves for the knowledge of Christ, combined with the knowledge of ourselves, is sure to produce this holy shrinking, in which we have no need for anyone to say to us, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet," for we are almost ready to put off our very body, for we can scarcely bear the glory of the presence of the Lord.

Luke 5:8 "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Would it not be better to say, "Come nearer to me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"? "I am a sinful man," here is humility. "Come nearer to me," here is faith, which prevents humility from degenerating into unbelief and despair.

Luk 5:9-10. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: and so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

He seemed to imply that he should catch them after the same rate, too; and so he did, for the first throw of the net brought in three thousand, and very soon the number caught was increased to five thousand. That was good fishing by those first Gospel fishermen; oh, that we could throw the net as they did!

Luk 5:11-12. And when they had brought the ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him, and it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy:

That is a characteristic touch of Luke, who, as a physician, with a glance of his eye, took in the condition of the man, not as merely a leper, but as one "full of leprosy."

Luk 5:12-13. Who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and brought him, saying, Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, —

The perfectly pure One touched the leprous man without himself becoming contaminated. In any other house, the man who touched a leper would have been defiled; but, when Christ comes into contact with impurity, he is not defiled, but he removes it. This is what the gospel is meant to do to the world. We are to go and seek the good of the most fallen and abandoned of men and those who do so, ought to have so much of the spirit of Jesus Christ in them, and so much vitality in their piety, that they will not be tempted by the sin upon which they look, but, on the contrary, will overcome that sin, and impart spiritual health instead of receiving infection. May we be in such a state of health as Jesus was! Then shall we be able to touch the leper, and not be defiled. Jesus touched him, —

Luk 5:13. Saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. —

Ask him to touch thee also, poor leprous soul; thou who art full of sin, thou who art deeply conscious that the deadly disease of sin is upon thee incurably. Ask him but to touch thee, for the touch of his finger shall make thee clean in a moment. Christ's cures are often instantaneous. He, who could speak a world into being with a word, can also speak a man into perfect spiritual sanity with a word.

Luk 5:14-15. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him:

Some fires burn the more fiercely for being damped, and such was the fame of Christ; it was not to be kept under. The more he bade men be quiet, "so much the more went there a fame abroad of him."

Luk 5:15. And great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

Two words that I long to see linked together in this house: "to hear, and to be healed by him." You come to hear; can you not also come "to be healed by him of your infirmities"?

Luk 5:16. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

The tense of the verb implies that he often did this; it was his habit to withdraw himself for private prayer even in his busiest times, and when he could occupy every minute with great advantage to the people. Thus he gathered new strength from above for each day's work; and when there was most to be done, then he took most time to pray. It is an evil economy that tries to take time for other things that should be spent in prayer, for the shortening of prayer will be the weakening of our power.

Luk 5:17. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. Not the Pharisees and doctors of the law; they do not often get healed by Christ, but “the power of the Lord was present to heal the multitude.” The only people for whom there seems to be no power to heal are these Pharisees and doctors, as will appear by the following narrative.

Luk 5:18. And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: He had had a stroke of paralysis.

Luk 5:18-19. And they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, — By the external staircase, —

Luk 5:19. And let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. Probably into the courtyard of the house where Jesus was preaching.

Luk 5:20. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. Laying the axe at the root; not healing the paralysis at first, but forgiving the sin which depressed the man’s spirit, and so was, in a measure, the cause of the paralysis. By removing the sin, he raised the man’s spirits, and with his renewed spirits, there came back strength. Note that it was when he saw their faith that he said unto the man, “Thy sins are forgiven thee.”

Luk 5:21. And the scribes and the Pharisees Here they are, these caviling gentlemen, these Pharisees and doctors of the law, —

Luk 5:21-23. Began to reason, saying, Who it this which speaketh blasphemies? ho can forgive sins, but God alone. But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? He that could do the one could do the other. He who bids the paralyzed man walk is divine; he, therefore, can forgive sin.

Luk 5:24-26. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, we have seen strange things today. May we often see such “strange things” spiritually!

Luk 5:27-32. And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

The murmuring of those Pharisees and doctors of the law had one good result, for it led the Saviour to declare the purpose of his mission to the earth: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Luk 5:12. And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. There was not much faith there, but faith even as a grain of mustard seed will serve; and therefore Christ did not refuse the poor leper’s plea.

Luk 5:13-15. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from

him. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. Oh, that sinners would come to Christ in this spirit now, — “to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities!” Some of you have come to hear, but have you come to Christ to be healed? Have you really come for that purpose? Alas! Some come even to God’s house only to see, or to be seen; how can such people expect to receive a blessing? Yet my Master is so gracious that, often, he is found of them that sought him not. So may it be with any careless ones who are with us now!

Luk 5:16-17. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

These were the least hopeful patients that the great Physician ever had; for to heal these doctors of divinity, and to bring these proud learned Pharisees down to accept the gospel, needed an omnipotent display of divine power. Penitent sinners are readily brought to Christ; but, often, the self-righteous, who think they are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, are not to be persuaded to accept the fine gold which Christ presents to all who ask him for it. The Lord grant that, if any such people be here, the power of the Lord may be here to heal them!

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:33-41; and Luk 5:12-17.

Luk 5:12. And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy:
As far gone with leprosy as he could be; thoroughly tainted, and eaten up with that loathsome disease.

Luk 5:12. Who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.
He felt that the difficulty lay in the will of Christ, not in his power. No other teacher would have looked at such a man. Everybody shrank from him, for he scattered defilement wherever he moved. A leper was a being from whom all kept clear, so this one was afraid that the great Teacher was not willing to cure him. “If thou wilt,” said he, “thou canst,” $\frac{3}{4}$ ‘I know that thou canst make me clean.’

Luk 5:13. And he put forth his hand, and touched him,
This was a wonderful instance of condescending love on the part of the Lord Jesus; and touching the leper did not defile him. On the contrary, Christ removed the defilement from the leper: “He touched him,”

Luk 5:13. Saying, I will: be thou clean.
It was the will of Christ that wrought the miracle, that secret movement of the heart of Christ, that silent omnipotent going forth of divine energy that accomplished the leper’s cure.

Luk 5:13. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.
Christ can heal sin in the same way that he cured this leper. If he touches the worst man in this place, he can make sin to depart from him the moment he touches him. It does not require years in order to perfect the work of salvation, it can be done in a moment. Such is the wonderworking power of Christ: “immediately the leprosy departed from him.”

Luk 5:14. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Our blessed Master did not court fame; he did not wish to make himself notorious, the crowds that flocked around him were inconvenient to him, so he did not wish to have them increased. There was danger in such crowding, and Jesus was wise in his generation, so he charged the healed leper to tell no man, but to show himself to the priest, and to present the offering enjoined under the law.

Luk 5:15. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him:
Fame is like fire. If you heap anything on it to prevent it from spreading, it often acts as fuel to the flame; so, the very effort to hide the light of Christ’s power, made it spread all the more widely.

Luk 5:15. And great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

I wish that all congregations would come together from the same motives, $\frac{3}{4}$ to hear and to be healed by Christ. What is thy disease, my hearer? What ails thy soul? What is the mischief in thy spirit? What is the malady in thy heart? Jesus can heal thee. Oh, that thou wouldst at once seek to be healed by him!

Luk 5:16. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Just when there were such grand opportunities of doing good, just when everybody sought him, does he get right away from them into the wilderness to pray? Yes, because he felt what we ought to feel but often do not, that he needed fresh power, that as the servant of God he must wait upon God for fresh power for his great life-work: "He withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed." No doubt it was the constant habit of Christ to pray, but there were certain special times when he retired into lonely places, and his prayer was peculiarly fervent and prolonged.

Luk 5:17. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

The word "them" scarcely gives the right sense of the original; it should be, "the power of the Lord was present to heal." Jesus did not heal the Pharisees and doctors of the law, but he healed many of the congregation. Now, how do you account for this power present to heal? Why, by that wilderness prayer: "He withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed," and afterward, in a very high and remarkable manner, "the power of the Lord was present to heal." And when the power to heal was present, the patient to be healed was very soon present, too.

Luk 5:18-19. And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. There does appear to have been, according to Mark, some breaking up of the material that formed the roof of the house where Christ was. It was not altogether such an easy matter as some have imagined to let this poor palsied man down into the presence of Jesus; and if some of the dust from the roof fell down upon the Pharisees and doctors of the law who were sitting by, it would only be what they were accustomed to throw into other people's eyes.

Luke 5:19 "They went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling."

Some of you say, "We cannot be of any use. We wish we could preach."

These men could not preach! They did not need to preach. They lowered the paralytic, and their work was done. They could not preach, but they could hold a rope. We want in the Christian church not only preachers, but soul winners who can bear souls on their hearts and feel the solemn burden; men who, it may be, cannot talk, but who can weep; men who cannot break other men's hearts with their language, but who break their own hearts with their compassion.

Luk 5:20. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Christ has eyes with which he can see faith. You and I cannot see it; but he can: "When he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins be forgiven thee." This was going to the very root of his disease. Jesus knew what the man really ailed; he was palsied in spirit as well as in body, and Christ removed the root of his disease by forgiving his sin.

Luk 5:21. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason,

The gentlemen I alluded to just now began to reason. It was just like them; instead of beginning to praise God, they "began to reason,"-

Luk 5:22. Saying, Who is this, which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, Why reason ye in your hearts?

See, Jesus can perceive thoughts. I have heard of "thought-reading." Here is a true specimen of it: "Jesus perceived their thoughts, and said unto them, Why reason ye in your hearts?"

Luk 5:23. Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

Anyone can say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or, "Rise up and walk," but to forgive sins, or to give the power to rise up and walk, equally needs a God. If God be present, and can make the palsied man arise and walk, he is also able to forgive his sins.

Luk 5:24-26. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear,

With awe, and reverence. They felt that God had come very near to them, and they perhaps said, like Jacob of old, when he was afraid, "flow dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." They were filled with fear,^{3/4}

Luk 5:26. Saying, We have seen strange things today.

Oh, that we might see such "strange things" in this house tonight, and whenever we meet to worship God!

Luk 5:12. And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy:

What a contrast there was between these two persons,— the Lord Jesus full of purity,— and this man full of impurity,— full of leprosy! He could not be more than full; he had as much leprosy as a man could contain.

Luk 5:12. Who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

This was splendid faith. Here was adoration of the noblest kind; no angel before the throne of God could render the Son of God more honour than this poor leprous man did. He believed in Christ's power at once to rid him of that otherwise incurable disease: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

Luk 5:13. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

This is just what Christ can do also in the spiritual realm. If a man be full of sin, let him but fall down on his face before Jesus, and say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," and the Lord will put out his hand, and touch him, and he will be clean in a moment. "Immediately "not needing the lapse of a single hour,— "immediately the leprosy departed from him."

Luk 5:14. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

As long as the ceremonial law was in force, Christ very diligently obeyed it, and bade others do the same. That law is now abolished, and the Jewish priesthood has also ceased to be. But mark the modesty of our Saviour. As a man, he sought no fame or honour, but, as far as he could do so, he suppressed the voices that would have brought him notoriety; yet grateful tongues could not all be silenced, even at his bidding.

Luk 5:15. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

There was a double attraction about the Lord Jesus, —his sweet, instructive speech, and his gracious, healing hand. There is a somewhat similar attraction still in every true gospel ministry, not the attraction of the mere words of human eloquence, but in the truth which every faithful minister preaches, and in that matchless soul-healing power which goes with the Word wherever it is believingly heard.

Luk 5:16. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

That is just what you and I would probably not have done under such circumstances. We should have said, "We must seize this golden opportunity of publishing our message. There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to plenitude of blessing; and we must take advantage of it." But our Saviour did not wish for fame, he cared nothing about excitement and popularity; so "he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed" for more of that real power which touches the hearts of men so as to save them, caring nothing for that power which merely attracts a crowd, and excites momentary attention. O servant of God, when thou art succeeding best in thy service, imitate thy Lord, withdraw thyself and pray!

Luk 5:17. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

To heal the people? Yes, and to heal the doctors, too; and that was a far more difficult thing than to heal the ordinary folk. It must have been a time of great mercy and favor when Christ was ready to bless even the Pharisee and doctors of the law who were sitting by.

Luk 5:18. And, behold,—
For it was a great wonder,—

Luk 5:18. Men brought in a bed a man which was taken with palsy:
A paralyzed man.

Luk 5:18-19. And they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop,—
There was, no doubt, a staircase outside, as there usually is to Eastern houses: “They went upon the housetop,”

Luk 5:19-21. And let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?
Most true, O Pharisees; and, therefore he is God, for he can forgive sins, and he has forgiven this poor sinner!

Luk 5:22-23. But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, Why reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, rise up and walk?
“Does not each of these require the same divine power? If I am able to bid him rise up and walk, I am also able, by the same divine authority, to forgive his sins.”

Luk 5:24-26. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear,
With a reverent awe,

Luk 5:26-27. Saying, We have seen strange things today. And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom:
This Levi, or Matthew, was a tax collector; not like those of our own day, but one who farmed the taxes for the Roman governor, and made what he could for himself out of them; at least, that is what many of the “publicans” did.

Luk 5:27-28. And he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him.
This was just a parallel case to that of curing the palsied man; it is precisely the same morally as the other was physically. The office of a publican was disreputable in the eyes of the Jews, and this Levi was probably making money fast at the cost of his own countrymen. He was paralyzed morally as the other man was physically; but as soon as Christ said to him, “Follow me,” “he left all, rose up, and followed him.”

Luk 5:29-30. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

It seems that there can never be a great wonder wrought by Christ without somebody or other objecting to it. I suppose that the sun never rose without annoying thieves, who would like a longer time to perpetrate their deeds of darkness; and no miracle of mercy is ever wrought without somebody finding fault with it for some reason or other. Be not dismayed, therefore, now that in these modern days there have arisen many cunning objectors to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let them object to it, as the dog barks at the moon; but still the moon shines on in her silver brightness. So, when all objectors shall have howled themselves to silence, the eternal gospel will shine on with never-failing splendor. These scribes and Pharisees murmured against Christ’s disciples, and said to them, “Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?” Their Master did not leave there to defend themselves, but he took the case

into his own hands.

Luk 5:31. And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole —
“Such as you scribes and Pharisees claim to be

Luk 5:31. Need not a physician; but they that are sick.

“You regard them as sick, and I regard them in the same way, and therefore am I found where these sick ones are. Why should I turn aside from them to insult you, who are so wonderfully healthy and think yourselves so good?”

Luk 5:32. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke 6

Luk 6:6-10. And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him. But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it? And looking round about upon them all, —

I think I see that piercing glance, which read their very hearts, and condemned the wickedness it saw there: “Looking round about upon them all,” —

Luk 6:10-11. He said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so and his hand was restored whole as the other. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

This was a second miracle wrought by our Lord on the Sabbath-day, and it also was a very notable one. Follow on in the same Gospel until you come to the thirteenth chapter, at the tenth verse. (See Luk 13:10-17)

Luke 6:38 “Give, and it shall be given unto you.”

We may so give for God as to get in the giving, so spend as to increase in the spending, so die for God as to live more than ever.

Luke 7

Luk 7:18. And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

John was in prison, and, possibly, troubled in spirit.

Luk 7:19. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus saying, art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

Did John doubt, then? Perhaps not. It may be that he saw that his disciples doubted, and that he wished their fears to be removed. It is possible, however, that he did himself have doubts. It is no unusual thing for the bravest hearts to be subject to fits of doubt. Elijah, you remember sat under a juniper tree in the wilderness, “and he requested for himself that he might die,” though he was the man who never was to die. And John, — the Elijah of the Christian dispensation, though a man of iron, was but a man, so he sent two of his disciples to Jesus, saying, “Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?”

Luk 7:20-22. When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen

and heard;

Our old proverb says that actions speak louder than words, so an answer in his actions would be more eloquent with these inquirers than even an answer in our Lord's own words. He bade them look at the evidences of his Messiahship which he gave them by his miraculous cures, and then he said to them, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard." It would be well if our lives were such that, if any enquired what we were, we should only have to say that they might judge us by what they had seen and heard in our common everyday life and conversation.

Luk 7:22-23. How that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

According to our Lord's testimony, the preaching of the gospel to the poor is as great a proof of his Messiahship as the raising of the dead. Then how highly it ought to be prized by them, and how glad should they be who have the gospel now preached freely in their hearing!

Luk 7:24. And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

The wind on the banks of the Jordan, where there are plenty of reeds growing; — did you see a man who would bow before every breath of popular favor or popular wrath? Was John the Baptist such a man as that? No, certainly not.

Luk 7:25. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment Behold, they which are gorgeously appareled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

They do not preach repentance. As is their clothing, so is their doctrine. They try to show a royal road to heaven — a smooth and easy path. But was John the Baptist a preacher of that kind? No, that he was not.

Luk 7:26-28. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Passing into the dispensation of clearer light, he who is least among the believers of the gospel of Jesus is, in some respects, greater than this man, who could only preach repentance, and point to a coming Saviour.

Luk 7:29-32. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation and to what are they like?

They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, at play; the playing of children is often according to the manners and customs of grown up people.

Luk 7:32. And calling one to another, and saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced;

"You would not play a merry game when we asked you to do so."

Luk 7:32. We have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

"You would not play either at funerals or weddings."

Luk 7:33. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, he hath a devil.

"He came among you as an ascetic, denying himself, not only the luxuries of life, but even the common comforts that others enjoyed, and ye say, 'He hath a devil.'"

Luk 7:34. The Son of man is come eating and drinking;

“He does not pretend to be an ascetic, he comes, on the contrary, to show that neither meat nor drink can save a man. What do you say, then, of this Son of man?”

Luk 7:34-35. And ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children.

Though the world contemns all wisdom's children, whichever way they go, and is not pleased with their manners, whatever manners they possess, yet, in the long run, when the wisdom of God shall be all unfolded, it will be seen that the roughness of John and the gentleness and lovingkindness of Jesus were both right in their proper place. If fish are not caught in the gospel fishery, it may sometimes be the fisherman's fault, but more often, it is the fault of the fish themselves. Here we have two very different kinds of fishermen, yet neither of them attracts all, though each of them draws some.

Luke 7:37, 38 “Behold, a woman ... began to wash his feet with tears ... and kissed his feet.”

Eyes which were full of adultery were now fountains of repentance. Lips which were doors of lascivious speech now yield holy kisses. The profligate was a penitent, the castaway a new creature. All the actions which are attributed to this woman illustrate the transforming power of divine grace.

Luk 7:36-37. And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, —

For it is a wonder of grace: “Behold,” —

Luk 7:37. A woman in the city, which was a sinner, —

A sinner by profession, a public and notorious sinner, —

Luk 7:37-44. When she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box; of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet:

“Though it was only a common act of courtesy, such as should always be shown to a guest, thou didst neglect that;” —

Luk 7:44. But she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head.

“She has given my feet no common washing, for she has washed them with her tears. You would only have brought me a linen napkin, but she hath ‘wiped them with the hairs of her head.’”

Luk 7:45. Thou gavest me no kiss,

Which was usually given as a greeting to guests at that time. Simon had not given to Jesus the honour which was due to him, which would have been to kiss his forehead.

Luk 7:45. But this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

Every word is emphatic to show how far she had gone beyond Simon, who thought himself so much better than she was.

Luk 7:46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint:

Another usual Eastern custom with guests whom the host intended to honour.

Luk 7:46. But this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Anointed them, not with ordinary olive oil, but with precious costly ointment.

Luk 7:47. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much:

“You know that her sins were many, and I tell you that they have been forgiven, and you can see, by her actions, that she loves much.”

Luk 7:47-48. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

What music that sentence “Thy sins are forgiven,” must have been to her! ‘Ah!’ says one, “I also should like to hear that sentence. Beyond everything else in the whole world would I desire to hear Jesus say to me, ‘Thy sins are forgiven.’ Then put yourself in the place that this woman occupied.

When Joab clung to the horns of the altar, he had to die there, but this woman had fled to the feet of Jesus, and she did not die there; nor shall you, but at those blessed feet, weeping for sin, and trusting the great Sin-bearer, you shall receive assurance of pardon: “Thy sins are forgiven.”

Luk 7:49-50. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? and he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

He did not want this young convert, this beginner in the Christian life to hear the bickerings and controversies of these coarse spirits, so he said to her, “Go in peace; and, dear soul, if you have begun to find out that, even in the Christian Church there are many opinions concerning many things, do not trouble yourself about those things. This is enough for thee: “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” There may be some who are called to contend for this or that point of the faith; but, as for thee, poor child, if, with thy broken heart, thou hast found the Saviour, and if thou lovest him with an inward, warm, and hearty love, do not spoil that love by getting into a controversial spirit: “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

Luk 7:24. And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

Certainly not; John could never be compared to a reed shaken with the wind, for he was strong, sturdy, firm, and steadfast. He was not like so many preachers, nowadays, who are swayed by the ever-changing opinion of the age, — the thought of these modern times, — and so prove themselves to be mere reeds shaken with the wind.

Luk 7:25. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment! Behold, they which are gorgeously appareled, and live delicately, are in kings’ courts.

John had been preaching in the desert, with all his might warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come. He was no court preacher, but a minister to the multitude, who delivered his heaven-inspired message in his own straightforward earnest style.

Luk 7:26-27. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

John was the morning star, and Christ the glorious Sun. John was the herald proclaiming the coming of Christ, and Christ himself followed close at his heels.

Luk 7:28. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist:

His was the highest office of all, immediately to precede Messiah himself.

Luk 7:28. But he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

We have a fuller gospel to preach than John had, and we may expect to see greater results from the preaching of that gospel than John could hope to see.

Luk 7:29-32. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the

Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. And the Lord said, whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

These children could not agree as to what game they would play. "Come," they said, "let us imitate a wedding, we will pipe, and you can dance." But the others would not dance. "Well," they said, "let us play at something. Let us imitate a funeral; we will be the mourners." Then the others would not weep. They would agree to nothing that was proposed, and that is the point of the Saviour's analogy, that there are multitudes of men who always quarrel with any kind of ministry that God may send to them. This man's style is much too florid; he has a superabundance of the flowers of oratory. That other man is much too dull; there is nothing interesting about his discourses. This man is too coarse; he is so rough as even to be vulgar. That other man is too refined, and uses language which shoots over people's heads. It is easy to find fault when you want to do so. And stick will do to beat a dog, and any kind of excuse will do to allow your conscience to escape from the message of an earnest ministry. Our Lord told the people that this was the way they had acted towards himself and John the Baptist.

Luk 7:33. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; —

An ascetic of ascetics, —

Luk 7:33. And ye say, He hath a devil.

"He is out of his mind altogether, possessed by the devil."

Luk 7:34. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; —

That is the Lord Jesus himself. He comes as a man among men, and sits with you at your feasts, and does not lead the life of an ascetic.

Luk 7:34. And ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

There was no pleasing them either way; whichever form of preacher the Lord sent, whether an ascetic or one like themselves, they found fault.

Luk 7:35. But wisdom is justified of all her children.

There shall come a day when it shall be seen that, after all, God knew best what style of preacher to send. He had work for each man to do, and he adapted the man for the work he had entrusted to his charge.

Luk 7:36. And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

Invitations from Pharisees were rather scarce; they did not often ask Christ to their houses. Even before this meal is over, there will be sure to be something like a quarrel, depend upon it.

Luk 7:37. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, —

Her name is not given; and there are good reasons why it should not be given. Certainly, she was not Mary the sister of Lazarus, nor yet Mary Magdalene, we may be quite sure of that. Our Saviour leaves her in an anonymous condition; and it is usually best that converts of this character should not be exhibited, and their names made known. I believe that much cruel wrong has been done to reclaimed sinners when they have been pushed to the front. "Behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner," —

Luk 7:37-38. When she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, —

His feet probably lay towards the door as he reclined at the table, and she could readily get at them without becoming too

conspicuous in the room: she “stood at his feet behind him weeping,” —

Luk 7:38. And began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

What a blessed amalgam of humility penitence, gratitude, and love! All these are seen in what she did, especially in that unbinding of the tresses of her beauty, which had been her nets in which she had taken the souls of men, now she uses these for a towel. She “began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.”

Luk 7:39. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, —

He did not like to say it in so many words, but he spoke loudly enough for himself to hear it, and for Christ to hear it, too.

Luk 7:39-44. Saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman?

“You did see this woman, and you looked upon her with a frowning face; now take another look at her by the light of my parable.”
“Simon, seest thou this woman?”

Luk 7:44. I entered into thine house, —

“Therefore thou wast bound by the obligations of a host,” —

Luk 7:44. Thou gavest me no water for my feet: —

An ordinary commonplace courtesy in the East, almost a necessity for those who have walked far, and whose feet are weary and dusty: “Thou gavest me no water for my feet:” —

Luk 7:44. But she hath washed my feet with tears, —

Costly water this! “She hath washed my feet with tears.”

Luk 7:44. And wiped them with the hairs of her head.

“She has done it, she has done it better than thou wouldst have done it, she has done it best of all, she has done what thou oughtest to have done, she has done it when there seemed to be no claim upon her to do it.”

Luke 7:45 “Thou gavest me no kiss.”

Simon shows how self-righteous men love the Savior. They do not even wash his feet or kiss his cheeks. But those who are saved by grace love Jesus, and therefore kiss his feet and bathe them with their tears, and would willingly lay down their lives for him. Law! There is no power for holiness in it! Law drives our spirits to rebellion, but love has magic in it.

Luk 7:45. Thou gavest me no kiss: —

Though that was the ordinary mode of !an honoured guest, —

Luk 7:46. But this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

You said in your heart that, if I had been a prophet, I should have known who and what manner of woman this was. I do know, and I am telling you. If you had given me a kiss, you would only have coldly kissed my brow, but she has found it in her heart to honour me by kissing my feet. Since I came in, she has not ceased to kiss them, unwashed as they were; and she has not only kissed them, but she has also washed them with her tears.”

Luk 7:46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: —

“Thou, the host, whose duty it was to anoint guest, didst not do it,” —

Luk 7:46. But this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

The best unguent she possessed or could procure.

Luk 7:47-48. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

“Not because she has done this, but this is an evidence that her sins are forgiven. This act of greater love is the proof that she must be conscious of the greater forgiveness: ‘she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.’” It is always like that; your converted Pharisees have to be made to feel like this woman before they will render love like hers; and if Simon is ever made to feel that his sin, in a certain light, is as great as the sin of this fallen woman, then he will love as much as she does, but not till then.

Jesus said unto her, “Thy sins are forgiven.” Oh, the marvellous music of that short sentence! If I had to choose from all language the choicest sentence that my ear could hear when under a sense of him, it would be these four words which the Master addressed to this woman who was a notable public sinner, “Thy sins are forgiven.”

Luke 7:47 “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.”

I do not say that love is always in proportion to the amount of sin forgiven. But I do say that it is in proportion to the consciousness of sin forgiven. A man may be less of a sinner than another, but he may be more conscious of his sin. He will be the man who loves Christ most.

Luk 7:49. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

Now, you see, they begin to mutter and to cavil. What is this poor woman to do? Probably she felt ready to speak up for her Master; but, sometimes, it happens that the Lord Jesus Christ will not permit certain even of his forgiven ones to be very prominent.

Luk 7:50. And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

She was best out of the way of all controversy; she would honour him most by going home, and there sweetly singing to his praise, and drinking deep draughts of his love. If any of you converts are meeting with those who cavil at you, do not stop where they are, but go about your business with these sweet words of your Master ringing in your ears: “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

Luk 7:36. And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat.

They sat according to the Eastern custom of sitting, which was rather lying at length, with the feet far out upon the couch or sofa.

Luk 7:37. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner,

In a particular sense, a sinner; one whose very trade was sin.

Luk 7:37-38. When she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment And stood at his feet behind him weeping.

As she could do, you see, without coming into the room, except for a few yards, especially if the Saviour’s feet were close against the door.

Luk 7:38. And began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

For water she gives her tears, for a towel, her hair; to heal the blisters of his weary pilgrimage, there are her soft lips for liniment; and then for ointment comes this precious salve.

Luk 7:39. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner.

She is a sinner, and does he let her touch him, and kiss his feet, and show such tokens of affection? What man must he be who allows a harlot's kiss, even though it be upon his feet? Ah! poor foolish Pharisee! He judged according to the sight of the eye, or else he might have known that the best of men would never be angry at a harlot's tears, for the tears of repentance, come from whatever heart they may, are always like diamonds in the esteem of thee who judges rightly.

Luk 7:40-42. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, And were, therefore, likely to be cast into prison, and to be sold as slaves.

Luk 7:42-43. He frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most. Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. There were no bonds, no promises of what they would do in the future, but he frankly forgave them both.

Luk 7:44. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, And it was, therefore, thy duty to attend to me.

Luk 7:44. Thou gavest me no water for my feet:
Though that was the common custom.

Luk 7:44-45. But he hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head Thou gavest me no kiss;
Which was the customary welcome to every honoured guest — a kiss upon the cheek or upon the forehead.

Luk 7:45. But this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.
She has done what thou oughtest to have done; she has done it better than thou couldest have done it; she has done it when there was no claim upon her to do it, except that she had been forgiven much, and, therefore, loved much.

Luk 7:46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint;
This, too, was the usual custom.

Luk 7:46-48. But this woman, hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

Luk 7:36. And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

It was usually a suspicious circumstance when a Pharisee desired to be familiar with Christ; it might generally be suspected that he wished to entrap him. Yet, on this occasion, if there was no real friendliness to Christ, there was at least the appearance of it. We see what our Saviour did when the Pharisee gave him an invitation: "He went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat." The Lord saw there an opportunity for usefulness. He knew that he would have a good reason for speaking personally to this Pharisee, who, peradventure, was one of the other sort. At all events, our Lord felt that it was right for him to go into that house, even if they did watch him, and try to catch him in his talk. If there was hypocrisy there, there was the more need for his presence, as Jesus himself said concerning his eating with publicans and sinners, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick."

Luk 7:37-38. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

She was not a sinner in the ordinary sense of the word, but she was "a sinner" by trade, "a sinner" by profession. It always seems to me that, in this description of her, every word is emphatic. There is much meaning in every separate action of the woman; and even in her little mannerisms there is something that is instructive to us. Our Lord was reclining at his meal, and his feet were turned towards the door, so that she had not to come far into the house before she reached his feet; and there she stood "at his feet." Those are blessed words: "at his feet." That is where we also would stand and weep. That is where we would sit and learn. That is where we would wait and serve. That is where we hope to live and reign for ever: "at his feet." This woman "stood at his feet behind him," — as if she were unworthy to be looked upon by him, but found it honour enough to be behind him, so long as she was but near him: "at his feet behind him weeping," — with sorrow for her sin, with joy for her pardon, with delight in her Lord's presence, perhaps with grief at the prospect of what yet awaited him. And she "began to wash his feet with tears." O sweet repentance, which fills the basin better than the purest streams of earth could ever do! Then she unbound her tresses, — those nets in which she had, mayhap, caught many a man when she had hunted for the precious life after her former sinful manner. But now she uses those tresses for something better, she makes a towel of her hair. That which was her pride shall now fill that humble office, and even be honoured thereby. "And kissed his feet." Oh, the tenderness of her love, and the strength of her passion — a sacred one, not born of earth at all, — for that dear Lord of hers! she kissed his feet; and then she poured upon them the precious perfumed ointment which had cost so much.

Luk 7:39. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, —

Well, what did he say? I think that, if some of us, taught of God, and let into the secret of eternal love, had been there, we should have whispered to one another, "What a change has been wrought in that woman! There she is, weeping, and washing the Saviour's feet, when, but the other day, she was standing at the corners of the streets, in the attire of a harlot, plying her accursed trade." How greatly we should have rejoiced to see her! But it is only grace that teaches us to rejoice over even one sinner that repenteth, and Simon the Pharisee appeared to know little or nothing of grace. He had, however, the good manners not to say aloud what he thought, but "he spake within himself, saying," —

Luk 7:39. This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

Yet "this man" was a prophet, and he did know "who and what manner of woman" that was who touched him. More than that, he knew what manner of woman his grace had made her, and how true, how pure, was the love which she was then manifesting to him; and he knew how deep was her repentance, how changed her heart, how renewed her entire life was. He knew all about her, but poor Simon could not know "this woman" as Christ knew her.

Luk 7:40. And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

Christ often answers people who do not speak audibly, he answers those who only speak in their hearts. So you, who are silently praying, may take comfort. If Jesus answers a Pharisee who speaks in his heart against him, much more readily will he answer his own people when they are speaking in their hearts to him. It was a hopeful sign that Simon used a respectful title in speaking to Christ, and that he was willing to listen.

Luk 7:41-43. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.

"Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most." Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. Now, dear friends, I hope that those of us who have had much forgiven are proving, by the warmth of our love, how right was this judgment on the part of Simon. If thou hast had much forgiven, be well to the front in every struggle on behalf of the cause of Christ. Be well to the front also with thy gift for him; bring thy alabaster box, and break it for him. With not for anyone to ask thee, much less to press thee, to give to him who gave his all for thee, but, spontaneously, out of the love thou bearest to trial who has loved thee so much as to die for thee, prove that thou lovest him most of all.

Luk 7:44. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman?

Christ knew that Simon did see her, and that he had just been sneering at her in his heart: "Seest thou this woman?"

Luk 7:44. I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and washed them with the hairs of her head.

"I became thy guest; and, therefore, as my host, the first thing thou shouldst have done was to give the ordinary Oriental hospitality of washing my feet: 'Thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.'" What a changing of places there is now! The Lord has made the first to be last, and the last to be first. Simon thought himself far in advance of this woman; but now that Christ had explained their true positions, I should think he began to see that the woman was far ahead of him.

Luk 7:45. Thou gavest me no kiss:

Yet that was the Eastern custom in welcoming an honoured guest.

Luk 7:45. But this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

"At best, thou wouldst only have kissed me once, but this woman, since I came in, has never left off kissing my feet. With a sacred audacity of love, she has lifted my feet to her lips, and kissed them again and again." So, see here again how the first is last, and the last first.

Luk 7:46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

"That is a common custom in the case of a guest of honourable estate, but thou didst not observe it; yet this woman has poured upon my feet the most precious form of perfume that could be procured anywhere."

Luk 7:47-48. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

There I see the clear run of the argument, — that she is a woman who has had much forgiven by Christ, and that is the reason why she loves him so much. But, often, when an inference is very natural and plain, the Saviour leaves men to draw that one for themselves, while he draws another. He puts the same truth in another shape: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." I am afraid that there are many professed Christians, who must have had very little forgiven them, for they love Christ very little. This seems to be the age of little love to Christ. There are some few who love the Master intensely, but, oh, how few they are! Some persons think they are only very little sincere; and we are told, nowadays, what a little thing sin is, and what a little place hell is, and what a very short time the punishment of sin will last. Everything is according to scale, and it must be so in religion; as you diminish the guilt of sin, and the punishment of sin, you also diminish the sense of obligation in being saved from sin. Consequently, you diminish our love to Christ, and we shall gradually get less and less, I fear, unto the old scale, the old balance, the old shekel of the sanctuary, shall once again be used by us.

Luk 7:49. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

"Who is this who can thus absolve from guilt?"

Luk 7:50. And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

"Go home, good woman, do not stop here and be bothered by these people." And oftentimes, that is the best advice that we can give to new converts. There is a theological controversy raging, and the jargon of the different schools of thought is being used by one and another; but, do you go home, good soul. You need not trouble about controversial matters. Your sins are forgiven you; your faith has saved you; if you know that, you know as much as you need to know just now. Go home, and be quiet and happy: "Go in peace."

Luke 7:50 "Thy faith hath saved thee."

Faith saves us just as the mouth saves from hunger. If we be hungry, bread is the real cure. But still it would be right to say that eating removes hunger, seeing that the bread itself could not benefit us unless the mouth should eat it. Faith is the soul's mouth, whereby the hunger of the heart is removed.

"But," says someone, "was it not the Lord Jesus Christ who saved her?"

Yes, certainly it was. But do you see what Christ does? He is so fond of faith that he takes the crown from his own head and puts it on the head of faith, as he says to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee." Is that a safe thing for Christ to do? Oh, yes! Because faith at once removes the crown from her own head and puts it back on Christ's, saying, "Not unto me, but unto thy name be all the

glory." Christ loves to crown faith because faith loves to crown Christ. As for boasting, faith cannot tolerate that

Luke 8

Luk 8:1-3. And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

The previous chapter tells how the woman in Simon's house manifested her love to the Saviour. She showed her love in one way, and in a very special way; but there were others, who had similar affection for him, who showed it in other ways. What is right for one person to do might not be a wise or right thing for everybody to do. Christ did not want his feet washed with tears every minute in the day, nor to have them anointed with even precious ointment very often. There are some Christians who ought to do, and I trust will do, some extraordinary thing for Christ, $\frac{3}{4}$ something which shall need no apology from them, because they are extraordinary persons, who used to be extraordinary sinners; and it would not be right for them to run in the ruts made by others, but they ought to strike out a distinct pathway for themselves. Happy is the church that has any such members; happier still if it has many such. But there are others, who love Christ just as truly, yet who must be content to show their love to him in some other, and apparently more common, but, perhaps, in the long run, more useful way. These gracious women ministered to Christ of their substance. He was only a poor itinerant preacher who needed daily sustenance. Some people say that every preacher ought to earn his own bread by trade or profession, and preach freely, yet the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of preachers, did not do this. "Oh, but Paul did!" Yes, Paul attained to a very high honour; but we may be perfectly satisfied, as the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, to attain to as high a degree of honour as our Master did; and, inasmuch as he never did any carpentering after he began to preach, but gave his whole soul and being up to the work of preaching, he was fed and cared for by the kindness of these godly women who were glad to minister unto him of their substance. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord." So, as ministers of Christ, we need not be ashamed to minister spiritual things to the people, and to receive of their carnal things in return. These women, though they did not wash Christ's feet with their tears, nor anoint them with precious ointment, did well, for they "ministered unto him of their substance." Let us all do for him all that we can.

This exposition consisted of readings from Mar 15:1-41, and Luk 8:1-3.

Luk 8:1. And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

Our Lord's display of forgiving grace to the woman who was a sinner seemed to whet his appetite for soul-saving, so that "he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." Dear friends, whenever we win a soul for God, let it spur us on to a greater diligence in his service, let it make us insatiable for more of this best wine of the kingdom of heaven. It was so with our Divine Master. He went about preaching; and, as he preached, he was training others also to preach: "the twelve were with him." I think that, whenever there is a successful ministry, there should be those round about who are being trained to continue it. Among the Waldensians, the pastors were always accompanied by young men who learnt to preach from their example, and who shared their toils when they went from valley to valley proclaiming the gospel.

Luk 8:2-3. And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirit and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance. If they could not be apostles, they could, at any rate, being women of property, contribute both to the sustenance of Christ and of the apostles who were with him. There is a place for everyone who is willing to be used by the great Master-builder who leaves no stone out of the wall if it is fit to be built into it. There is something for the twelve to do, and there is something for the holy women to do, and we cannot do without either of them, and in that last great day when the rewards are distributed, there will be as much for Joanna as for John, and as much for Mary Magdalene as for Simon Peter. Did they not each, according to their utility, serve the Lord Jesus Christ?

Luk 8:4; Luk 8:6. And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: a sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

Or, as Mark records it, "because it had no depth of earth." There was just a little coating of earth, sufficient for the fructification and the early sprouting of the seed; it came up all the more quickly because it was so near the surface, and because the heat could get at it so easily, the hard pan of the rock speedily sending up the heat to it. But, for that very reason, "as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture."

Luke 8:5 "Some fell by the wayside ... and the fowls of the air devoured it."

It is easy for birds to pick up seed which lies exposed on a trodden path. If the soil had been good and the seed had entered it, he would have had far greater difficulty. He might even have been foiled. But a hard heart does the devil's work for him in great measure. He need not use violence or craft. There lies the unreceived word on the surface of the soul, and he takes it away. The power of the evil one largely springs from our own evil.

Notice how zealous the devil is. We may be careless about souls, but he never is. Although the seed lay there on the surface and had never penetrated the soil, and although that grain had been trodden on, Satan was not satisfied. He said, "There may be life in it, and if there is, it is dangerous to have it lying there, for it may grow." So he comes and takes it away altogether.

Luk 8:7-8. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

There are many, who have ears, who do not hear to any real purpose. There is the physical act of hearing, but they do not hear in the heart and the mind. It is a very different thing to have an impression on the drum of the ear and to have an impression on the tablet of the heart. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Luk 8:9-10. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

It was a time of judicial visitations. These people had for centuries refused to hear the voice of God and now they were to pay the penalty for that refusal. The reward of virtue is capacity for higher virtue, just as the effect of vice is a tendency to yet greater vice. When men will not hear the voice of God, it is a just judgment upon them that they cannot hear, their impotence being the result of their impudence. Since they would not hear, they shall not; who shall say that this is not a very just and natural way of allowing sin to punish itself? So these people heard the words of our Saviour's parable. It was like a clock, a covering to the truth; but, to them, it hid the truth, they did not see it. To the disciples of Christ, it set forth truth in all its beauty; but, to the unbelieving people, it hid the truth, so that they did not discern it. Brethren and sisters, if you and I understand heavenly mysteries let us not be proud that it is so, but let us hear our Saviour saying to us, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." This is the gift of the free grace of God. Be very thankful for it, but give God all the glory of it. For if thou beginest to say to thyself, "I am a man of great understanding," and if thou shalt take to thyself a high place, God may leave thee to thy natural blindness; and, then, where wilt thou be?

Luk 8:11. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

Not the word of man. Have we a word of God at all? Brethren, that is a question which we have to answer nowadays. Our fathers never questioned it, they believed in the infallibility of the Bible, as we do. But, now, all our wise men do not think so. They set to work to mend the Scriptures, to pick out of the Bible that which they imagine to be inspired. Let us not do so, my brethren.

Luk 8:12. Those by the way side are they that hear, then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

He does not mind their merely hearing. What he is afraid of is their believing, for he knows that in believing lies the secret of their salvation.

Luk 8:13. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy;

They are very hasty converts, like men who hurriedly take a bath. They are no sooner in than they are out; it is so speedy that there is more haste than real speed with some of them.

Luk 8:13. And these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

"These have no root," and they never had any root. If you give your child a little garden for himself, perhaps he will go and pluck the heads for some of your flowers, and put them in the ground, and say, "There, father, see what a nice garden of flowers I have got."

But they have no root, and so they very soon wither away. These are like men's converts, of whom we read that so many scores came forward the whole of the people in the parish were said to be converted, but in six weeks you cannot find one of them. How often is this the case! We begin to be afraid of those statistics, because there is so little truth in them; and yet, if there were but one saved out of a hundred, how grateful we should be!

Luk 8:14. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

How many we have of that sort! They do continue somewhat longer than the others, yet they get choked after all.

Luk 8:15. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Or, "with perseverance, with continuance." "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." He is not converted at all who is not converted eternally. The work of man is temporary; the work of God is everlasting.

Luk 8:16. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

A candlestick, or lamp-stand. True religion and true doctrine are not intended to be concealed, they are meant to be seen, and if any of you are hiding these blessed things away, I pray you to do so no longer. Bring out your candle, and put it on the candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

Luk 8:17. For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

You cannot conceal anything from the eye of God, so do not try to do so. You are like bees in a glass hive, watched while you are working, and your every movement observed. God can read the secret emotions of our hidden nature. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Luk 8:18. Take heed therefore how ye hear:

You think, and think very properly, that we ought to take heed how we preach. Yes, that is true; but you must take heed how you hear. There are a great many criticisms upon preaching, will you kindly make a few criticisms upon your own hearing? I like what a woman said to me some time ago, about a certain preacher. She said, "I heard him well last Sunday." Ay, that is the thing, she did not tell me how he preached, she told me how she heard, and that is the main point. Good hearers will make good preachers, in due time, I do not doubt. God grant that we may be all good hearers! "Take heed therefore how ye hear."

Luk 8:18. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Preaching will enrich you or impoverish you according to how you hear. There are some hearers, who have nothing, and the preacher gives them nothing. Hens like to lay where there is a nest-egg, and preachers of the gospel like to preach to hearers who have received some truth, and want more. Where there is some love to God, and love to souls, there more will come. May all of you be among those who have, to whom more shall be given! But the gospel is also "a savor of death unto death" to some who hear it. It takes away from some men what they never had. You call that a paradox; so it is, but it is true. They think they have it, but the gospel reveals to them their mistake; and so it taketh from them that which they seem to have.

Luk 8:19. Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

I think that his mother and his brethren were under the delusion that he was mad, and they came to seize him, to restrain him, so little did even they understand him.

Luk 8:20-21. And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, my mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

The spiritual relationship overtops the natural. But what a sweet and condescending word this is? Dear brothers and sisters, do you hear the Word of God, and do it? If so, Christ is at home with you. Christ calls you "Brother." He knows that you will take care of his cause. He calls you "Brother." He has deep sympathy with you. O blessed One, thou who callest us mother and brother, how he welcome those loving and familiar titles!

Luk 8:26-27. And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

To what a frightful state of wretchedness this poor creature was reduced by Satanic power! Yet he is only a picture of the state of mind into which many are brought through sin. They seem as if they could not live with their fellowmen; they have grown so mad through sin, so utterly beyond restraint, that they can scarcely be endured in ordinary society. Yet, as Christ healed this man, so he is equal to the cure of the worst case of spiritual and moral disease that may be brought before him.

Luk 8:28. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

See the devil can make men pray against themselves; and this is what they do in common profane swearing when they imprecate all manner of curses upon their eyes and limbs. Ah, me! To what mischief and folly and misery can Satan drive his willing dupes!

Luk 8:29. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bonds, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

Such cases have we often seen, — young men who have been rescued from a course of vice, and who have been for a season helped towards virtue; but they have broken loose again. There was no holding them in; they had not learned self-restraint, and no one else could restrain them

Luk 8:30-31. And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

So, you see, dear friends, that devils can pray: "They besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep;" that is, to their place of torment in hell. They would sooner go to the bottom of the sea than go to their own dreadful home; and, if we are half as wise as devils are, we shall dread beyond all things to be driven there. May God grant that no soul among us may ever lift up his eyes in torment, and find himself in that awful deep!

Luk 8:32-33. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

Our proverb says, "They run hard whom the devil drives;" and when once he begins to drive men or swine, there is no end to their running till they are choked in the deep. Woe unto that man, then, who yields himself up to the tyrant master! Oh, seek the grace that will enable you to fling him off, never to come under his dread sway again! Better still, pray the blessed Prince of Peace to cast out the black prince of hell, and himself to rule over your spirit, soul, and body.

Luk 8:34. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

Sometimes, Christ wrought cures which were scarcely mentioned; but here, — and I only remember a second miracle at all like to it, — that of the withering of the barren fig-tree, — he wrought a miracle of judgment, and it caused a great stir and much talk. I have heard of bells at sea that only ring out in the roughest storms. Here is one that was heard when softer tones would not have been heeded: "They fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country."

Luk 8:35. Then they went out to see what was done and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

There was some clothing work done that day. I know not who provided the garments; but here was some real practical Christianity exhibited, not only by the Master in healing the demoniac, but by the friends who found clothing for this poor man. You do well, my sisters, who set yourselves to help to clothe the poor. God grant that all of them may not only be clothed, but also be led to sit at the feet of Jesus!

Luk 8:36-37. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them;

Surely, this legion of demons must have had the same effect on them as on the poor man when Christ first came to him. These foolish people took up the same cry as the poor demoniac: "The whole multitude besought him to depart from them? Christ

sometimes hears this kind of prayer. There is many a man who has entreated that his conscience might not be troubled any more, and it never has been troubled again. But what an awful prayer for any people to pray! "The whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them."

Luk 8:37-39. For they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

Sometimes, it is better to be spreading the good news of the gospel than to be sitting at Jesus' feet. It is best when we can do both; but, sometimes, the practical duty of serving our fellowmen must take the first place. Happy are they who give themselves to this work, telling to others what God has done for them!

Luk 8:40-46. And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

Here are we tonight, dear friends, a great crowd; and what multitudes of professed worshippers of God there are in many places! They seem to throng the Saviour; but of all, how few do really touch him so as to derive healing virtue from him! This humble, simple touch of faith is something above and beyond all the pressure of professed zeal and ardor. This touch Christ recognizes at once, but all the pressing and the squeezing of the crowd goes for nothing.

Luke 8:43, 44 "A woman having an issue of blood twelve years ... Came behind him."

The poor sick soul had a faith which assured her that Christ could bless her when his back was turned. Can you also reach this point? Some of God's own children can hardly trust him when they see the light of his countenance. I would to God that we had such confidence in Jesus that we would not doubt under any circumstances his power and willingness to save all who trust him.

Luk 8:47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

Here is a second confessor. First, there was a man healed; now, here is a woman healed. Both sexes may now hear from them what Christ can do. If they will not believe, oh, then, their unbelief is sad indeed!

Luk 8:48-49. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. While he yet spoke, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

As if such a suppliant really did trouble him! Still, if you have been praying long, and your case appears to be hopeless, despair will whisper, "Trouble not the Master." But Christ is never troubled by our prayer; it is our want of prayer that troubles him. Even after the worst has come to the worst, we shall never trouble him if we continue our prayers. But if, on any account, we cease from them, then indeed is his heart grieved.

Luk 8:50. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. "If she is actually dead, she shall be raised to life again."

Luk 8:51. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

For Christ does not make a parade of his miracles. He loves to do his work quietly; and they that make a great noise must mind that they do not get put out when Christ is about to work a cure.

Luk 8:52-55. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn,

knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

Young saints want feeding as soon as they are converted. The conversion may be by miracle, but they will need to be fed by ordinary means. Be ready, dear people of God, with your milk for those who are but newly born: "He commanded to give her meat."

Luk 8:56. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

For Jesus did not wish, at least at that time, to have the story of his miracles blazed abroad. Of him the prophet had long before written: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench."

Luk 8:41-42. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

Notice the word "behold," for this was a wonder that a man so high in position to come to Christ at all, especially one who was in an ecclesiastical position, for he "was a ruler of the synagogue." Usually those who had to do with the synagogue were great despisers of our Lord Jesus; God works great wonders, however, and sometimes the camel does go through the eye of the needle. This man's name was Jairus, a common Jewish name, and you will find it was the name of one of the judges recorded in the book of Judges. Note this man's humility, "He fell down at Jesus' feet." The greatest of men must humble themselves before they can obtain mercy. Jesus Christ is always ready to receive, to accept, and bless all those who fall down at his feet, but those who lift up themselves shall find him to be their sure and swift, enemy, and the day shall come when he shall abase them to the dust. "He besought him that he would come into his house, for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a-dying." She seems to have been not only the darling of the house, but of all the neighbors too for we find that all the neighbors came together to weep and to lament her. You find Matthew says that this daughter was already dead. It seems that some delay arose, so that the child died, but the father, with triumphant faith, still besought him to come and raise her, even from the very jaws of death.

Luk 8:43-44. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.

This disease laughs at the physicians, and whenever a cure has been effected it has always been a slow one. Hence the supernatural character of this cure, "Immediately her issue of blood stanch'd." This is the glory of our blessed religion, that it heals sin-sick souls at once and upon the spot. The moment a man believes in Jesus, his nature is changed; he becomes a new creature: in that moment all his sins are gone: in that same hour he becomes heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ. "Immediately."

Luk 8:45. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

What impudence on their part! Doubtless there are many things we say of our Lord, and even to him in prayer, that are very far from such words as he should have from his disciples. There were many who touched him out of curiosity, and doubtless some out of want of respect to his person came too close to him, but there was only one who touched him with the finger of faith, which was the only true touch.

Luk 8:46-48. And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

Faith crowns Christ, and, therefore, Christ takes the crown off his own head and puts it upon the head of faith. "Thy faith hath saved thee." Christ's virtue would not have saved her without her faith, and certainly her faith could not have saved her without Christ's virtue. We ought to note how vital faith is to true salvation, and what a high degree of importance is attached to it. Let us, therefore, if we have some degree of faith, pray for more, "Lord, increase our faith, for if a little of it may heal, what may not a great faith do?"

Luk 8:49. While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogues, house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

Be resigned, and say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," and expect not the blessing back again. Do as David did, who, while the child was yet alive, fasted and played, saying, "Peradventure, God will spare him, but when he was dead, fasted no more. Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master." Ah! but this man knew that he who can stay the soul at the gates of death can also bring it back from the gates of death if he wills. He that can get it from the paw of the lion can get it from the jaw of the bear. He can

deliver his people at all times and at all seasons, and even Death is a conquered foe.

Luk 8:50. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

“Believe only.” What a depth lies in those two words! Believe only! Ah! Lord, it ought to be the easiest thing in the world to believe thee, for thou art so truthful; thou keepest every promise to us, and yet sometimes when we are in the dark, and when circumstances go contrary to us, it is hard to believe; but is not the hardness in our own hearts? Believe only! Christian, what is your trouble this morning, what is your trial? Believe only, and let your humble faith cast your burdens upon your God. “Believe only, and she shall be made whole.”

Luk 8:51-52. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

They were so sure she was dead that they had actually hired the minstrels for her funeral — so Mark tells us — and the pipers, and the women that made those strange, Oriental lamentations were there, ready to inter her.

Luk 8:53-54. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them out, and took her by the hand, and called saying, Maid, arise.

But Christ put them all out. They laughed him to scorn, and, therefore, he would not work the miracle in their presence. It is not meet to cast pearls before swine.

Luk 8:55. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

Do note here the word “straightway.” Just now we had the word immediately, and now we have straightway. It is one of the distinguishing features of the gospel, both of Mark and of Luke, that both evangelists use the word “eutheos,” “straightway.” Christ’s miracles do not take a long time to do; they are done straightway. If there is a distressed soul here now, your salvation need not take months and years; it may be done today, and in a moment thou mayest be able to rejoice that thy sins are forgiven, and that thou art a child of God. “She arose straightway, and he commanded to give her meat.” There are no unnecessary miracles. It wanted a miracle to give her life, but meat could sustain it, and, therefore, there is no further miracle performed.

Luk 8:56. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

But we know from another evangelist that the fame thereof went abroad everywhere, and, indeed, the healing of a soul is not a thing to be kept secret, but when any are raised from the dead the world must know it.

Luke 9

Our Lord had been on the mountain, and had been transfigured; and when he came down, the first person that he met was the devil, with whom he had to come in contact. Whenever you or I get up on the mountain-top, and have a very happy and delightful experience, we may expect to be in a battle before long. Our joy is, however, a preparation for the conflict; it nerves our spirit, and makes us strong to meet the great enemy of our souls.

Luk 9:37-40. And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. And, behold, a man of the company cried out saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

There they were, all baffled and defeated; and their enemies were looking at them with many a grin of contempt and scorn. Now comes the conquering Captain. He will turn the tide of battle when his troops are flying before the enemy. He comes, and with a word he gathers them together again.

Luk 9:41. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you. Bring thy son hither.

If you have been praying for some dear one, and the devil is not cast out, but the one for whom you have pleaded seems to be worse rather than better, notwithstanding all your prayers and all your efforts, hear the Master himself saying to you tonight, as he said to the father of this child, “Bring thy son hither.”

Luk 9:42. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him.

This is Satan's usual way. Whenever he is about to be cast out of anyone, he grows angry; and if he cannot destroy, he will worry, just as a bad tenant will do injury to the house if he cannot any longer keep possession of it. "As he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him." Perhaps I speak to some tonight who are coming to Christ, and yet have worse fears than ever. They are more troubled than ever they were before. Well, you are like this poor child: "As he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him." It was, however, the devil's last throw.

Luk 9:42. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

How well it is done, how perfectly it is done, how easily it is done, how quickly it is done when Christ comes on the scene! Let us pray distinctly tonight for those who have been our failures hitherto. They will not be Christ's failures if in prayer and by faith we bring them to him.

Luk 9:43. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.

But while they were amazed, many of them did not believe. It is one thing to be astonished, it is another thing to be humbled, and to be led to simple faith in Christ. Never be content with any emotion but that which leads you to believe in Jesus for yourself.

Luk 9:43-44. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

Just after the transfiguration, just after he had cast out the devil, he tells his disciples that "the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men." The shadow of the cross fell upon Christ long before the substance of the cross was on his shoulder. He never forgot that the day would come when he must lay down his life as a ransom for many, and he never started back from it, either.

"This was compassion like a God,

That when the Saviour knew

The price of pardon was his blood,

His pity ne'er withdrew."

45. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

They were not as yet spiritual enough to spy out his meaning; and when they had even a faint glimmering of it, it made them feel so sad, so cast down, that they did not dare to go and ask him fully to explain it. Do not you think that you and I may have tonight, something pressing upon us that would all vanish if we but took it to Jesus? And yet we fear to ask him. Let us drive away that fear, and be familiar with our Lord, and tell him everything that vexes our spirit.

Luk 9:46. Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

Sad, sad, sad, a hundred times sad! When he was talking of his death, and of his being delivered into the hands of wicked men, his disciples were disputing as to who should be the greatest. Ah, brethren, but we may be guilty of quite as great an inconsistency. If, after Christ's death for us on the cross, and after he has given up everything for us, and has washed us in his hearts blood, if we begin to want to be great and famous in the eyes of men, what wretches we are! May God deliver us from all ambition, from every kind of self-seeking, and from any measure of pride! Otherwise, we are inconsistent in pretending to follow such a Master as the Lord Jesus.

Luk 9:47-48. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

The way to rise in the ranks of Christ is to go down. Be willing to do the meanest thing, and you are growing in Christ's esteem. When you are great, you are little. When you are nothing, then are you great. The Lord take away from us the black drops of pride

that make us stand up on our dignity, and think we must be somebody! Somebody? God will not use you as long as you are somebody; but when you are nobody, then will God greatly magnify you, and use you in his Church.

Luk 9:49. And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.

This man who was casting out demons was a dissenter, he was not with the regular church. He was doing good; but still, what right had he to do it? John said, "He followeth not with us." He was outside the pale; and even John, with all his loving disposition, felt that he must blow that candle out. He had no right to shine in anything but the regular, orthodox candlestick. "We forbad him, because he followeth not with us."

Luk 9:50. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

Jesus also said that no man could do a miracle in his name, and then lightly go and speak evil of him; so that it was for the good of the cause to let the irregular practitioner go on with this business. Besides, if anybody can cast a devil out, by all means let him do it; for there is none too much of the power of casting out devils; and, remember, that these gentlemen who found fault, could not cast the devil out themselves. They had been beaten in this very task; and yet, when somebody else did it in the power of God, they began to complain, and forbid them. That is surely being like the dog in the manger. God save us from falling into that spirit!

Luk 9:51. And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up,

Is not that a wonderful expression? Christ is to die, and to be buried. Ah! but this word comprehends everything, "that he should be received up." Think not of the gloom of death, specially concerning your dear friends who have lately fallen asleep. Think of their being received up. They did seem to go down; they went as low as the grave; but they could not go any lower. Thank God for his abounding mercy in receiving them up.

Luk 9:51. He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

To go where he must he scourged, and spit upon, and crucified: "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."

Luk 9:52-53. And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

He used to be welcomed in Samaria; but now the evil spirit has come to the front again: "They did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem," and they wished nobody to go up to the feast at Jerusalem, but desired all to stop and worship God with them on Mount Gerizim. So they would not receive him.

Luk 9:54-55. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

When you read the Old Testament, you will remember that the spirit of the Old Testament was in accordance with the law of Moses; but you are not under the law but under grace, and the spirit of Christ is another spirit, not the spirit of judgment, bringing down fire from heaven, but the spirit of mercy, bringing life and blessing from above.

Luk 9:56. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

That was all Christ did by way of punishment of these Samaritans: he "went to another village." Yet, gentle as was this treatment, it was really a very severe punishment, such a punishment as will fall on all of you who reject Christ. If you will not receive him, he will go to somebody else. If you will not hear him, somebody else will; and if, when you hear him, you will not accept him, it may be that you will not hear him many times more, the word may never again be spoken with any power to you, but Christ will go to somebody else.

Luk 9:57-62. And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his

head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Luk 9:51. And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

It is a very remarkable expression that is here used: "when the time was come that he should be received up." It does not say "that he should depart," or "that he should die." It overleaps that, and speaks only of his glorious ascension into heaven. When that time was drawing near,—and, of course, his death would come before it,—Christ "stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," where he knew that he should die upon the cross.

Luk 9:52-53. And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

And, of course, Jerusalem was a sort of rival of Samaria; and if he was going there to worship, they did not want him to stay with them. Yet the Samaritans were believers in the first five Books of the Bible; they accepted the Pentateuch, and they ought therefore to have practiced hospitality, imitating Abraham's noble example. They erred both against their own Scriptures and against the dictates of humanity when they refused to receive Christ because he was on his way to Jerusalem.

Luk 9:54. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

James and John, two of the most loving of Christ's disciples, John the most loving of all, startle us all by failing in the matter of love, and so being as bad as the Samaritans themselves. I have often noticed that very "liberal minded" people, who denounce bigotry in general, do it with about seven times as much bigotry as those who are out-and-out bigots. In fact, it is a wonderfully easy thing to be a bigot against all bigotry, and to be illiberal towards everybody except fellow-liberals. Well, that is a pity; it is better far to have the spirit of Christ, even when the Samaritans refuse to exercise hospitality. At any rate, let them live. You notice that John quotes the example of Elijah; and this should teach us that the best men mentioned in Scripture did things which we may not copy, and that they did some things rightly which it would be wrong for us to do. Under special inspiration of God, Elijah, the prophet of fire, may call down fire from heaven; but you and I must not do so; we are not sent for any such purpose. Let us, therefore, be cautious how we make even prophets our exemplars in everything,

Luk 9:55-56. But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

If that principle had been always remembered, and followed, there would have been no persecution. To cause a man to suffer in his person, or in his estate, because of his religious opinions, be they what they may, is a violation of Christianity. Consciences belong to God alone; and it is not for us to be calling for fire, the stake, the rack or imprisonment, for men because they do not believe as we do. "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Luk 9:56. And they went to another village.

That was the easiest thing for them to do, and a great deal better than calling for fire from heaven upon anybody. If one village would not receive them, another would; and if you cannot get on with one person, get on with somebody else. Do not grow angry with people. That is not the way to make them better. To fight God's battles with the devil's weapons is generally, in the end, to fight the devil's battles on his behalf; let none of us make such a mistake as that.

Luk 9:57. And it came to pass, that, as they went in, the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

He was a volunteer; but his zeal was too hot to hold out long. He had never fully known what following Christ meant, so he came forward without a thought.

Luk 9:58. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man, hath not where to lay his

head.

He did not reckon on such hard fare as that, to lie hard, and live hard; so we hear no more of him. That is would-be follower number one.

Luk 9:59. And he said unto another, Follow me.

Not a volunteer this time; but one actually called by Christ, and commanded to come, a conscript, as it were.

Luk 9:59. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

We do not even know that his father was dead. He would like to stop at home till the old man was ready to be buried.

Luk 9:60. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

When Christ wants men to go upon his errands, they must make no excuses. The King's business requireth haste. The King's commands are peremptory. Other people could bury the dead; let them do it. They were not alive unto this holy ministry; they would therefore be doing right in stopping to bury the dead. When Christ says to a man, "Follow me," he must not let even the tenderest relationship detain him, or the most proper duties stand in the way of the highest duty. That is would-be follower number two. We hear no more of him.

Luk 9:61. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

"Lord, I will follow thee; but I must have time. I want a little allowance, and a permit to leave home. I will follow thee; but let me first go and bid them farewell, which are at home at my house." It might be a long distance; and as it was now Christ's time to send out the seventy, they must go at once, or not at all. This man intends to wait till he has gone, perhaps, fifty miles home, and back again.

Luk 9:62. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

You must go at once when you have orders to go, and not even the courtesies of life, or the fondnesses of affection, may make you disobey the command of the Captain. It would be a pretty thing, in the day of battle, if the soldiers came to the general, and one said, "I must go back to bury my father," and another said, "I cannot fight, for I want to go and bid farewell to my mother." The country would soon be in a desperate state for want of soldiers; and the great King, whose war is more important than any other, will not have for soldiers those who talk in this fashion. So, you see, there are three would-be followers gone; but there are at least seventy faithful followers left, as the next chapter shows. Our third reading will be at the end of the Gospel according to Matthew.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:16-30; Luk 9:57-62; and Mat 28:16-20.

Luke 10

Our Lord was about to send out seventy disciples to preach the gospel. He had already chosen his twelve apostles; now there must be seventy disciples, something like Moses had seventy elders to serve under him. Some have fancifully likened these two sets of men to the twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees at Elim; and certainly they were for the refreshment of the people.

Luk 10:1. After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

They were to go before Christ, and be his heralds. What a mercy it is when the preacher knows that his Master is coming after him, when he can hear the sound of his Master's feet behind him! What courage it gives him! He knows that, though it is very little that he can do, he is the thin end of the wedge preparing the way for One who can do everything.

Luk 10:2. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

The seventy were very few compared with the many that were needed. There were many loiterers about then as there are now; but the labourers were few. There were preachers of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and they were not worth a penny a hundred; but the true labourers, who watched for souls, and preached Christ with all their hearts, were very few. It is the same today; and therefore we are to pray for more labourers. A good minister always desires to see more good ministers. In a trade, every tradesman would be glad if those of the same trade as himself would move to another parish; but in the profession of a Christian minister, the more the merrier. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."

Luk 10:3. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

"Defenseless, harmless, into the midst of those who would devour you if I did not send you. It would be foolhardiness to go on your own account; but I send you; and he who sends his lambs among wolves will take care of them." As I have often reminded you, the lambs and the sheep are very defenseless; and yet, after all, there are more sheep in the world than there are wolves; and although it looked as if the wolves would soon devour the sheep, the wolves are extirpated in many a country, and the sheep are still prized; and it will be so till the end.

Luk 10:4. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes:

This time, when Christ sent out the seventy, he bade them take no provision, for they might depend upon the kindness of the people. Afterwards, when he was about to leave his disciples, he bade them take both purse and scrip, for they were going among an unfriendly people; but on this first mission he knew that there was a kindly feeling towards them, so he said, "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes."

Luk 10:4. And salute no man by the way.

Eastern salutations by the way took up a very long time, the people saying a lot of fine nothings to one another. Christian ministers ought to be excused from many of the lengthy courtesies of life; and if they are not excused, if they are faithful, they will take French leave to be excused. We have not time for all those pretty things that some people attend to. If we are to win souls, we must go to work like the king's couriers, who turn not aside to attend to anything else, but devote all their energies to the mission on which they are sent.

Luk 10:5-6. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

So that it will not be wasted. Wish well, and your well-wishing will do you good, even if it does nobody else good. Our chickens come home to roost. If they be curses, they will come upon ourselves; if they be blessings, they will bless ourselves as well as others.

Luk 10:7-8. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, cut such things as are set before you:

The Jewish Rabbis, in their perambulations, were very particular about food; it is said to have been very difficult to find a dish to their taste. This might be unclean in one way, and that not up to the mark in another; but here the Master exempts his ambassadors from attention to these minor matters. They had something better to do than to be always careful about what they should eat or what they should drink, so he said to them, "Eat such things as are set before you."

Luk 10:9-11. And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

We are not to stop and argue; that is no business of ours. We have to tell our message. If men will receive it, we are glad; if they will not hear it, with a heavy heart we turn aside, and go elsewhere. Our work is to proclaim the glorious message of mercy through a dying Saviour, salvation through the great atonement; it is our business to proclaim it and leave it, the responsibility of receiving or rejecting it rests with our hearers.

Luk 10:12-14. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

Hearing and rejecting the gospel is the crowning sin of all. Whatever else men are guilty of, if they have not rejected Christ, they have not yet reached the summit of iniquity.

Luk 10:15-16. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

If the messenger delivers his message correctly, and as his Master would have him deliver it, the rejection of it, when brought by him, has the same guilt in it as the rejection of Christ himself, and the rejection of Christ is the rejection of God; so Jesus tells us here.

Luk 10:17. And the seventy returned again with joy,
Not one of the lambs had been eaten by the wolves.

Luk 10:17. Saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

Christ had not mentioned that in the commission. He sent them to heal the sick. The casting out of devils was included, no doubt, but it was not specifically mentioned; and this being an extra beyond the words of their commission, they were especially delighted with it Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.”

Luk 10:18-20. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

That is a higher privilege than to be master over demons, or to be able to tread on serpents. That day of miracles is past; but the power of the gospel is a spiritual power the same as before. We still cast out devils; still are men delivered from the dominion of Satan.

Luke 10:21 “Jesus rejoiced in spirit.”

God never did a sovereign act yet that the loving Christ himself could not rejoice in. Be content, therefore, to leave everything that you do not understand in the hand of God.

Luk 10:21-22. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father;

You know that he is the Son of God; you know that he is Jesus of Nazareth; but you do not know him, you cannot know him, as his Father knows him. He is known in his fullness only to the Father.

Luk 10:22. And who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

“Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” No, thou canst not. The Son of God must reveal his Father to thee, or thou wilt never know him.

Luk 10:25-26. And, behold a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

That was a most appropriate answer to a lawyer. “ You ask me what you should do; well, you profess to be a teacher of the law, you ought, therefore, to know what is written in the law.”

Luk 10:27-28. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

This lawyer was one of those people who know the law, yet do it not. No doubt Jesus struck the nail on the head when he gave him that very pertinent answer, “This do, and thou shalt live.” This lawyer was trying to live by teaching the law, by his knowledge of it, but Christ insists that nothing will do but a practical carrying out of its precepts.

Luk 10:29. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

He probably meant to say, “I have not any neighbours; I have no near relations; my father and mother are dead and gone, I have no brothers and sisters, and therefore I may be excused from the duty of loving anyone else as I love myself.” Jesus did not answer the lawyer’s question, “ Who is my neighbour?” He did not turn the eyes of the man to the poor mendicants who needed charity, but he made him look at himself.

Luk 10:30-31. And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

This priest had been up to the temple to perform his part of the service; he was much too good, in his own opinion, to go and touch a man who was wounded, "he passed by on the other side."

Luk 10:32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, He did a little more than the priest, who would not even cross the road.

Luk 10:32-34. And passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, ³/₄Denying himself, therefore, because of course he had to walk-

Luk 10:34-35. And brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence,³/₄
A much more valuable sum than two pence of our money

Luke 10:33 "But a certain Samaritan ... had compassion on him."

Our Lord Jesus Christ has done better than the Good Samaritan, because our case was worse. The wounded man could not blame himself for his sad estate. It was his misfortune, not his fault. But you and I are not only half-dead, but altogether dead in trespasses and sins, and we have brought many of our ills on ourselves. The thieves that have stripped us are our own iniquities; the wounds which we bear have been inflicted by our own suicidal hand

Luk 10:35-36. And gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

He might have said, "The Samaritan," but he would not, for the Jews hated them.

Luk 10:37. And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Here was a dismissal, and here was a commission too. Jesus dismissed him. "I have nothing more to say to you; 'Go.'" Here was the commission:

"Do thou likewise." Alas! I am afraid that, after most sermons people get the dismissal: "Go;" but they forget the commission: "Go, and do thou likewise." It is your privilege as well as your duty, O Christians, to assist the needy; and whenever you discover distress, as far as lieth in you, to minister practically to its relief.

Luk 10:25-28. And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Do any of you want to live by the law? There is the law. Does any man here pretend that he has kept it? Let me ask any man here who would justify himself by his own works, have you thought of God today? How much time have you spent with God? or yesterday, how much of your time did you give him ³/₄how many minutes? Would you venture to say that you spent a quarter of an hour in prayer? No, perhaps, if it comes to the truth, you did not spend five minutes. Now, if you loved God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your strength, and all your mind, do you think that five minutes would satisfy such a love as that? Oh, no, sirs, you that are unconverted give God no love at all, and how can you think therefore, that you are keeping his law which puts it so strongly, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart? and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself"? Have you ever done that? Neither the first nor the second table have you kept intact.

Luk 10:29. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

The Saviour then related this incident, which I have no doubt was really a fact.

Luk 10:30. And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

It was a very dangerous road, a very lonely part, and robberies were very frequent there.

Luk 10:31. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. He did not like the look of wounds and blood. It is a very convenient thing not to recollect the miseries of your fellow-men. Do not think about their poverty: it might spoil your digestion. Do not think about their drunkenness: you might have to become a teetotaler. Do not think about their sin: you might have to go and preach in the street to them. You can live so easily and pleasantly, and even be a priest and be called "His Reverence," if you are very careful which side of the road you take. "He passed by on the other side."

Luk 10:32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him and passed by on the other side. There are some whose looks are evidently esteemed by themselves to be so very precious, that, when they have given them, they give nothing more. He may have meant, "I will see into it." There are a great many who are very diligent in their promises to see into a case, but we do not see much come of what they say. They also pass by on the other side. Neither the priest nor the Levite acted as a neighbor to the man who fell among thieves.

Luk 10:33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was:
He looked, approached, drew near, "came where he was."

Luk 10:33. And when he saw him, he had compassion on him,
He did not ask him how he got there, or say to him, 'Why, man, you must have been very foolish to travel alone. My dear friend, next time you come this way, you must come armed. Did you not know this was a very ugly part of the road? And I think you are ill-advised to have been traveling quite so late.' Oh, we have many dear friends who always favor us with their rebukes when our wounds are bleeding! "He had compassion on him."

Luk 10:34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.
Oil and wine—two very good things for external application, and he used them for that. Wondrous healers these were known to be. They were expensive things too. He had brought them for his own comfort, and he freely used them for this poor man. Then he set him on his own beast; so he had to walk himself. He took the inconvenience. He relinquished his own comfort for the sake of doing good. "And he brought him to an inn and took care of him," perhaps sat up at night with him, he took care of him after he had got him into the inn. He did not immediately commend him to the care of some paid person, but at first he took care of him. But this good Samaritan had urgent business, and was obliged to go about it.

Luk 10:35. And on the morrow when he departed he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.
"This is my piece of work. I want to finish it, and as I cannot stop will you kindly supply the ready money, and when I come again, I will repay you?"

Luk 10:36-37. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him.
Oh, you lawyer, why did you not say "The Samaritan"? Of course, he did not like to use that word. Oh, no, we never mention them—the "Samaritans." "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans;" so he would not honestly say "The Samaritan"; but he made a roundabout of it and said, "He that shewed mercy on him."

Luk 10:37. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.
May we all be enabled to do so by exercising constant love to those who are in need!

Luk 10:38. Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.
There were not so very many that kept open house for Christ. But Martha did. It was her house.

Luk 10:39. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.
She was free to do so. It was not her house. She need not attend to the hospitalities of it. Her sister was quite equal to it, and so

Mary did well to avail herself of the opportunity of sitting at Jesus' feet, and hearing his word.

Luk 10:40. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

She wanted to get so much ready ^¾to have everything nice. So she came almost scolding the Master. She was out of temper, surely, that day. She had got to be troubled. Dear friends, it is not wrong to labour and to work and do all we can, but it is wrong to grow cumbered with it, ^¾to get fretful, anxious, worried about this thing and that. You will not do it any better. You will probably do less, and you will do it worse. She was "cumbered about much serving."

Luke 10:40 "Martha was cumbered about much serving."

It was not her fault that she had much serving. We cannot do too much. Let us do all that we possibly can. Head and heart and hands, let every single power and passion of our nature be engaged in the Master's service. But her fault was that she grew cumbered with much serving, so that she forgot him and remembered only the service. She overrode her union with Christ by her service to Christ, and herein was the mischief.

Luk 10:41-42. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful:

"Thou hast forgotten much. Looking after many things, thou hast failed to remember the chief, the only needful thing."

Luk 10:42. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

And so he let her still sit there, and hear his blessed words. "Oh, that I could for ever sit With Mary at the Master's feet. Be this my happy choice!"

Luk 10:38-40. Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

Agitated, distressed Martha was afraid that something would go wrong with the dinner. She had too much on her hands — too much on her brain. That led her to blame her sister Mary, and to try to get the Lord to blame her too. There is a strong tincture of self-righteousness in Martha's speech.

Luk 10:41-42. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

I shall not tell her to leave my instruction said our Lord or to get up from the position which she occupies. No, you may go about your work, she is honouring me as much as you are, if not more. This did not mean that Mary was perfect, or that Martha was wholly to be condemned. Both needed to learn much from Jesus, and Mary was more in the way of it. Still Martha was doing good service. But you will see that Mary could do something for Christ too when the time came.

This exposition consisted of readings from Psalms 63.; Luk 10:38-42; and Joh 12:1-8.

Luke 11

Luk 11:1. And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

It seemed to this disciple as if he did not know how to pray after he had heard Christ pray. The prayer of Jesus was so infinitely above anything that he had ever reached that he said, "Lord, teach us to pray;" and, as if he felt that he needed a precedent for asking such hallowed instruction, he said, Teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." We must all feel that if we are to pray aright, we must be taught of God, by his Holy Spirit. We are full of infirmities, and if there is any time when our infirmities are felt most, it is when we engage in prayer, but "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as are

ought.” Let us, then, breathe this prayer to our great Teacher, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

Luke 11:1 “Lord, teach us to pray.”

Though the disciples often heard Christ preach, they never said, “Lord, teach us to preach.” But when they heard him pray, they said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” They were so astonished with such praying as the Savior’s that though they thought they might emulate his preaching, his praying seemed too masterly, too infinitely above them, and they could not help exclaiming, “Oh, God, show us how to pray like that!”

Luk 11:2. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

When we come to God in prayer, we are apt to think first of our own necessities, but if we came aright, in the spirit of sonship, truly saying, “Our Father who art in heaven,” we should begin our prayer like this, “‘Hallowed be thy name.’ May all men honour, reverence, and adore thy holy name. ‘Thy kingdom come.’ We are not satisfied that thou shouldst be anything less than king; our heart’s desire is, ‘Reign, gracious God over us and over all men.’ ‘Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.’ ‘Thy will be done,’ rather than ours.” Now comes a prayer for ourselves: —

Luk 11:3. Give us day by day our daily bread.

“Give us, O Lord, what we really need; not that which would be a luxury, but that which is a necessity. ‘Give us,’ according as we shall need it day by day, what we shall then actually need, ‘our daily bread.’” We are not warranted in asking much more than this in temporal matters. They are all comprehended in this petition as far as they are necessary, but God has not given us carte blanche to ask for wealth, or honour, or any such dangerous things. There is no harm in asking for bread, and he will give us that.

Luk 11:4. And forgive us our sins;

We also need to pray this prayer; I do not think that our Saviour ever anticipated a time when his disciples on earth would not need to pray, “Forgive us our sins.”

Luk 11:4. For we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation;

“Lord, do not try us and test us more than is absolutely necessary, for we are so apt to fall: ‘Lead us not into temptation;’ but, if we must be tempted,” —

Luk 11:4. Deliver us from evil.

“If some good end is to be answered by our being thus tested, then let it be so, but, O Lord, ‘deliver us from evil,’ and especially from the evil one; suffer us not to fall into his hands in the hour of temptation.”

Luk 11:5-6. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him;

This man was in a sad plight; his friend was faint and hungry, and he himself was willing enough to entertain him, but he had “nothing to set before him.” So he acts very wisely; he goes to a friend, and asks him to lend him three loaves.

Luk 11:7. And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

If the man outside keeps on knocking, if he will not go away without the bread he wants for his friend, what will happen?

Luk 11:8. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

See the power of importunate prayer; and you, beloved, can have all that you really need for yourselves or others if you will only ask for it in the right way. If, summoning every faculty of your being, you resolve to plead, and plead, and plead yet again and again, and

never take "No" for an answer, your heart's desire shall be granted.

Luk 11:9. And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you;

But if asking does not seem to prevail with God, —

Luk 11:9. Seek, and ye shall find;

And if, for a while, you do not find, come closer in; —

Luk 11:9. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

There are different methods of praying, and each one has its special adaptation to the state in which you may be; so use that method to which the Holy Spirit guides you, so use all methods until you prevail.

Luk 11:10-11. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?

There were many stones in those days that were in appearance wonderfully like the bread which they used in the East; but would any father mock his son by giving him one of those stones to break his teeth on, instead of bread that he could eat? Never.

Luk 11:11-13. Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

If you have the Holy Spirit, you virtually have all good gifts, for the Spirit is the earnest of God's love, the pledge of joys to come; and he brings with him all things that are necessary and good for you.

Luk 11:14. And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb.

So that this poor man could not obey the Saviour's teaching. He could not pray, for he was under the influence of a dumb devil. How many of that sort there are still in the world! They cannot speak with God, they have never learned to pray, for they are possessed by a dumb devil.

Luk 11:14. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

When the devil is driven out of men by Christ, they soon begin to pray. The little sentence, "Behold, he prayeth," was the indication of a new birth in Saul of Tarsus. The Lord grant that some here, who have been possessed by a dumb spirit, may be graciously led to pray! Remember, dear friend, that God will hear your prayer the first time you call upon him; and there is a text which says, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

Luk 11:15. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

They could not have uttered a fouler falsehood than this; and if people thus slandered the Lord Jesus Christ, we need not be surprised if they speak ill of us.

Luk 11:16. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

Yet they had a very striking one in the dumb devil being cast out of the man; what clearer sign than that could they have?

Luk 11:17-18. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

If Satan cast out Satan, his kingdom would soon come to an end. Note how calmly the Saviour met these mockers and cavillers.

There is no trace of anger in his words; they said the worst thing they could say about him and his work, and yet, in the coolest manner possible, he closes their mouths in the silence of shame. God grant us grace to be calm and strong even when we are most furiously assailed! It is when we are in a hurry and fret that we grow weak.

Luk 11:19-23. And, if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons, cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

Christ had made no compact with the powers of darkness. He was not casting the demons out with the devil's aid, it was absurd to think that he was. He was fighting them and casting them out by his own divine, omnipotent energy. Now comes a very striking parable: —

Luk 11:24. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, —

Satan does sometimes go out of men entirely of his own accord without being turned out. He goes out for a walk, meaning to go back again. Many a man has left off being a drunkard, or left off being lascivious, — for a time: “when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man,” —

Luk 11:24. He walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house —

You see that he still calls it his house. He has gone out for a walk, but he has taken the key of his house with him. Some people sign the pledge, and give up being drunkards for a time, but if the devil is still their master he has only gone away for a while, and he will come back again before long. If he goes out of his own accord, he will come back when he pleases: “I will return unto my house “ —

Luk 11:24; Luk 11:26. Whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

The man has become quite a decent sort of fellow. He has given up his bad ways, and is a respectable member of society. The house is swept and garnished, but it is the devil's house all the same.

Luk 11:26. Then goeth he, and taketh to him even other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

There are, alas! many who have only a sham conversion, a conversion which lasts but a very little while. The devil was not cast out of them, but he went out of his own accord. But where Christ has come — the One who is far stronger than the devil, — to cast him out of his house, he will never be allowed to come back again, Christ will take care of that. Having won the victory, and taken the house, he will keep it by force of arms; but beware, I pray you, of a “conversion” without Christ. Beware of a “reformation” in which the devil himself is a co-worker with you, for it will come to something worse in the end. Let me read the verse again: “Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.” He becomes a worse man than ever because once he promised to be better, but only promised it in his own strength, which was utter weakness

Luk 11:14-15. And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

One would hardly have thought that they could have gone to such a length as that; but when men hate Christ, there is nothing they will not say against him. It is no subject of surprise when great heresies arise, for they are the natural outcome of human enmity against Christ and his truth. People in such a state of heart will say anything; they will give utterance to thoughts that you could not have imagined would have entered any human brain; it is the enmity of the heart to Christ that produces this blasphemy of the tongue.

Luk 11:16. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

“You are working this work from beneath,” they said, “now do something that is really from above.” They must have known that the casting out of the devil was from heaven, for Satan would never cast out Satan.

Luk 11:17-18. But he, knowing their thought, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

That was a very good and sufficient answer to these cavillers. It is a comfort to us to know that error is very vulnerable; there is always a weak point about it. In this case, Christ permitted it to turn its sting upon itself: —

Luk 11:19. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges.

For some of these men had sons, who either did really cast out devils, being disciples of Christ, or else professed to do so, being exorcists, pretending to a power they did not possess. In either case, the argument was good as against the objectors.

Luk 11:20-22. But if I with the finger of God cast out devil, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him. We asketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

This is how Christ drives out the devil, by sheer force of arms, he overcomes him, and drives him out. He does not cajole him, invite him, or persuade him to go; but he fights with him, puts forth his omnipotent power against him, overthrows him, takes away his armor, and divides the spoil. Were you ever conscious of Hugh's fight as that? If not, be afraid of your so-called reformation, for there is no true reformation, and no true conversion, in which there is no conflict between Christ and Satan.

Luk 11:23-24. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, —

This is the kind of "conversion" which is not genuine: "when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man," — "gone out" of his own accord, — and he may do that; he may leave a man, for a while, with the evil purpose of getting him more completely into his power afterwards: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man," —

Luk 11:24. He walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

It was his house all the while; he left it voluntarily, he was not driven out by force; he simply left it for a time in order that he might return to it, and retain it the more completely. Now he goes back to it.

Luk 11:25. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

There has been a reformation of a sort; the man has given up drunkenness, left off swearing, and become, in certain respects, a better man. The house is swept and garnished, but there is no new tenant of Mansoul, there is no Christ come to take possession of Heart Castle.

Luk 11:26. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirit more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

It often happens that, when men make a profession of reformation, and then relapse into their former state, they become far worse than they were before. The so-called "reformation" is all of their own doing; or rather, the greater part of it is the devil's doing. The demon within the man voluntarily went away, and now that he comes back, he brings with him "seven other spirits more wicked than himself;" and so the man is more than eight times worse than he was before the demon left him for a while.

Luk 11:27-28. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

The enthusiastic woman was so carried away with admiration for Christ that she thought his mother was a highly-favored woman, and she called her "blessed." "Yes," said Christ, "she is blessed; but still more blessed are they who have the Word of God in their hearts, who regard it as their own, and keep it as a great prize."

Luk 11:29. And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, There is an evil generation: they seek a sign;

Look back to the 16th verse: "Others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven." Christ had answered those who imputed his miraculous works to Satanic agency, now he answers these others.

Luk 11:29-30. And there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

Jonah rose, as it were, from the dead, for he was buried in the deep, in the belly of the whale; and Christ was buried in Joseph's tomb, yet he came back from the grave on the third day.

Luk 11:31-32. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineva shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

The resurrection would make Christ the most conspicuous sign of God's presence among the people, it would be the testimony of God to his Son that he was indeed the Messiah.

Luk 11:33-35. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they that come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light, but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

If thy religion be irreligion, if thy hope be a false one, if thy highest aspirations are untrue, what is thy position in the sight of God? Where art thou?

Luk 11:36-37. May thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light. And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

It was often a matter of marvel to the onlookers that Christ went among publicans and sinners; but is it not a greater wonder that he went among Pharisees? If they asked him to their houses, it was usually because they hoped to entangle him in his talk; yet the condescension of our Master is so great that, again and again, "he went in, and sat down to meat."

Luk 11:38. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not just washed before dinner.

Not because Christ's hands needed washing, but because it was the custom of the Pharisees to wash before eating, and our Lord broke through the customs as he was wont to do, for he cared nothing for their inventions.

Luk 11:39-40. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fool, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

"One needs washing as much as the other. You are so careful of your hands; will you not be more careful of your hearts?"

Luk 11:41. But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

"When you are full of love to your fellow-men, and make a practice of helping them, you have cleansed your heart from selfishness, and have really washed yourself then."

Luk 11:42. But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

How many, in these days, are very particular about very little things, but very careless about great things! They would not violate the law of their sect or party for the world, but the law of God is of small account to them.

Luk 11:43. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

They loved to be called Rabbi, learned Doctors of the law. Any title that made them appear great was very sweet to them.

Luk 11:44. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

Nobody but Christ knew how base they were. They were fair to look upon, but he knew that they were villainously hypocritical, and he therefore denounced them. Ah, dear friends, the great matter is to have grace in the heart, — to have the divine light within, in the soul; and if we have not this, vain is a fair profession, vain is everything that comes from man. If we are to be saved, we must have the grace that comes from God alone.

Luk 11:45. Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

There was no great difference between the scribes and Pharisees and the lawyers, as this man evidently perceived, and as our Lord also soon confirmed by pronouncing upon them the same kind of “Woe” that he had pronounced upon the other false teachers.

Luk 11:46. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

Their regulations as to moral and ceremonial observances were like huge faggots or crushing burdens bound together, and made into a weight intolerable for any man to carry. Many of these rules by themselves were grievous enough; but altogether they formed a yoke that neither the people nor their fathers could bear. The scribes, and Pharisees, and lawyers piled the great load upon them; but neither helped them to sustain it, nor offered to relieve them of any portion of it. “Ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.”

Luk 11:47-48. Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophet, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

They pretended to have such regard for the holy men of the past that, being unable to honour them in person, they would set up monuments to their memory, and adorn their resting places with tokens of respect. Out of their own mouth our Lord condemned these hypocrites: “Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers.” In effect, Jesus said to them, “You confess that you are the sons of the murderers of the prophets. That admission carries with it far more than you imagine. You are their sons, not only by birth, but also by resemblance; you are veritable children of those who killed the prophets. If you had lived in their day, you would have committed the crimes you pretend to condemn.”

Luk 11:49-54. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shalt slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.

The destruction of Jerusalem was more terrible than anything that the world has ever witnessed, either before or since. Even Titus seemed to see in his cruel work the hand of an avenging God. Truly, the blood of the martyrs was amply avenged when the whole city became a veritable Aceldama, or field of blood. It was before that generation had passed away that Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed. There was a sufficient interval for the full proclamation of the gospel by the apostles and evangelists of the early Christian Church, and for the gathering out of those who recognized the crucified Christ as their true Messiah. Then came the awful ending, which the Saviour foresaw and foretold.

Luk 11:51. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

This “Woe” is similar to that pronounced upon the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, and it was a terrible charge to be brought against them by him who could read their hearts, and who could truthfully say to them, “Ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.” They ought to have helped men into the kingdom; instead

of doing so, they hindered those who were entering. Are there not false teachers, nowadays, who put stumbling stones instead of stepping-stones in the way of those who are entering the kingdom of heaven?

Luk 11:53-54. And as he said these tidings unto them, the scribe, and Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Thus they proved the truth of the accusations that he had brought against them; but all their plots and traps were in vain until the hour appointed for his great sacrifice to be offered on Calvary.

Luke 12

The teaching of our Lord, in this chapter, has very much to do with Christianity in connection with this present life, and its cares and troubles. God has nowhere promised us exemption from affliction and trial. Indeed, it has been said, with much truth, that the Old Testament promise was one of prosperity, but that the New Testament promise is one of tribulation. You may rest assured that, if it had been best for us to be taken away to heaven directly we were converted, the Lord would have done it, and that, as he has not done so, there are wise reasons why he keeps his people here for a while. The gold must go through the fire ere it has its place in the king's crown, and the wheat must be exposed to the winnowing fan ere it can be taken into the heavenly garner.

Luk 12:1. In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy, however, of a kind that was calculated to spread, like leaven. If you know that a man is a hypocrite, you do not feel inclined to imitate him; but the Pharisees were such well-made hypocrites, — such excellent counterfeits, — that many people were tempted to imitate them. Our Lord teaches us, however, that it is no use being a hypocrite, —

Luk 12:2. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

For many a day, the hypocrite's true character may not be discovered but there is a day coming that will reveal all secrets; and woe unto the man whose sin is laid bare in that day!

Luk 12:3. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

It would be well if we all lived in such a fashion that we should not be ashamed to have everything we did placarded on the very sky. I have heard of one who said that he would like to have a window in his heart, so that everybody might see what was going on. I think that, if I had such a window in my heart, I should like to have shutters to it; and I question whether any man really could wish to have his heart open to the gaze of all mankind. But, at least, let our lives be such that we should not be ashamed for the universal eye to be fixed upon them. If thou art ashamed to have any one of thine actions known, be ashamed to do it. If thou wouldst be ashamed to hear again what thou was about to say, do not say it. Check thy tongue; be cautious and careful. Live ever as one who realizes God's omniscience. While one of the ancient orators was speaking, on one occasion, all his hearers went away with the exception of Plato; but he continued to speak as eloquently as ever, for he said that Plato was a sufficient audience for any man. So, if there be no one but the eye of God looking upon thee, be just as careful as if thou were in the street, surrounded by thy fellow-creatures; nay, be more careful because thou art in the presence of thy Creator.

Luk 12:4-5. And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

And how brave we shall be if we fear God! It is well put in that psalm which we sometimes sing, — "Fear him, ye saints, and you will then Have nothing else to fear." This great filial fear will chase out all the little, mean, graven fears, for he who, in the scriptural sense, fears God, can never be a coward in dealing with men.

Luk 12:6-7. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

God does not forget the sparrows, but he regards you with far greater interest and care, for he counts the very hairs of your head. He not only knows that there is such a person, but he knows the minutest details of your life and being. It is always a great comfort to remember that our Heavenly Father knows us. A dying man, who had been for many years a believer, had a minister at his bedside who said to him, "Don't you know Jesus?" "Yes, Sir," he replied, "I do, but the ground of my comfort is that he knows me." And, surely, there is a great force in that truth. Your Heavenly Father knows you so completely that he has counted the hairs of your head: "Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Luk 12:8-9. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

What courage this ought to give us! In company where the very name of Christ is kicked about like a football, — where everything is respected except true religion, — it is not always an easy thing to come forward, and say, "I also am his disciple." But if you will do this, you have Christ's pledge that he will own you before the angels of God. If you do not do so, but practically deny him by a shameful silence, you may reasonably expect that he also will deny you before the angels.

Luk 12:10. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

This is one of the very difficult texts of Holy Scripture. We are told, in 1Jn 5:16, that "there is a sin unto death," and I would have you very chary of ever daring to trifle with the Spirit of God, since sin against him is guarded with such special warnings. The flaming sword of divine vengeance seems to hang before the very name of the Holy Ghost; so, whatever you do, never trench upon his royal dignity, or blaspheme him in heart or by lip.

Luk 12:11. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, —

That is to say, the persecutors, — "when they bring you there, to be tried for your lives, as many have been in past ages, and some still are,"

Luk 12:11-12. Take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

I have often been amazed and delighted with the remarkable answers which were given to bishops and priests by poor humble men and women who were on trial for their lives. Perhaps you remember that Anne Askew was asked, in order to entangle her in her speech, "What would become of a mouse if it ate the bread of the holy sacrament?" "She said that was too deep a question for a poor woman like her to answer, and she begged the learned bishop on the bench to tell her what would become of the mouse; to which his lordship answered that it would be damned. Now, what reply could be given to that but the one Anne Askew gave, "Alack, poor mouse!" I do not know that anything better could have been said; and, on other occasions, there have been answers which have been deeply theological, and there have been some which have been wisely evasive and, also some full of weight, and others full of grace and truth, for the Holy Ghost has helped his saints, in time of persecution, to answer well those who have accused them.

Luk 12:13-17. And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

There were empty cupboards in the houses of the poor, and there were hungry children to be filled; so this man need not have lacked room where he could bestow his fruits.

Luke 12:14 "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

For each one of us there is a special vocation in which we can follow Christ. I do not believe that all of you would be following him if you were to attempt to preach. Even Christ never attempted to do what his Father did not intend him to do. A man once asked him to officiate as a lawyer or judge, but he replied, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" One beauty of Christ's life was that he

kept to his calling and did not go beyond his commission. And you will be wise if you do the same.

Luk 12:18-20. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I, will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, —

Which was the last thing he thought, he imagined that he was a very wise man: “But God said unto him, Thou fool,” —

Luk 12:20-21. This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Here our Saviour shows us the frail nature of the tenure upon which we hold all earthly goods, and how it is not worth while to make these the chief things of our life; for, while they may leave us, we are quite sure by-and- by, to have to leave them.

Luk 12:22. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought —

No undue, anxious thought, for such is the meaning of the word used here:
“Take no thought” —

Luk 12:22-30. For your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the like how they grow: they toil not, they spin not, and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.”

So that, with the knowledge of his guarantees to you that you shall always have enough, what need have you to be careworn and anxious? I have often looked at birds in a cage, and thought of the happiness and carelessness of heart which they seem to exhibit; and yet, if you were to forget to give them water, or if you were to fail to give them seed, how soon they would die! Perhaps the little creature has not enough to last it more than one day, but it goes on singing its tune, and leaves; all anxiety about the morrow to those whose business it is to care for it. You would be ashamed to let your bird starve; and will your Heavenly Father let you, who are not his birds, but his children, starve? Oh, no! “Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.”

Luke 12:24 “Consider the ravens.”

Consider the ravens as they cry. With harsh, inarticulate, croaking notes they make known their wants, and your heavenly Father answers their prayer and sends them food. You, too, have begun to pray and to seek his favor; are you not much better than they? Does God care for ravens, and will he not care for you?

Luk 12:31-32. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

He does not give you all that you would like to have, but he is going “to give you the kingdom.” He gives the lesser gifts to others, but he is saving up the kingdom for you. Luther once said, “All the empires of the earth are only so much meal for God’s swine; but the treasure is for his children. They may have less meal, but they shall have the eternal kingdom.” Oh, how blessed are we if, by faith, we know that this is true concerning us: “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”!

In this chapter, our Saviour dispels the fears of his disciples concerning temporal things, and especially their fear of persecution and their fear of want.

Luk 12:1-2. In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is

nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid; that shall not be known.

What, therefore, can be the use of hypocrisy? Hypocrisy leads a man to pretend to be what he is not. His only hope lies in not being discovered; but, as Christ declares that "there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known;" hypocrisy becomes insanity as well as iniquity. Therefore, keep clear of it in every shape and form.

Luk 12:3-5. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

There is nothing, comparatively, to fear in death considered by itself. If that were the end of man, he need have little or no fear even of God himself. But inasmuch as after death, there is another state which is everlasting and unchangeable, there is grave cause for the ungodly to fear him who, "after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell."

Luk 12:6-7. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

So particular is the care of divine providence.

Luk 12:7. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

And if he counts the sparrows, and cares for them, he certainly will not forget you.

Luk 12:8-9. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

Mind what you are at, then, you who never confess Christ before men; because, according to the connection of this passage, you are set down as having denied him. Christ first speaks of those who confess him, and then of those who do not confess him, and he describes them as virtually denying him. On another occasion, Christ said, "he that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Examine that attitude of yours, which you suppose to be neutral, and see how Christ regards it, and then ask yourself whether you can be satisfied to remain in it any longer.

Luk 12:10. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

What is the sin against the Holy Ghost? We do not know, and I think it is a great mercy that we do not know. I will tell you one reason why I think it is a great mercy, and that is, because the devil is continually tempting poor distracted souls to commit that sin. I have, within the past week, seen several persons who have been frequently tempted to commit it; only, happily, they did not know what the sin against the Holy Ghost was; and, therefore, they could not persuade themselves into the belief that they had committed it. I have seen many people who have told me that they have committed the unpardonable sin, and I have asked them to sit down, and tell me what that sin was; for if they could do so, I should find out something that I did not know. In every instance, I have very soon been able to say to them, "Though I do not know what the unpardonable sin is, I am quite certain that what you mention is not that sin, for such sin as yours has frequently been forgiven." It is a blessing that we are left in the dark concerning that matter; only as I have often said to you, do not presume upon your ignorance. This warning is something like the notice you see put up on certain great men's estates, "Man-traps and spring guns set here." If you go round the mansion, and say to the owner, "If you please, sir, will you tell me where the man-traps and spring guns are?" he will say, "No; why should you want to know where they are? You keep from trespassing, and then it will not matter to you where they are." That very indistinctness about the warning is a part of the preventive power which surrounds it. You have no right to go trespassing there at all, so keep away from the place; and you are not told what the unpardonable sin is, though there is a sin which is unto death; and there is a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven.

Luk 12:11-12. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

He has often done this. If you will read, in Foxe's Book of Martyrs, the answers given even by unlearned, illiterate men and women, who were taken quite at unawares, and assailed by subtle questions, you will see that they often answered in a remarkably wise way. They could not have answered better if the questions had been before them for months. They frequently burned their cunning

adversaries by their wisdom and sometimes by their wit, for the Holy Ghost taught them in the same hour what they ought to speak.

Luk 12:13. And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. He rudely broke in upon Christ's discourse when he was preaching upon these important matters, because he wanted the Saviour to act the part of a judge in his dispute with his brother.

Luk 12:14. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you. Some present-day minister, if this request had been made to him, would probably have said, "Well, I may save some litigation, perhaps, if I attend to this matter." As a general rule, brother, you had better mind your own business. Your Master, who was far wiser than you are, would not entangle himself with the affairs of this life; and, usually, true wisdom suggests that we also should keep ourselves apart from them.

Luk 12:15-17. And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? This was his dialogue within himself. He might have answered at once, "As I have more than I can use, I will give some away to the poor; why should I want to lay up my fruits, to let them get moldy and corrupt? There are many poor people starving at my very gates; I will let them share in what God has so bountifully given to me." This might have been his answer to the question, "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" His reply, however, was a very different one.

Luk 12:18-19. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, — It is "my" all through, — my fruits, my barns, my goods. The man was eaten up with selfishness, and did not recognize the fact of his stewardship. He did not know that even his own soul did not belong to him; he thought it did: "I will say to my soul," —

Luk 12:19-20. Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

"Thou fool." That is God's opinion of the man who means to build bigger barns in order that he may himself enjoy what is about to be taken away from him. He was a fool to be laying up in store for others to scatter. Many a miser's heirs have lived to ridicule him. He was the rake that gathered up a heap of gold, and they are the shovel and fork that scatter it. They drink the old man's health, and are much obliged to him for stinting himself that they may drink so deeply.

Luk 12:21-22. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought —

It really means, "Make it not a matter of anxious care. Take no inordinate thought" —

Luk 12:22-23. For your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

Everybody admits the truth of this saying of the Saviour, though all do not see everything that is involved in it. Therefore, as the soul is more important than all else, look well to your soul, look more to your life than to your meat.

Luk 12:24. Consider the ravens:

It is quite possible that some of them were flying overhead just at that time, and that Christ pointed to them, and said, "Consider the ravens;" —

Luk 12:24-25. For they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? "You cannot lengthen your body;" or perhaps the Saviour meant, "You cannot lengthen out your life."

Luk 12:26. If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least,
It really is a matter of very slight consequence whether you are a little shorter or taller.

Luk 12:26-29. Why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

Full of carking care and wearing anxiety about little things; or, indeed, about anything.

Luk 12:30. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Therefore he would have you so live — industriously, prudently, thriftily, — that you shall get these things, and shall not waste them when you have them; but he would not have you live in an anxious, worrying, depressed spirit, as if you had no God, no Heavenly Father, no all-sufficient Friend; and as if there were no all-wise providence, and you were left to drift about uncared for and alone. It is not so. O thou God of the lilies and God of the ravens, thou wilt be the God of thy people too!

Luk 12:31-32. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

He may not give you much here; but, in due time, he will give you the kingdom. He may give to worldlings more of these secondary things — these husks, these mere illusions, these mirages of the desert — than he gives to you; but for you there is prepared a city that hath foundations, and a kingdom that shall never pass away. Therefore patiently wait until the appointed time; and fear not; “for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

Luk 12:33-34. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which was not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

It is not only important to lay up that which can truly be called treasure, but also to lay it up in the right place: “a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.” Such treasure as that will not harm us if we set our heart upon it, and, by-and-by, in God's good time, we and our treasure shall both be in heaven.

Luk 12:35-37. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

This always seems to me to be one of the most remarkable of our Lord's utterances while he was here upon the earth. His whole life was one of condescension, which was never more clearly manifested than it was when he, the Lord and Master of all, took the position of servant of all, and washed his disciples' feet; yet he here tells us that, if he finds us watching when he comes again, he will once more take his place as our servitor.

Luk 12:38-44. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all! And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

Luk 12:13-14. And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me, And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

Our Lord was a Judge and a Divider, but his sphere of action was spiritual; he did not interfere in the personal disputes of those who gathered round him.

Luk 12:15. And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Christ took advantage of this man's request, and made it the text for a sermon against covetousness.

Luk 12:16-19. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

Notice how fond the rich man was of the little pronouns "I" and "my." He lived only for himself, and was an embodiment of that covetousness which our Lord abhorred and denounced. What a vivid contrast there is between what the man said to himself and the Lord's message to him!

Luk 12:20. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

This may also be said to any one of you; where would you be if the Lord did say to you, "This night thy soul shall he required of thee"?

Luk 12:21-23. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

Do not spend your care on the lower things; care most for that which is most worth caring for ³/₄more for the body than for raiment, more for life than for meat, and consequently, more for the immortal spirit than for aught besides, and more for God even than for your own soul. Let your cares be rated according to their objects; to set a caring, anxious care upon the lesser things, will be folly indeed.

Luk 12:24. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

It seems, then, that those that are fed by God are much better fed than those that are fed by men. The ravens know no care whatever, for God cares for them; and, if we could ever bring our hearts into such a condition that we felt that everything to do with us was in God's hand, we should enter into a blessed, hallowed freedom from care in which we should find a sweet repose of spirit.

"Beneath the spreading heavens,

No creature but is fed;

And He who feeds the ravens,

Will give his children bread."

Luke 12:24 "Consider the ravens."

Consider the ravens as they cry. With harsh, inarticulate, croaking notes they make known their wants, and your heavenly Father answers their prayer and sends them food. You, too, have begun to pray and to seek his favor; are you not much better than they? Does God care for ravens, and will he not care for you?

Luk 12:25-26. And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

It would be a very small matter to you if you were a foot taller, or if you were a foot shorter. It is not that the making of yourself a cubit taller or shorter would be a small thing to do, but it is a small thing in its result; it is an inconsiderable matter whether a man is tall or short. If ye, then, be not able even to reduce your stature, or to increase it, take no anxious thought about other things.

Luk 12:27. Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

So that God cares not only for things that have necessities, as ravens have, but for things that have luxuries, as lilies have. When God does anything, he does it well. He is a grand Housekeeper; he does not measure out so many ounces of bread per diem, as if

we were in a workhouse, but “they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” The lilies might do as well without their golden hues, they might ripen their seed without the lengthened stems that lift them where they can be observed; but God takes more care of them even than Solomon did of himself, for “Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Now, dear children of God, if you trust your Heavenly Father, he will see that you have no cause for care. If you trust him with your souls, he will not give you a bare salvation, but a rich robe of righteousness to cover all your nakedness. When he does any work, he does it after a better fashion than the wisest of men could do it; and nature herself, working as she does for the lilies, is only God working in another way. But when God himself, without the intervention of the laws of nature, works in the kingdom of his grace, he does it perfectly; he does it gloriously.

Luk 12:28. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Your life is not like that of the grass, or the flower of the field, that fades on a summer's day. God will take care of you, and the everlasting things shall have from him a care even greater than he gives to the temporal. Yet how much God really does for flowers! Flowers that only open their cups in the morning, and shut them in death at night! How much of skill and wisdom there is even about them! Shall there not be greater skill and wisdom employed upon you who, when you have once begun to bloom in the light of God, shall go on blooming, and flowering, and shedding your perfume throughout the endless ages?

Luk 12:29-30. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things in the nations of the world seek after and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

For you, the immortal, the twice-born, the very body-guard of Christ, to live for such things as the men of the world live for, is to degrade the peerage of heaven, to bring those who are of the blood royal of the skies down to a gross pursuit. No; let your whole thought, and heart, and life, be spent for something higher and better than these things; and leave the lower cares with your Father.

Luk 12:31-32. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

When Abraham had many sons, he gave to each one of them a portion and sent them away; but Isaac had the family heritage. It is the same with you. The Lord may give to others more than he bestows upon you in this life, but for you he reserves the kingdom. Are you not content with that, whatever else your Father gives you or withholds from you?

Luk 12:33. Sell that ye have, and give alms;

That is to say, do not merely give a little, which you can readily spare; but sometimes even pinch yourselves to relieve the poor.

Luk 12:33-34. Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

You are sure to live for that which is the choicest object of your love. Whatever you think to be first, will be first; and what you love in your heart, you will be sure to follow in your life.

Luk 12:35-36. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Many people are thinking just now of Christ's first advent, but this passage bids us watch for his glorious second coming.

Luk 12:37. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

I never read this verse without wondering at the marvelous condescension of our Lord. Even in the day of his appearing in glory, his thoughts will be more about his people than about himself: “He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.”

Luk 12:33. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. We cannot tell when he will come, but “Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching.”

Luk 12:39-44. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched,

and not have suffered his house to be broke through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

Wonderful words! We cannot at present tell all that they mean; but, by God's grace, may they be fulfilled to us when our Lord comes to take us to himself!

Luk 12:13-14. And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

Our Lord kept to his proper business, which was the preaching of the gospel and the healing of the sick. We find, in these days, that the minister of the gospel is asked to do almost everything. He must be a politician; he must be a social reformer; he must be I know not what. For my part, I often feel as if I could answer, "Who made me to do anything of the kind? If I can preach the gospel, I shall have done well if I do that to the glory of God, and to the salvation of men. Surely there are enough people to be judges and dividers, there are quite sufficient politicians to attend to politics, and plenty of men who feel themselves qualified to direct social reforms. Some of us may be spared to attend to spiritual affairs."

Luk 12:15. And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Jesus gave his hearers a good moral and spiritual lesson from the occurrence which they had witnessed, and then passed on to speak of the matter which always occupied his thoughts.

Luk 12:16-17. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth, plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

He did not enquire, "Where can I find a needy case in which I may use my superfluity for charity?" Oh, no! "How can I hoard it? How can I keep it all to myself?" This was a selfish, worldly man.

Luk 12:18-20. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool,

Other men said of him, "This is a wise man; he minds the main chance; he is a fellow plentifully endowed with good sense and prudence;" but God said unto him, "Thou fool, "

Luk 12:20. This night thy soul shall be required of thee:

I should like you to set that up as the counter picture to the one that we had this morning, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." That was said by Christ to the penitent thief, but to this impenitent rich man, God said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Luk 12:20-21. Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

"He that layeth up treasure for himself." That was the chief point of this man's wrong-doing, his selfishness. His charity began at home, and ended there; he lived only for himself.

Luk 12:22-23. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

Have no anxious, carking care. Do not be looking after the inferior things, and neglecting your soul. Take care of your soul; your body will take care of itself better than your soul can. The raiment for the body will come in due time; but the clothing for the soul is the all-important matter. Therefore, see to that.

Luk 12:24-27. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

The lilies simply stand still in the sunlight, and silently say to us, "See how beautiful are the thoughts of God." If we could just drink in

God's love, and then, almost without speech, show it in our lives, how we should glorify his name!

Luk 12:28. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith!

But you have some faith, else the Saviour would not have said to you, "O ye of little faith!" The man who has no faith may well go on fretting, toiling, spinning; but he that hath faith, as he goes forth to his daily labour, looks beyond that to the God of providence, and thus God keeps him without care, and provides for him.

Luk 12:29-30. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

He knows that you must go and work for these things; but he would not have you fret and fume about them. "Your Father knows." He will provide. It is enough for him to know his children's wants, and he will be sure to provide for them.

Luk 12:31. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Thrown in as a kind of make-weight. You get the spiritual, and then the common blessings of life shall be added unto you.

Luk 12:32. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

That is your share. Others may have inferior joys; but you are to have the kingdom. The Lord could not give you more than that; and he will not give you less.

Luk 12:33. Sell that ye have, and give alms;

Do not merely give away what you can spare; but even pinch yourself sometimes, and sell what you can that you may have the more to give.

Luk 12:33. Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Put some of your estate where it cannot be lost. Take care that you invest some of it for God's poor, and God's work, where the interest will be sure, and the investment will be safe.

Luk 12:34. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Make sure of that. Your heart will go after your treasure; and if none of your treasure has gone to heaven, none of your heart will go there.

Luk 12:35-36. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Our Lord constantly reminded his disciples that the time would come when he must leave them for a season; but he always kept before them the thought of his return, and bade them watch for him as those that wait for their lord.

Luk 12:37-39. Blessed are those Servants, whom the lord when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

As he does not know when the thief will come, he is always watching.

Luk 12:40-41. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

And the Lord told him that, while it was spoken to all, it had a very special bearing upon apostolic men, upon preachers of the gospel, ministers of Christ.

Luk 12:42-44. And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to

give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

Just as Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over all Egypt, so, when men have done well in the ministry of Christ, he will promote them, and they shall do still more for him.

Luk 12:45-46. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder.

This is a truly terrible expression. We are sometimes charged with using too strong expressions with regard to the wrath to come. It is quite impossible that we should do so, even if we tried, for the expressions of the Lord Jesus are more profoundly terrible than any which even mediaeval writers have ever been known to invent.

Luk 12:46. And will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

The worst portion that any man can get is with the unbelievers. Are there not some here who may, in this verse, see what a dark doom theirs will be if they are among those who are described as being out in sunder, and having their portion with the unbelievers?

Luk 12:47. And that servant, which knew his lords will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

So that there are different measures of responsibility; there are degrees in guilt, and degrees in punishment.

Luk 12:48. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall he beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

O my brethren! Let those of us who are privileged with the possession of the gospel, and privileged with any amount of ability to spread it, enquire whether we could give in a good account if the Lord were to come tonight, and summon us, as stewards, to give an account of our stewardship. God bless to us all the reading of his Word! Amen.

Luk 12:22-23. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

If you are God's servants, he will clothe you. There is no servitor of the Lord of hosts who will have to go without his livery, and not one who belongs to his vast household, even though he is but a menial in God's kitchen, who will ever be permitted to starve.

Luk 12:24-26. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

How little you can do for yourself after all! Therefore, leave the whole with God.

"Make you his service your delight,
He'll make your wants his care."

The best cure for the cares of this life is to care much to please God. If we loved him better, we should love the world far less, and be less troubled about our portion in it.

Luk 12:27-28. Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of those. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

What a title to address to us, — "O ye of little faith!" — but, depend upon it, we deserve it when we are full of anxious care. Much care argues little faith. When faith is strong, she casts all her care on him who careth for us. Oh, that we could but be rid of that which, after all, is not our business, and give our whole mind, and heart, and soul, to what is our business, namely, to please our Creator, our Redeemer, our Friend!

Luk 12:29-30. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all those things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

Is not that a sweet word? "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." There used to be a hymn which was sung a good deal at revival meetings, it had a very sweet refrain, "This my Father knows." If you cannot yourselves understand your ease,

your Father knows all about it. If you cannot make other people comprehend it, yet your Father knows all that needs to be known. Whatever you really require, even for the present life, need not be any cause of anxiety to you, believers, for "your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." There is no need, therefore, for you to seek "what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink."

Luk 12:31-32. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all those things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

He gives others a good many things, but he will give you the kingdom. Just as Abraham gave portions to the sons of Keturah, and sent them away; but Isaac had the covenant blessing; so, "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Luk 12:33. Sell that ye have, and give alms;

Not only give to the poor till you pinch yourself, but even pinch yourself to do it.

Luk 12:33-35. Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

Never be undressed, as it were, in a moral or spiritual sense: "Let your loins be girded about." Never be in the dark spiritually. Keep in the light; let your lamp be ever burning. Not only walk in the light of God but let your light shine before men.

Luk 12:36. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Brethren, whatever theory we hold about the future, may God grant that it may never prevent our looking for the coming of Christ as an event which may happen at any moment, and being on the watch for it as a matter the date of which we do not know! The practical essence of all Scriptural teaching upon that subject is just this, "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding."

Luk 12:37. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

I will not attempt fully to explain this passage of Scripture in the few moments which I can give to it, but it is very wonderful. Our Lord has been here once, and girded himself to serve us; but is it not extraordinary that here is an intimation of a second girding of himself that he may serve us? Oh, how fond is Christ of being the servant of servants, ministering unto those who delight to minister unto him! What an honour does the Captain of our salvation put upon the meanest soldiers in this war when he declares that, if we be found faithful, he will gird himself, and come forth and serve us!

Luk 12:38-40. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good-man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Peradventure he will not come when the modern prophetic say that he will appear, but he will come when least of all he is expected. Therefore, expect the unexpected; look for your Lord to come when the many go to sleep. Perhaps, while yet I am speaking, ere this gathered assembly shall disperse, there may be heard the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Are our loins girded? Are our lamps burning? God bless his own truth to the effecting of both those ends!

Luk 12:41-43. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Distributing the bread of life, giving milk to babes and meat to strong men; not behaving as if he were master, but acting only as a steward who serves out, not his own, but his master's stores. Oh, that we who are ministers of Christ may be always doing this! So shall we obtain the blessing promised to "that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

Luk 12:44-45. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all the he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

First, he becomes lordly, he acts as if he were master, beats his fellow-servants, he is harsh and ungenerous, and assumes great dignity and gives himself airs. Let him mind what he is at, for his Master will come, and catch him usurping his place. The next

danger is that he begins to enjoy himself, to be voluptuous, self-indulgent: "To eat and drink, and to be drunken." He becomes intoxicated with pride, he is carried away with divers errors; in making much of himself he loses his head, and acts like a fool.

Luk 12:46. The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Truly, our Lord uses very strong words; the Saviour is not one of your effeminate preachers like those of modern times, who seem as if the very word "hell" would burn their lips, and who will not warn men to flee from the wrath to come. It is an unkind and heartless want of humanity which prevents their being faithful to the souls of men. The great Lord, who is full of tenderness, does not hesitate to use the sternest figure, and the most terrible language, simply because he does not consult his own feelings but aims at the highest good of those with whom he deals. This is a terrible word for us if we are unfaithful at the last: "He will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." It is an awful thing that the unfaithful servant gets his portion with those who do not believe in Christ. The Lord preserve all of us from such a doom!

Luk 12:47-48. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with a few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. Under the shadow of such solemn texts as these, let us draw near to God in earnest prayer.

Luk 12:35-37. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

This is a wonderful passage. Christ has already had one turn as a servitor. He was Master and Lord, yet he washed his disciples' feet; but he says that, if we are watchful and faithful, if we truly serve him, the day shall come when, in all his robes of glory, he shall gird himself, and serve us.

Luk 12:38-40. And if he shalt come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

This is a warning to Christ's own people; but it is still more a warning to those who do not know him. Suppose he were to come tonight; where would you be, you who have hitherto lived as if you were your own masters, and were by no means the servants of Christ? Take heed unto yourselves, for ye know not when your Lord shall come.

Luk 12:41-44. Then Peter said unto him Lord, speakest then this parable unto us, or even to all. And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

What rewards Christ has in store for his people. If we will but be his servants now, and the servants of our brethren, he will make us rulers over all that he has. I cannot attempt to explain all that these words mean, but I bless the Lord that they are absolutely true.

Luk 12:45-46. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shalt begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Again let me say that I cannot attempt to explain all that these words mean; but, oh! what will be the horror, the terror, of the punishment which will fall upon the unfaithful steward, the minister who is untrue to his holy calling, the professor who says that he is a child of God, and a steward of Christ, and yet is unfaithful to his trust? I will read our Lord's words again. You know how we are sometimes accused of saying things too dreadful about the wrath of God in the world to come; but, beloved, we never say anything dreadful enough. If you will carefully examine the Word of God, you will find there expressions such as even Dante or the mediaeval preachers, with all the horrors they depicted, never; surpassed. We cannot exaggerate the awful depth of meaning which we find in the words of the loving Christ himself; let me read this verse again: "The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

Luk 12:47-48. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten

with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shalt be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. Judge ye, then, brethren and sisters, how much of ability and talent your lord has entrusted to you, and be not content to have rendered him some service; but look for proportionate service, and humble yourselves in his presence if your service is not in proportion to the opportunities entrusted to you. Who among us can refrain from humbling himself before God when he thinks of this?

Luke 13

Luk 13:1. There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

This was a matter of common town talk, so of course they brought the news to Jesus. Notice how wisely he used this shameful incident. You and I too often hear the news of what is happening, but we learn nothing from it; our Saviour's gracious mind turned everything to good account; he was like the bee that gathers honey from every flower.

Luk 13:2. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

"Do you imagine that there was some extraordinary guilt which brought this judgment upon them, and that those who were spared may be supposed to have been more innocent than they were?"

Luk 13:3. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.

There would come upon them also, because of their sin, a sudden and overwhelming calamity. When we read of the most dreadful things happening to you we may conclude that something similar will happen to us if we are impenitent; if not in this world, yet in that which is to come.

Luke 13:3 "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

How did those Galileans perish? I am solemnly afraid that some of you will perish just as they did. Think of it—your blood on your hymn singing and on your prayers, because you have not yielded yourselves up to God or obeyed the word of his gospel! If my blood must be spilled through an act of divine vengeance, let it fall anywhere but on my religion, for that would seem a doubly dreadful thing. Yet I fear that this must and will be the lot of some here who never forsake the gatherings of God's people, and yet have never yielded their hearts to God.

Luk 13:4-5. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

This was a foreshadowing of the overthrow of Jerusalem, and the razing of its walls and towers to the ground, which happened not long after; and even that overthrow of Jerusalem was but a rehearsal of the tremendous doom that shall come upon all who remain impenitent.

Luk 13:6. He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

He had a right to seek fruit upon the tree, for it was planted where fruit-bearing trees were growing, and where it shared in the general culture that was bestowed upon all the trees in the vineyard.

Luk 13:7. Then he said unto the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

This was sound reasoning. "It yields nothing, though it draws the goodness out of the ground, and so injures those trees that are producing fruit; 'cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?'"

Luke 13:8 "Let it alone this year."

There was no reason in that tree why he should plead for it, and there is no reason in you why Christ should plead for you, yet he does it. This very morning, perhaps, he is crying, "Spare him yet a little while. Let him hear the gospel again. Let him be entreated once more. Oh, let him have another sickness, that it may make his conscience feel! Let me have another endeavor with his hard heart. It may be that he will yield."

O sinner, bless God that Jesus Christ pleads for you in that way.—8.381

Our text represents the gardener as only asking to have the tree spared, but Jesus Christ did something more than ask. He pleaded, not with his mouth only, but with pierced hands and pierced feet and pierced side. And those prevailing pleas have moved the heart of God, and you are still spared.

Luk 13:8-9. And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

He asks a respite, but only a limited one. "After that, thou shalt cut it down." If, after the trial of another year, it shall still be fruitless, then even the pleader will not ask for any further respite.

Luk 13:10-11. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

If she was there when Christ was speaking about the fruitless fig tree I feel pretty certain that she said "That must mean me; I am the fruitless fig tree," but the Master did not mean her, he had other words and more cheering tidings for her.

Luk 13:12. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

Oh, what glad news this must have been to her! How it must have thrilled her whole body! As she learned that she was to be restored to an upright position, what delight must have filled her heart!

Luk 13:13. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

What expressions of fervent gratitude, what notes of glad exultation came from that woman's joyful lips! Surely, even cherubim and seraphim could not more heartily and earnestly praise God than she did when "she was made straight and glorified God."

Luk 13:6. He spake also this parable, A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Let us, every one, read this parable as if our Lord Jesus Christ were now speaking it for the first time to each of us. There is a lesson here which we shall do well to heed.

Luk 13:7-9. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

"In that case, I will plead for it no longer, for it will have had its full time of testing, and every opportunity of bearing fruit: 'After that thou shalt cut it down.'" The parable is so simple that it needs no explanation, and therefore our Lord Jesus has not given any. May we all make a personal application of its solemn teaching! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from SOLOMON'S Son 8:11-14; Isa 5:1-7; and Luk 13:6-9.

Luk 13:6. He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

It was a fig tree, a fruit-bearing tree by profession, so it ought to have borne fruit. It was planted; it was not a wild tree, it was planted in a vineyard, in the proper place for fig trees to grow, in good soil; and therefore the owner of it had a right to come and look for fruit on it; but he found none. Have we not here, tonight, some who are planted in the Church of God who ought, by their profession, to be bearing fruit, but they are not? Christ has come, and he has looked for fruit; but he has found none.

Luk 13:7. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

The owner seems to say, "If I had not found fruit the first year, I should have thought that the season was unfavourable; if I had found no fruit the second year, I might have thought that peradventure the tree was a little out of condition, and would come round again;

but when I come for three years, and three years consecutively I find no fruit, then it is clear that the fig tree is a barren one. Why should it stay here, and spoil the soil, occupy the place that a good fig tree might have occupied, and take away the nutriment from other trees?" So if, after many years, some of you have brought forth no fruit, God may well complain about you. You are eating the bread that might have nourished a saint. You are occupying a place in which your influence is injurious to others. Others do less because you do nothing. I pray the Holy Spirit to bring this home to the conscience of any barren professor whom it may concern, lest the command should go forth, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

Luk 13:8-9. And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

Even the vinedresser's pleading has a limit: "Give it one more year." He admits that the time must come for the axe to cut down the tree that is fruitless. The cumber-ground tree cannot stand for ever; it is unreasonable that it should. And you cannot be permitted to live for ever in sin; you cannot be allowed to taint the air with blasphemy for another fifty years. There must come an end to such a life as yours, and that end may come very soon. The edge of the axe is sharp, and the hand that wields it is strong. Beware, O barren tree!

Luk 13:10. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

When there happened a very remarkable miracle. The parable that preceded it was a parable of judgment; the miracle that followed was a miracle of mercy and grace.

Luk 13:11-12. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him,

You can see her slowly moving along, bent double. Hers was a painful walk, but she came at Christ's call.

Luk 13:12-13. And said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

See what Christ can do. After I had preached this morning, I had to speak with just such a woman as this, one who has been, for many years, the victim of deep despondency. How I wished that I could lay my hands on her, and say, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity"! But we cannot work such a miracle as that. It is Christ who must do it all; and blessed be his name, he is always great at a pinch! Christ loves to come in at a dead lift. When we are all beaten, and we have reached man's extremity, then it is Christ's opportunity. Oh, you poor despairing woman, bent double by your sadness, the Lord's hand can restore you: and we pray for you tonight, even the thousands of Israel pray for you at this moment! Lord, lay thine hand upon that poor child of infirmity!

Luk 13:14. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation,

Wretched creature, to be indignant at Christ's doing good! There is no reckoning with self-righteous people. They are mad themselves, and they think others so.

Luk 13:14-15. Because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men, ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite,

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It served him right. This is just the word that would naturally come to the lips of the Saviour. Because he was loving and tender, he could not endure this hypocritical indignation: "The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite,"

Luk 13:15-16. Doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

A very conclusive argument. You may do deeds like this on the Sabbath; and you may come and be healed on the Sabbath, even though it should involve you in a journey. It is so needful that you should get the bread of heaven, so needful that you should get the blessing of Christ, that on this day you may come and be healed.

Luke 13:16 "... whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years."

As in Job's case there was a limit, so was there here. Satan had bound this woman, but he had not killed her. He might bend her

toward the grave, but he could not bend her into it. He might make her droop over till she was bent double, but he could not take away her poor feeble life. With all his infernal craft he could not make her die before her time. Moreover, she was still a woman, and he could not make a beast of her, notwithstanding that she was thus bowed down in the form of a brute. Even so the devil cannot destroy you, O child of God. He can smite you, but he cannot slay you.

Luk 13:17-19. And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it.? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

You get a little grace tonight; let that Divine Man take but a grain of the mustard seed of his grace, and drop it into your heart, which he will have prepared like a garden, and there is no telling what will come of it. That sigh, that tear, that wish, will grow into holiness of life and zeal of conduct. It may be but very little in its beginning, but it will grow. Both good and evil begin with very small eggs, but they grow into great things.

Luk 13:20. And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

Now take the bad side, and see how the kingdom of God may be perverted and injured by evil influences.

Luk 13:21. It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

That woman of Rome has hidden her leaven in the church, and it has leavened the whole; and now the woman of intellect has put her leaven into the church. Conceited self-invention of new doctrines, perversion of the simplicity of the gospel, that kind of leaven has been hidden in the meal of the church, and it is leavening the whole. God help us to keep out the leaven both of Romanism and of Rationalism!

Luk 13:22. And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

His face was toward the cross, he was working his passage to his sacrifice, and preaching his way to that place where he should complete our redemption. This is a wonderful picture of Christ: "teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem."

Luk 13:23. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved?

What business is that of ours? Our business is far more practical, to be saved ourselves, and to endeavor to be the means of saving others. Jesus did not answer the question; but he did what was better.

Luk 13:23-24. And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

You can get into the broad road without striving; but you must "strive to enter in at the strait gate." Strive for that which requires self-denial, that which humbles you, that which goes against the grain, that which is not according to human nature. Do not imagine that grace is to be had while you are half asleep, and that heaven is to be gained on a feather bed. Strive, strive, for many will seek in vain to enter. Seeking is not enough; it must come to a holy violence: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." When will that be? That will be when you are in another state.

Luk 13:25. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath, shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us;

They will be very respectful; they will call him, "Lord." They will be very earnest; they will pray, "Lord, Lord." They will be very simple and very honest in their request: "Open unto us." They will be very personal: "Open unto us." Such will the prayers of the ungodly be when they wake up to the fact that they are shut out of heaven.

Luk 13:25-26. And he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

They came to the communion-table. They used to hear sermons indoors and out of doors. "Thou hast taught in our streets."

Luk 13:27. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

They shall be judged by their works. If they were workers of iniquity, it proved that they were unrenewed and unsaved. Christ will not

endure their company, but will say to them, "Depart from me."

Luk 13:28. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

You who thought that you had a share in the kingdom of God, and were, by birth, the natural heirs of it: "You yourselves thrust out."

Luk 13:29-30. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

The least likely to be saved shall be saved; the blackest sinners, the vilest outcasts, the grossest unbelievers, shall be brought to repentance and faith, and shall be saved; while those who were first in privileges, children of godly parents, professors of religion, those who appeared in every way likely to be saved first, will be left to the last, and be shut out of the kingdom of God, never to enter. God grant, in his infinite mercy, that nobody in the Tabernacle tonight may be of that unhappy number! Amen.

Luk 13:10-17. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

His adversaries might well be ashamed, and the people might well rejoice at such a display of his power and mercy; but the point I want you to notice is that the poor woman was set at liberty by the Lord Jesus on the Sabbath-day. There is another Sabbath miracle recorded in the next chapter. (See Luk 14:1-6)

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:33-36; Luk 6:6-11; Luk 13:10-17; Luk 14:1-6; Joh 5:1-9; ND 9:1-14.

Luk 13:10-12. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath, And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, With that quick eye of his which was always in sympathy with his audience.

Luk 13:12-14. He called her to him, and said unto her, Woman thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people,

In what a cold-blooded, heartless manner he must have said it, you may well imagine. For a man not to rejoice when he saw his poor fellow-creature thus healed, shows that he must have been destitute of much milk of human kindness, and that bigotry had dried up his soul.

Luk 13:14. There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. He did not dare to speak to Christ. I suppose the majesty of Christ's manner overawed him, so he struck at the people directly, and at Christ through them. Now our Lord did not go sideways to work when he replied to him.

Luk 13:15-17. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

The Jews had reduced the Sabbath to a day of idleness and luxury. The only thing they forbade themselves was the doing of anything. Now the Sabbath was never intended to be spent in idleness and luxury. It should be spent in the worship of God; and works of mercy and works of piety make the Sabbath Day holy, instead of being contrary to its demands. And our Saviour, by giving rest to that poor burdened woman, was in truth, making Sabbath in her body and in her soul.

Luk 13:18-19. Then said he Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard

seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree: and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

A little grace grows and becomes great grace. If thou hast at present but little faith, be thankful for that little. Bring it to Christ; let it feed upon him; and thy mustard seed will grow till it becomes a tree. The same is true of the gospel throughout the world. We need never be afraid because we happen to be few in number. If we have got the truth, the truth will live; and if the truth be small as the mustard seed, there is life in it — vitality in it, and it is sure to grow ere long. We must not be afraid to be in the minority. Majorities are not always right. Are they ever? Perhaps sometimes.

Luk 13:20-21. And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Some read this as a parable to set forth the power of evil, and I do not doubt that it does set it forth. At the same time it sets forth the power of good, too, for it is put side by side with the other as the likeness of the kingdom of God. And truth in the soul does work, and ferment, and permeate the entire nature, if it be placed there.

Luk 13:22-23. And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved?

That is a question that I have heard a great many times. What is the fascination that makes men so fond of asking it? I do think that some ask it as if they almost hoped that there would be few. If they do not go to our Ebenezer or Rehoboth, what can become of them? Surely you cannot expect that there should be any good come to those that do not frequent Salem and Enod. What must they hope? In that spirit the question is often asked; but, brethren, may God lift us up above that spirit, and make us desire that there should be multitudes saved. I suppose that one of the surprises of heaven will be to see vastly many more there than we ever dreamt would reach that place. Jesus Christ gave a very practical answer. It was no answer, and yet was the best of answers.

Luk 13:23. And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Make a push for it; agonize for it; for many will seek — not strive, but merely seek. Or, to put another meaning into it, strive now to enter in at the strait gate, for many will be unable, when it is too late; and that, doubtless, is the sense of the passage.

Luk 13:11-12. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. Observe the word “Behold” here. Sometimes, in old books, they used to put a hand in the margin to call attention to something special in the text, so, this word seems as though nobody in the synagogue was worthy of such special notice as the most forlorn and desolate individual there: “a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and who bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.” It was to be a happy sabbath for her, though she did not know it. She used to go to the synagogue, though it must have been painful for her to be present; possibly, she could not even see the minister, she was so “bowed together.” It must have been a great surprise to her when the Saviour called her to him, and said to her, “Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.”

Luk 13:13. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately he was made straight, and glorified God.

I should think she did. We have no record of what she said; she may have merely cried out, “Hallelujah”; but the very look of her, her streaming eyes filled with gratitude, her face beaming with delight, all tended to glorify God. Even if she had said nothing, her being made straight would of itself have glorified God; and, just as that once crooked woman could glorify God, so can a guilty sinner, crushed and helpless, glorify God. It was when Christ’s hands were laid upon her that she was made straight. Oh, that he would lay his hands on some of you! May this be to you the saving Sabbath of the year, that God may be glorified in you.

Luk 13:14. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation,

Poor soul! Surely he was more crooked than the infirm woman was: but, alas! he did not get healed.

Luk 13:14. Because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

The Lord then answered him; and what an answer it was!

Luk 13:15-17. The Lord thou answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering. And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day! And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. His reply was unanswerable.

Luke 13:16 "... whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years."

As in Job's case there was a limit, so was there here. Satan had bound this woman, but he had not killed her. He might bend her toward the grave, but he could not bend her into it. He might make her droop over till she was bent double, but he could not take away her poor feeble life. With all his infernal craft he could not make her die before her time. Moreover, she was still a woman, and he could not make a beast of her, notwithstanding that she was thus bowed down in the form of a brute. Even so the devil cannot destroy you, O child of God. He can smite you, but he cannot slay you.

Luk 13:18. Then said he,

They were in a right frame for hearing, having been rendered attentive by their admiration for his miraculous work and his wondrous word.

Luk 13:18-22. Unto what is the kingdom of God like, and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it, and again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Practically, that is what he was always doing, "journeying toward Jerusalem," toward that great climax of his life, his substitutionary death upon the cross of Calvary.

Luk 13:23. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved?

That is a question that many have asked, and some have vainly tried to answer. What did Jesus reply?

Luk 13:23-24. And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate:

Instead of gratifying idle curiosity, he excites to diligence in seeking entrance into the narrow way.

Luk 13:24. For many, say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

They will only seek, not strive, to enter in. There will also come, in the future, a time when they may seek as they will, and strive as they will, to enter in but it will be too late then. Once having passed into another world, there will be no hope for any seeker or striver.

Luk 13:25. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, —

They do not like to go away, they are reluctant to meet their final doom. Oh, that they had been wise enough to cry for mercy when it was to be had! Now they stand, and begin to knock; and more than that, they begin to plead.

Luk 13:25. Saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us;

All this earnestness, all this deference, all this reverence have come too late.

Luk 13:25-26. And he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

"We were regular hearers of the Word; we observed all the usual forms of religion, we even went to the communion table."

Luk 13:27-28. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

Driven away, yet they could see the saintly ones there, and see their own kith and kin there, for they were Jews, and they could see.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets” there, but they themselves were cast out; and what was worse for them:

Luk 13:29. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

Rank outsiders, far off heathen, outrageous sinners, harlots; “they shall come,” and repent, and “sit down in the kingdom of God,” and this shall cut to the quick those who were hearers of the Word, but who perished because they were workers of iniquity.

Luk 13:30. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

Many who, today, seem to be unlikely to be converted, those who are “last” in character, will yet be “first” in repentance; and there who are “first” in privileges, and even in hopefulness, who will be “last” in the great day of account. May we take home to our hearts this solemn warning!

Luk 13:31. The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

Think of the Pharisees being concerned about Christ’s life! What an affectation of regard! Yet it was only affectation. We must always be on our guard against the foes of God even when they speak most fairly; indeed, it is their agreeable, affectionate words that we have most cause to dread.

Luk 13:32. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox,

Jesus called Herod a fox because he wanted to get Christ out of his territory without having the opprobrium of driving him away. So he sent this roundabout message to try to make a coward of the Lord, and to get him to go off on his own account.

Luk 13:32. Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

That is, “I shall stay my full time here, while I have work to do, I shall do it, and I am not going away until it is finished. I am not afraid of Herod threatening to kill me, for I am immortal till my work is done.” He is not even flurried, or put about by such a message as that. Besides when men mean to bite, they do not usually bark; and if Herod had meant to kill Christ just then, he would not have told him what he was going to do.

Luk 13:33. Nevertheless I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

What a sad thing for Christ to have to say! So many holy men had been murdered in Jerusalem that he roughly put it as being true, in the main, that all the prophets were martyred there, the exceptions only proving the rule.

Luk 13:34. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killed the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

There was their weakness, they were like a brood of chickens; there was his power to protect them, like a hen gathers her brood under her wings; yet there was their infatuation, that they would rather perish than come and be sheltered beneath his almighty wings: “and ye would not.”

Luk 13:35. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

There will be no true glory for Jerusalem until the Jews are converted; there will be no return of Christ to that royal city until they shall welcome him with louder hosannas than they gave when he rode in triumph through the streets, and entered into the temple. The Lord grant that we may never reject Christ! Let us run, even now, like little chicks, and hide beneath the wings of the Eternal.

Luk 13:18. Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

For men learn much by resemblances, and the things which are seen are frequently helpful to us in seeking to set forth the things which are not seen. Knowing that God is one in all that he has done, we are often able to learn from one part of his works to understand another. What, then, is God’s kingdom like? Is it like a mighty army marching with banners and trumpets? No. Is it like the raging sea, rolling onwards and sweeping everything before it? Not so; at all events, it is not so visibly.

Luk 13:19. It is like a grain of mustard seed,—

You can hardly see it; you can, however, taste it. Try it, and you shall find it pungent enough; but it is so small that you may easily pass it by: “It is like a grain of mustard seed,”

Luk 13:19. Which a man took, and cast into his garden;

It must be sown in prepared soil; and there is “a man” who knows how to cast it so that it shall fall where it will live, and where it will grow.

Luk 13:19. And it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

“The fowls of the air,” that might once have eaten it, “lodged in the branches of it.” See, in this emblem, an illustration of the growth of the kingdom of God, the vitality of the truth of God, the energy with which, from a small beginning, God’s kingdom advances to a great ending. Have you this mustard seed in your heart? It may seem a very little thing even to yourself; others may scarcely perceive it yet; but let it alone, and it will grow. Yet it will not grow without watering. Seeds may lie long in the ground, but they will not sprout until the rain has fallen to moisten the earth. Pray God to send showers of blessing upon your soul tonight, so that, even if you have no more than a grain of mustard seed in your heart, it may begin to grow. Is the grain of mustard seed sending up its shoot above the ground? Then pray God that it may grow yet more till it shall not only be just visible, but shall be so prominent that it must be seen, that those who once hated it will be compelled to see it, and to wonder at it as they behold the birds of the air coming and lodging in its branches. I pray that, in many hearts here, the grace of God may not long continue to be a small thing, but that it may advance to tree-like stature, till you shall yield comfort to fifties and hundreds, and many of you shall be like some of the trees in this great city and its suburbs. Did you ever notice them, at nightfall, when all the sparrows of the street come and lodge in the branches, and merrily twitter ere they go to their rest? There are some Christians like those trees; they have hearts so big, and they do for Christ’s service so much, that they harbour hundreds of poor little birds of the air that else would hardly know where to go for shelter. God make us such Christians that we shall be a blessing to multitudes all around us!

Luk 13:20-21. And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Some expositors think that this is a picture of the kingdom of the devil, but it does not say so. If our Lord had meant to represent the power of evil, he would have given us some intimation of that kind, but he has given us none. He means to describe exactly what he had described before, for he says, “Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?” The leaven is buried, as it were: “hid in three measures of meal;” it is lost, covered up. Let it alone; by the force that is within itself it begins to work its way in the meal, and it leavens all around it until, at last, the whole three measures of meal are permeated by it, and made to feel and own its power. So is it with the grace of God where it is placed within a human heart, and so is it with the kingdom of God wherever its influence is exerted among the sons of men.

Luk 13:22-23. And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved?

Oh, that question! Have you never asked it yourself? Have you never heard it asked? And there are some people who are very pleased when the answer is, “Yes, very few indeed will be saved; and they all go to Salem, or Zoar, or Rehoboth, or little Bethel.” There are some who are not quite certain whether all who go even there will be saved; they seem to delight to cut and pare down to the very lowest the number of those who will be saved. With such a spirit as that, I trust we do not sympathize for a moment. Certainly, our Lord does not; listen to his reply to the question, “Lord, are there few that be saved?”

23; 24. And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

For your own part, take it for granted that there will be so few that ever will enter at all that you will have to push for it to get through the gate: “Strive to enter in at the narrow gate.” If you are not narrow in your own mind,— and it is a pity that you should be,— yet still recollect that the gate into heaven is narrow, and make up your mind that there is no getting through it except with many a push and many a squeeze.

Luk 13:25-26. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

See; there are some men who will not think of going to heaven till it is too late; and then, when they get to heaven's gate, and find it shut, they will begin to plead for admittance though they pleaded not for it before. When they might have had the blessing, they would not have it; and when they cannot have it, then they grow earnest in crying for it.

Luk 13:27-28. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

Ejected, violently driven away, as those who are abhorrent in God's sight because you despised his mercy.

Luk 13:29-34. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last. The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

What a terrible contrast! "I would,.... and ye would not." May the Lord Jesus never have to say that to any of us!

Luke 14

Luke 14:1-6. And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? And they could not answer him again to these things.

Christ's question was unanswerable unless they wished to condemn themselves. Now I want you kindly to turn to the next evangelist, in whose Gospel you will find the record of the fifth miracle which our Saviour wrought on the Sabbath-day. (See Joh 5:1-9)

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:33-36; Luk 6:6-11; Luk 13:10-17; Luk 14:1-6; Joh 5:1-9; ND 9:1-14.

Luk 14:7. And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; — This parable was by far the best part of the entertainment of the day: —

Luk 14:7-9. Saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be hidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

For, of course, the next room is full, and the next, and the only vacant seat, when the feast has begun, will probably be in the very lowest room of the house.

Luk 14:10. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

Note that our Saviour was not just then talking to his disciples, or else he would have given more spiritual reasons for his advice; but, speaking to the people who were gathered as guests at the Pharisee's house, he appealed to them with an argument suitable to themselves. We may, however, extract the marrow from this bone. Let us not covet the highest place; let us not desire honour among men. In the Church of God the way upward is downward. He that will do the lowest work shall have the highest honour. Our Master washed his disciples' feet, and we are never more honoured than when we are permitted to imitate his example.

Luk 14:11. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

There is a conspiracy of heaven and earth and hell to put down proud men, neither good nor bad, the highest nor the lowest, can endure those who are self-exalted; but if you are willing to take your right place, which is probably the lowest, you shall soon find honour in the midst of your brethren.

Luk 14:12. Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbor; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

Our Saviour, you see, keeps to one line of instruction. It was a feast, so he used the feast to teach another lesson. It is always well, when men's minds are running in a certain direction, to make use of that particular current. When a feast is uppermost in the minds of men, it is no use starting another subject. So the Saviour rides upon the back of the banquet, making it to be his steed. Note his advice to his host: "Try to avoid doing that for which you will be recompensed. If you are rewarded for it the transaction is over; but if not, then it stands recorded in the book of God, and it will be recompensed to you in the great day of account."

Luk 14:13-14. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

It should be your ambition to have something set down to your credit "at the resurrection of the just." If you do someone a kindness with a view to gaining gratitude, you will probably be disappointed; and even if you should succeed, what is the gratitude worth? You have burned your firework, you have seen the brief blaze, and there is an end of it. But if you get no present return for your holy charity, so much the better for you.

Luk 14:15-16. And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Then said he unto him, —

As if to prove what a privilege it is to be permitted to "eat bread" there, and that the persons who appear most likely to do so will never taste of it and that the most unlikely persons will be brought into it, Jesus "said unto him," —

Luk 14:16-17. A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

They had accepted the invitation, so they were pledged to be present but, in the meantime, they had changed their minds with regard to their intended host, and they were unwilling to grace his feast.

Luk 14:18. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

Yet it was supper time, and people do not generally go to see pieces of ground at night; and if the man had bought the land he ought to have seen it before he bought it. People do not generally buy land without looking at it. A bad excuse is worse than none; and this is one of those excuses which will not hold water for a minute.

Luk 14:19. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

He pretended that he had bought five yoke of oxen without proving them, and that he wanted to prove them after he had bought them, when, of course, he could not cancel the bargain: a likely story! But, when men want to make an excuse, and they have no truth to raw as the raw material, they can always make one out of a lie.

Luk 14:20. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

This man did not ask to be excused; he had married a wife, so that settled the matter, of course he could not go to the feast.

Luk 14:21. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things.

Every true servant of Christ should go to his Lord, and tell him what reception his Master's message has had. After service, we sometimes have an enquirers' meeting; but after every sermon there ought to be a meeting of the servant with his Lord to tell the result of the errand on which he has been sent. Sometimes, as in this case, it will be a very painful meeting, as the servant tells how his Master's message has been despised, and his invitation rejected.

Luk 14:21. When the master of the house being angry —

Notice what the Lord does even when he is angry, he just invents some new way of showing mercy to men: "The master of the

house being angry” —

Luk 14:21. Said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

Happy anger that explodes in blessing! The justly angry master turns away from the bidden ones who had insulted him, and sends for those who had not hitherto been bidden, that they might come to the feast.

Luk 14:22. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

They fetched in all the poor people, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind whom they could find, it was a great gathering, and a strange gathering, yet there was still room for more guests at the banquet.

Luke 14:22 “Yet there is room.”

We have a word of warning to say to you. There is room in the precious blood of Christ. There is room at the gospel feast. There is room in the church on earth. There is room in heaven. But if you will not occupy this room, I must solemnly tell you that there is room in hell! There may hardly be prisons enough for all the criminals on earth, but there is room for them in hell. There are nations that forget God, there are myriads that hate him, there are millions that neglect his great salvation. But there is room for them all in hell if they will not repent and believe the gospel.

Luk 14:23. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

“Bring in highway-men and hedge-birds, those that have no place whereon to lay their heads; fetch them in by force if necessary, that my house may be filled.”

Luk 14:24. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

They were invited, yet they would not come; but others shall come, and fill the tables, and the great feast shall be furnished with guests. No provisions of mercy will ever be wasted. If you who are the sons and daughters of godly parents, or you who are the regular hearers of the Word, will not have Christ, then others shall. If you hear, but hear in vain, then the rank outsiders shall be brought in, and they shall feed upon the blessed provisions of the infinite mercy of God, and God shall be glorified; but terrible will be your doom when the great Giver of the gospel feast says concerning you and those like you, “None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.”

Luk 14:25. And there went great multitudes with him:

During at least a part of his earthly ministry, Christ was very popular. The people crowded to his feet, and they were willing to make him a king; but you must have observed that he was always faithful in speaking to the populace, he did not flatter them. He dealt in the same fashion also with those who professed to be his followers. He winnowed the heap that was laid upon the floor, and drove away the chaff from the midst of the wheat.

Luk 14:25-26. And he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Do not misunderstand this passage. Our Lord does not use the word “hate” in our common acceptation of the term, for no man would hate his own life; but he means that the love of all these must be secondary to the love we bear to him. Compared with our love to our Lord, all lower love must be more like hate. We must be willing to give up everything — to give up even ourselves — our entire selves — to him, for Christ will have all or nothing. He will never divide the human heart with any rival. If we profess to serve him, we must have him for our only Master, and not attempt to serve two masters. I fear that this truth greatly needs to be enforced nowadays, for we have numbers of so-called Christians, who are worldlings first, and then Christians afterwards. We have a great many professors who might be accurately described by the words of a little girl concerning her father. When someone asked her, “Is your father a Christian?” she replied, “Yes, but he has not worked much at it lately.” There are plenty of that sort. Christianity is their trade, their business, their profession; but they have not worked much at it lately, they carry it on very slightly indeed. Let it not be so with us; if we would be followers of Christ, our whole hearts must be his.

Luke 14:26 “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother. ...”

Sometimes we think we could say with St. Jerome, “If Christ should bid me go this way, and my mother did hang about my neck to

draw me another, and my father were in my way, bowing at my knees with tears entreating me not to go, and my children plucking at my skirts should seek to pull me the other way, I must unclasp my mother, I must push to the very ground my father, and put aside my children, for I must follow Christ.”

Luk 14:27. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

If there is any cross-bearing involved in Christianity, — such as the cross of holy living, or the cross of believing old-fashioned doctrines, and not being “abreast of the times,” — if there is any sort of cross which is involved in the conscientious discharge of our duty as followers of Christ, we must bear it, or else we cannot be his disciples. Our Lord’s words are very clear and explicit: “ ‘And whosoever doth not bear his cross,’ — be he who he may, whatever pretensions or professions he may make, — if he does not bear his cross, ‘and come after me, cannot be my disciple.’ “

Luk 14:28-30. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

Do you not think that there are a great many towers of that kind about in our day? I mean, unfinished Christian characters, persons who profess to be followers of Christ, but are not. They just exhibit to you their own shortcomings; they are people with good intentions, who did make some attempt to follow Jesus; but, since it involved too much self-denial, they were not able to go that length, so they turned back, and walked no more with him. They began to build a tower, but never finished it. May God, in his mercy, prevent you and me becoming a laughing-stock to all eternity! I believe that, in the last great day, and forever, those persons, who knew enough about the gospel to wish to be Christians, and who were somewhat actuated by right motives, but yet who never went so far as to give up their hearts to Christ, will stand forth as monuments of their own folly and even the demons in hell will point at them, and say, “These men began to build, and were not able to finish.” Such persons will be unable to answer that contemptuous sneer. If you have conscience enough to begin to follow Christ, even reason itself requires you to go the whole length. If you know that it is right for you to do so, why do you not go through with it? If you are sufficiently convinced of its rightness to go as far as you do, why not go still farther? God grant that you may! Better never begin to build than to commence without having counted the cost, and then to find that you have not sufficient to finish.

Luk 14:31-32. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

If you cannot fight the world, the flesh, and the devil, — if there is no power that can help you to do it, or if you are not willing to be helped by the only power that can help you, — if you will not surrender yourself to Christ that he may baffle all the hosts of the adversary, then it is of no use for you to begin the war.

Luk 14:33. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

In Christ’s days, and afterwards, discipleship usually involved the absolute giving up of everything that his followers had, for those were times of persecution; and if such seasons should come to us, we must have such love to Christ that, for his sake, we could forsake all that we have; otherwise we cannot be his disciples.

Luk 14:34. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

Christianity is good; but if the very life has gone out of it, what can you do with it? A dead professor is the most corrupt thing under heaven. Some there are who think that God’s salt can lose its savor, and yet get it back again. I remember one who told me that he knew a person who had been born again four times. That doctrine of re-re-re-regeneration is one that I have never found in the Word of God. I believe that true regeneration never fails to take effect, and that it never loses that effect. It begets within the soul a life that cannot die; but, if that life could die, it could never be brought back again. The apostle Paul puts this matter beyond dispute in Heb 6:4-6 : “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

Luk 14:35. It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out.

A dead profession of religion is utterly useless; and if it could be possible that a man should be really quickened by the Spirit of God, and yet that the new life should depart from him, he would be in a hopeless case indeed.

Luk 14:35. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Let all of us give good heed to this injunction, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

Luke 15

This is a chapter that needs no explanation; it carries its key within itself, and the experience of every child of God is the best exposition of it. The three parables recorded here set forth the work of saving grace in different aspects.

Luk 15:1-2. Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

The Pharisees and scribes formed the outside ring of Christ's hearers, but the inner circle consisted of the guilty, the heavy-laden, and the lowly. They pressed as near to Christ as they could, that they might catch his every word; and besides, there was an attractiveness about his manner that drew them towards him. His mercy attracted their misery. They wanted him, and he desired them; they were thus well met. There will be an inner circle tonight when the gospel is preached, and it will not consist of the self-righteous. They that are full will not press to the table on which the gospel feast is spread, the hungry will be found nearest to the heavenly provision.

Luk 15:3. And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

There are three parables here; but, inasmuch as it is called "this parable", it is really only one. It is a picture in three panels, representing the same scene from different points of view.

Luke 15:3 "And he spake this parable unto them, saying. ..."

The doctrine of free will has not a single specimen to show to prove itself. There is not a sheep in all the flock that came back to the shepherd unsought. There is not a single piece of money which leaped again into the woman's purse; she swept the house to find it. There is not even a single prodigal son in the entire family who did ever say, "I will arise, and go unto my Father" till first the Father's grace, veiling itself in the afflicting providence of a mighty famine, had taught the prodigal the miserable results of sin.

Luke 15:4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them. ..."

To be lost to Christ may seem to you who are careless and thoughtless a trifling matter. If the wandering sheep could have spoken, it might have said, "I do not want to belong to the shepherd. I know that he values me, and that he is seeking me because I am his, but I do not care about that." No, poor sheep, but if you had been the shepherd, you would have cared. And, poor sinner, if you did but know even a little of what Christ feels, you also would begin to care about your own soul.—

Luk 15:4. What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

It has a new importance in his eyes, for it is lost. Before, it was only one of a hundred in the fold; but now it is one distinct and separate from all the rest, and the shepherd's thought is fixed upon it.

Luk 15:5-6. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

No doubt he was glad that the other sheep were not lost; but that joy was, for a while, quite eclipsed in the more striking and vivid joy over the one which had been lost.

Luk 15:7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

If such there be, and there are many who think that they belong to this class, they bring no joy to the great Shepherd; but you who have had to mourn over your lost estate set the bells of heaven ringing with a new melody when you are recovered by the great Redeemer. The first of these three parables may he said to represent salvation in reference to the work of the Son of God as the

great Seeker and Saver of the souls of men. In the second, we have a representation of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church of God.

Luk 15:8. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

Her thoughts were all concerning that one lost piece. It had not more intrinsic value than the rest, but being lost it called off her attention from the other nine. She valued it, and for the hope of finding it she lighted a candle, swept the house, and sought diligently till she found it. This is a picture of the Holy Spirit's work in seeking for lost souls. They bear the King's impress, they are coins of the realm. This woman knew that the silver coin was not far away, so she swept the house, and sought diligently, using all her eyes, devoting all her time to this one object, quitting all other avocations until she found it.

Luk 15:9. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

She might never have called them together to rejoice that she had ten pieces of silver, she might even have hidden them away; and the joy she had in them might have been only her own, a solitary joy; but now that one piece had been lost, and had been found again, she says, "Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost."

Luk 15:10. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Not joy among the angels, as some read it, though no doubt that is a truth; but "joy in the presence of the angels of God;" and what can that mean but that God himself rejoices, and rejoices so that angels perceive it; and no doubt they then join in the delight? But all this points out that it is the lost one that is the great object of consideration, that out of any congregation where the gospel is preached, it is the lost one who is the most important person in the whole place. In the next verses, we get the Father's part in the work of the recovery of the wanderer.

Luke 15:10 "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God. ..."

We often say of the angels that they rejoice over one sinner that repents. I doubt not that they do, but the Bible does not say so. The Bible says, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." What means the presence of the angels? Why, that the angels see the joy of Christ when sinners repent. Hear them say to one another, "Behold, the Father's face! How he rejoices! Gaze on the countenance of the Son! What a heaven of delight shines in those eyes of his! Jesus wept for these sinners, but now he rejoices over them."

Luk 15:11-13. And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.

And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. His heart was far away when he asked his father to give him his portion; and now his body is far away as he goes into the outward wandering which follows after the inner wandering.

Luk 15:14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land;

There generally does arise "a mighty famine" in such cases. Famines and other miseries are God's messengers, which he sends after his wandering children.

Luk 15:14. And he began to be in want.

This was a new sensation to him; he had never known it when he was at home. He did not know it in his first boisterous days away from his father's house, but now "he began to be in want."

Luk 15:16. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

Perhaps he did not want to employ him, but said that he would give him that occupation if he cared to accept it. It was small pay, very dishonouring work to a Jew, not fit employment for the son of a nobleman; yet "half a loaf is better than no bread," so he took it, though even the half loaf must have been a very small one.

Luk 15:16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. Such a thing as generosity was not known in that country. His companions could share his riches when he was living riotously, but they will not share their riches now that he is in his poverty.

Luk 15:17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!
"My father's day-labourers have bread enough and to spare, yet I, his child, perish with hunger."

Luk 15:18-19. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.
You notice that this last part of the prayer he never did pray; for it was stopped by his father's love. There was a legalism about it naturally suggested by his own despair, but it was not such as his father would tolerate.

Luk 15:20-21. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.
There comes an interruption there; the kiss upon his lips stops the rest of the prayer, which he had prepared, and now the father declares his will concerning the wanderer.

Luke 15:20 "His father saw him, and had compassion, and ran."

The prodigal son was resolved to come, yet he was half-afraid. But we read that his father ran. Slow are the steps of repentance, but swift are the feet of forgiveness. God can run where we can scarcely limp, and if we are limping toward him, he will run toward us. Though the father was out of breath, he was not out of love.

Luke 15:20 "His father ... ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

If ever there was a soul that knew itself to be far off from God, I was that soul. And yet in a moment, no sooner had I turned my eyes to Jesus crucified, than I felt my perfect reconciliation with God. I knew my sins to be forgiven. There was no time for getting out of my heavenly Father's way. It was done, and done in an instant. And in my case at least, he ran and fell on my neck to kiss me.

Luk 15:22-24. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.
I have never read that they left off being merry, for the conversion of a soul is enough to make eternal joy in the hearts of the righteous.

Luke 15:24 "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

1843We are happy when God blesses us, but not so happy as God is. We are glad when we are pardoned, but he that pardons us is gladder still. The prodigal going back to his home was very happy, but not so delighted as his father, who could say, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." The father's heart was by far the larger heart, so that it could hold more joy

Luk 15:26; Luk 15:26. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.
This was a new thing, and apparently a thing that he did not care much about. How had it come to pass that there was such noise, such joy?

Luk 15:27-28. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and treated him.
I hardly know which to admire most, the love of the father when he fell upon the neck of the prodigal, or the love of the father when he went out to talk with his elder son: "Therefore came his father out, and treated him." Oh, our God is very good to us when we give way to naughty tempers! If we begin to think that we are very holy people, that we have been long the servants of God, and that

there ought to be some little fuss made over us as well as over great sinners that come into the church, then our Father is very gentle, and he comes out and entreats us.

Luk 15:29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

"I have had no banquets. I have kept at home, a patient worker, and have had no extraordinary joys." I know some Christian workers who are very much in this condition. They keep on and on and on in holy service, and they do well; but they seldom have great entertainments of high joy and unspeakable delight. It is their own fault, and it is a thousand pities that they do not have them, for they might have them if they would. There is a tendency to grow so absorbed in service, like Martha, that we are cumbered by it; and we do not have the joy of Mary in communion at the Master's feet. I am sure that this elder son was out of fellowship with his father, or else he would not have talked as he did. We are all apt to get into such a condition. See to it, ye who work for Jesus, that it is not so with you. Then the elder brother went on to say,^{3/4}

Luk 15:30. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. I do not read that the prodigal had devoured his father's living with harlots; that is the elder brother's version of it. I dare say that it was true, but it is always a pity to give the roughest interpretation to things. He had spent his substance "in riotous living." When we are cross, we generally use the ugliest words we can; we may think that we are speaking forcibly, but indeed we are speaking naughtily, and not as our Father would have us speak.

Luk 15:31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

Oh, what a word was that! How it reminds Christians of their privileges, if they would but appropriate them! It is yours, beloved, to live always with your God, and to know that all that he has is yours. You ought to live in a perpetual festival; for you there should be one joyful Christmastide that lasts from the beginning of the year to the end of it: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

Luk 15:32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

It was the fit thing, and the proper thing, and the right thing, that there should be extraordinary joy over a returning sinner. There ought to be, there must be, there shall be, special music and dancing over sinners saved by the grace of God. The Lord give us some such tonight, and make us glad over them! Amen.

Luke 15:32 "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad."

The father in the parable was glad when his prodigal son was found. But he would have been gladder still had a brother found him.

Luk 15:1. Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

However sunken they might be, they knew their best Friend; they recognized their Benefactor, so they gathered around him. They knew who it was that smiled upon them, and who would fain uplift them; so they came clustering around him, like bees fly to the flowers: "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him."

Luk 15:2. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

Where bees come, wasps often come, too. This murmuring of the Pharisees and scribes was after their nature; they were so proud, so wrapped up in themselves, they thought so contemptuously of everybody else, that they dared even to despise him whose shoe's latchet they were not worthy to unloose. "This man," said they, "receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

Luk 15:3. And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

This is really a picture in three panels,^{3/4}a parable with three variations.

Luk 15:4-7. What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just

persons, which need no repentance.

There, no doubt, the Saviour looked at the Pharisees, who, though they did need repentance, yet thought they did not. Little or no joy did they ever bring to him; his heart never leaped with delight over them. Good as they thought themselves to be, they did not yield him so much joy as these poor publicans and sinners would when he had found them; and he was bent on doing that. Now, beloved, how much is a man better than a sheep? And if a shepherd will leave all his ease and comfort, to hunt after one stray sheep, how ought you and I, after the example of the Son of man, to be ready for any service, or any self-denial, by which we, too, in our poor measure may seek and save the lost! Now we have the second panel of the picture

Luk 15:8-10. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and search diligently till she find it And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, Saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Did the woman rejoice at finding her piece of silver, that she had lost, and shall not God much more rejoice over an inestimably precious human soul, which had been lost, but which, through grace, is found again? Ah, yes! there is joy in heaven, there is joy in all heavenly hearts, there is joy in all who are the friends of Christ, when lost ones are found! There was another quiet stroke at the Pharisees and scribes, who were proved not to be the friends of the soul-seeking Saviour, because they did not rejoice with him over those whom he had found. If they had been at all like the angels in heaven, as they thought they were, they would have been glad that the Lord Jesus Christ had come to seek and to find the lost. Then came the third most touching panel of the picture,^{3/4}perhaps the best beloved of all the parables,^{3/4}one which, like a key, fits the wards of the human heart, and many a time has opened the heart

Luk 15:11-13. And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that faileth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

It is clear that his heart had gone away from his father before he went away himself. He would not have wished to take from his father his portion of goods, or to be independent of his father, if he had not felt a spirit of alienation; and, therefore, what his father did developed the latent evil; just as, oftentimes, the loving mercy of God brings to the surface the concealed sin which is in man all the while; and then he sins the more openly. It is a grievous thing that even divine love should lead us to sin;^{3/4}not of itself, but because of our evil nature, just as the sun shines, not that he may make the weeds to grow, or that he may help to lift into the air noxious effluvia. With goodwill itself as its only motive, ill may come even of the pure sunlight.

Luk 15:14-15. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

A very degrading employment for him as a Jew;^{3/4}perhaps, however, the best that the citizen of that country could do for him, for there was a famine in the land; and when men are all pinched with hunger, it is not much that one can do for another. And what can one poor sinner do for another? Even though he be called a priest, and puts on flue apparel, yet what can he do for his fellow-sinner?

Luk 15:16-17. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How 'many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

"I, his son, perish with hunger, when there is not only enough in my father's house for his children, but for his hirelings, too; ay, and some to spare after that." "Bread enough and to spare." This was the thought, which drew the prodigal home, and it ought to draw sinners to Christ. There is, in the gospel, "bread enough' and to spare." You know how some would, if they could, contract the provisions of grace; and make it out that there is bread enough, but they say that if there is anything to spare, it will be a waste. Why, it is that "spare" bread that is God's bait to catch poor souls with when they are cast down; "for," say they, "if it is to spare, then, even if my father be angry with me, he will not deny me the spare bread for which there is no use, so I may well go, and ask for a portion of it."

Luk 15:18-20. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

Oh, the speed of divine love! There were delays with the son, but there were no delays with the father. At the first glance, the father's

heart is made up, and he runs to meet his returning child. And what a welcome he gives him! He “kissed him much,” is the right rendering. Truly, this was prodigal love for the prodigal son.

Luk 15:21-22. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father—Stopping him short, and for ever obliterating the rest of the prayer, so that he never had time to utter it, seeing that it was too legal to be permitted by his father’s love: “But the father”^{3/4}

Luk 15:22-25. Said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field:

At work, like the good son that he was.

Luk 15:25. And as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

Which he did not often hear, for he was of a gloomy spirit, and there had not been cause for much rejoicing lately.

Luk 15:26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

“What are you all up to in making such a noise? What new thing has happened to our orderly household to make it thus full of roistering and noisy gladness?”

Luk 15:27-28. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry,

It did not seem to him right that one, who had acted so badly, should be thus honoured: “He was angry,”^{3/4}

Luk 15:28. And would not go in:

He did not believe in revivals, so he would not attend them; he did not believe in many being converted, especially if they had been great sinners; he would have nothing to do with them.

Luk 15:28. Therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

Oh, the goodness of the father, not only in receiving the returning prodigal, but in entreating this indignant and erring son, for he was greatly erring in this matter, and was not showing the true spirit of a son.

Luk 15:29-30. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed/or him the fatted calf.

“I am a consistent Christian; I have maintained the excellence of my moral character. I have tried to be orthodox, and attentive to all religious duties. Thou knowest that it is so; yet I seldom have any joy in my religion. ‘Thou never gavest me a kid.’ I go trembling and mourning all my days. I get very little delight out of my religion; yet here is one just converted, and all this fuss is made over him; and he is rejoicing, too. Thou feasted him with the best fatted calf. He is as glad as glad can be, and everybody is glad about him; and nobody seems to take much notice of me. I go on my steady quiet course, and I have never caused thee such grief as this thy son has done.”

Luk 15:31. And he said unto him

So beautifully,

Luk 15:31. Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

And that is what the Lord seems to say to the believer, when he gets into that naughty spirit of the elder brother, and does not like to hear of sinners of the deepest dye being brought to Christ, and who disapproves of the jubilation and excitement at revival times. The Lord says to him, “Suppose you have not had such enjoyments; you may have them if you like, for you are ever with me. There is joy enough in that fact; and all that I have is yours. You are joint-heir with me. I have given you everything; what more do you

want?"

Luk 15:32. And it was meet
It was fitting, it was proper,

Luk 15:32. That we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother

"For he is thy brother. Notwithstanding thy richer experience, and thy deeper Christian knowledge, and thy high standing in the church, this poor prodigal, who is just saved, is thy brother; so it is meet that we should make merry, and be glad, for this thy brother"^{3/4}

Luk 15:32. Was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

We have read this chapter together many times; possibly some of us have read it hundreds of times; yet whenever we read it, we always find something fresh in it. It is ever bright and sparkling, full of diamonds and other precious gems of truth.

Luk 15:1-3. Then drew near unto him and the publicans and sinner, for to hear him, and the Pharisees, and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them,

The deepest feelings of our Saviour's heart seem to have been brought out by the two classes of persons here mentioned, his pity and compassion towards the sinful, and his righteous anger at the perpetual objections of the hypocritical Pharisees and scribes. The one class caused his heart to overflow with love, the other excited his burning indignation, yet, even then, his soul was moved with pity and tenderness toward the wandering and erring. We ought to be grateful to the Pharisees for having led our Lord to utter the three wondering parables which we are about to read. Luke says, "He spake this parable unto them," implying that the three are really one, a picture in three panels. The whole plan of salvation is not to be found in either of the parables by itself, but in all three combined. Some points omitted in any one of them will be found in one of the others. "He spake this parable unto them, saying," —

Luk 15:3-7. Saying, what man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing: And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friend and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for have found my sheep which was lost. I say into you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

The shepherd had an extraordinary joy in his flock through the wandering and recovery of that one sheep. If they had all kept in the fold, and none of them had strayed away, he would have been glad, but there would have been a sort of tameness and sameness about his constant satisfaction with them; but that wandering sheep stirred up other emotions in his heart, and when he had found it, he experienced a new joy, a higher joy than he would otherwise have known. So, though sin is a great evil, yet it has been overruled by God in such a way as to introduce a new joy into the universe. Songs of praise, that would never have made the angels' harps to ring, are now heard in Paradise. There would never have been any repentance if there had never been any sin, and the love of the great and good Shepherd towards wandering sheep would never have been revealed if no sheep had ever wandered from the fold. I suppose it was some such feeling as this that caused Augustine somewhat rashly to exclaim, concerning the fall, "O beata culpa!" — O happy fault, which has thus made manifest the abounding mercy of God! Looked at in one aspect all sin is an unutterable calamity; but as it has had the effect of displaying still more of the matchless mercy of God in the person of Jesus Christ, we see how God brings forth good out of evil. The chief point of the parable is the shepherd's joy derived from the finding of the lost sheep. Our Saviour needed no other reason for looking after publicans and sinners than the fact that he would get far more joy out of them than he would out of the Pharisees and scribes, even if they were what they professed to be, "just persons, which need no repentance." This first panel of the picture specially sets forth the work of the Son of God. Why was not the Father's work put first, as the Trinity is "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost"? Why is it also that, in the Benediction, Paul writes, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." Why, because the love of Christ is the first thing that the sinner apprehends. Our first Christian experience is not, as a rule, a knowledge of the Holy Spirit or the Father; but, to our consciousness, it is Jesus Christ who is first revealed to us. I think it is for this reason that the work of the Son of God is here first set forth.

Luk 15:8-10. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with

me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

As I have already said concerning the lost sheep, there was a new joy over the recovery of the lost silver. The woman always rejoiced over the pieces of silver, but that one particular piece had been the cause of new joy, the joy which is experienced whenever the sorrow of loss is outweighed by the joy of finding again that which was lost. Is this woman intended to represent the Church of Christ, and is she thus set before us because the Church is the great agent under the control of the Divine Spirit, in seeking the lost, carrying the lighted candle of the Word, sweeping with the besom of earnest, faithful preaching, applying the law of the Lord to the conscience of man, and turning everything upside down until, at last, the lost piece of silver is found? If so, this second panel of the picture sets forth the work of the Holy Spirit as wrought through the Church of Christ.

Luk 15:11-13. And he said, A certain man had two sons and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after —

For sin is very rapid in its development, and sinners are often in great haste to get away from God. The young man's heart was wrong already, or he would not have wanted to be his own master. He was already away in the far country so far as his heart was concerned, and it was not long before his body followed: "Not many days after" —

Luk 15:13-15. The younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

Probably, that was the best thing he could do for him; and, usually, when the world does the best it can for a sinner, it sets him feeding swine. It was the most degrading employment to which a Hebrew could be put; and, in like manner, sin, before it is finished, bringeth forth degradation on the way to bringing forth death.

Luk 15:16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

"He would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat," but he could not, for he was a man, and not one of the swine. Worldlings are happy in their own poor way, and I, for one, never grudge them their husks. One never craves the wash that is given to the pigs, we let them have their trough as full as they please, and never want so much as a taste of it; so, when sinners are full of worldly joys, we may not envy them, and we may scarcely blame them. Let the swine have their husks. Once, we too would fain have filled our belly with them; and if we did not, it was not because we would not, but because we could not.

Luk 15:17. And when he came to himself, —

For sin is insanity. He was out of his mind while he was acting so foolishly:

"When he came to himself,"

Luk 15:17-19. He said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

It was the knowledge that there was plenty in his father's house that led him back; and you may depend upon it that the preaching of full salvation rich in blessing, is a strong inducement to a sinner to cry, "I will arise and go to my Father." This prodigal son might never have gone back if his father had kept a miserly house with a scanty table; but he knew that even the servants in the kitchen had "bread enough and to spare," his father never stinted them, they had what they needed, and there was always more than they could eat, so there was no need for his son to "perish with hunger." In like manner, the extraordinary bounty of God in Christ Jesus the richness of his free redemption is, I doubt not, the means of bringing many a starving soul to Christ. The prodigal said that the servants had "bread enough and to spare." There are some who seem to think that, in Christ, there is only just bread enough, but we believe that the largest possible idea of the value of his redemption may be indulged, and, oftentimes, the thought that first enters the sinner's ear and heart is that there is "bread enough and to spare, so why should not he have some of the spare bread, at any rate? That was the way that the prodigal argued; he felt sure that his father could feed another hired servant, so he resolved that he would ask to be engaged in that capacity; yet you know that he never did ask that, his father stopped him before he could make that request.

Luk 15:20. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, Perhaps, before he saw his father: "his father saw him,"

Luk 15:20. And had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

Matthew Henry's comment on this verse is excellent: "His father saw him.' Here were eyes of mercy. 'And had compassion.' Here were bowels of mercy. 'And ran.' Here were feet of mercy. 'And fell on his neck.' Here were arms of mercy. 'And kissed him.' Here were lips of mercy." It was all mercy from first to last.

Luk 15:21. And the son said unto him,

The father kissed his son before he had time to say anything; and divine compassion is swifter even than our prayers.

Luk 15:21-22. Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him;

He did not let him finish his prayer with the request that he might be taken on as a hired servant; that part which was legal he stopped with a kiss on his mouth, and then he said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him;"

Luk 15:22-24. And put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

This, again, was a new joy in that family circle. There was joy when the elder brother was born, and joy when the younger son came into the household; but this joy over his return was one that they never would have known if he had not gone away. So, there is joy to be got even out of sinners. Christ's object was to show that, bad as the publicans and other gross sinners were, and despised as they were by the Pharisees and scribes, yet there was joy to be got out of them. By their salvation, the very heart of the great Father is rejoiced.

Luk 15:25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

The elder brother in our day says, "I do not believe in these revival services. I like regular, orderly proceedings, and I do not approve of these crowds of people coming to hear the Word under such undue excitement as is sure to result." That elder brother thought he knew a great many things. He did not get carried away by excitement, as other people did, he was too old for that, he was a man of very proper habits, and he liked everything done in a cold orthodox style.

Luk 15:26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

"What are you all at? Have you gone out of your minds? Why are you all dancing? Who is to pay for that music? You had better have been along with me out in the fields at work. What is the meaning of all this merriment?"

Luk 15:27. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come: and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

These servants spoke as some of us have told to others what the Lord has done when souls have been saved, the unregenerate quickened, and those that were far off from God, by wicked works, have come back to him. We have told it all out, in the simplicity of our hearts, and have been so glad to tell the good tidings that we felt as if we could keep on dancing to the music while we were telling the story.

Luk 15:28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

I never know which to admire the more, — the love of the father in going to meet the returning prodigal, or in going out to talk with this coldhearted elder brother. He was a son, but he had not the true spirit of his father, he had fallen into a very wrong state of mind, just like certain Christians that I know, who have always been very proper, and who have little sympathy with those who have been great sinners. They seem as if they do not want to see such people as these brought to the Saviour. "Why!" they exclaim, "there are girls from the street, and men that have been burglars, and all sorts of rabble being brought into the church." I have heard such remarks, and I have seen the same sort of spirit displayed in the looks of others who have not liked to say what they thought. Yet they themselves were no better than others by nature, though grace has done much in restraining them from the sin into which others have fallen; and it was wrong for them to talk as if they were sheer legalists, as this Pharisaic elder brother did.

Luk 15:29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy

commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

A Christian of this stamp seems to say to the Lord, "I have been thy child all these years, yet I am still full of doubts and fears. I have none of the high joys that I see these other people have. 'Thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.' I am chastened every morning, and I go sighing all the day long. I seem to get but little comfort; yet here are these young folk, who have not been saved a week, and they seem to be full of assurance, and they are as happy as ever they can be. Surely, they cannot belong to the tried family of God; how can they be sincere with all that music and dancing? I cannot endure it, for I never had such an experience."

Luk 15:30-31. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

Think of that, you who are the Lord's people, but who have fallen into a grumbling state of heart. Are you not ever with your Lord, and is not all that he has yours? If you have never had a kid to make merry with your friends, whose fault is that? Your Father never denied it to you. All in his house is yours, so take the good that he provides for you, and rejoice over it, for then you will be in a fit state to go to meet your poor returning prodigal brother, and to welcome him with a smiling face and a gladsome heart.

Luk 15:32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found.

After that reply, there was nothing more that could be said, even by the grumbling elder brother.

Luke 15:32 "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad."

The father in the parable was glad when his prodigal son was found. But he would have been gladder still had a brother found him.

Luk 15:11-13. And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

It was an act of ingratitude to leave his father at all, an act of extreme folly to turn his father's goods to ill-account.

Luk 15:14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

And the sinner's greatest all will be spent one day; the pleasures of sin are but for a season; the strongest sinew in an arm of flesh will one day crack; the flowers that grow in man's garden will one day fade; man may think he has an eternity of pleasure before him, but if he is looking to the flesh for it, it shall be but for an hour.

Luk 15:15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; And he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

At the very best the comforts of this world are ignominious to a man; they degrade him; as it was a very degrading employment for a Jew to feed swine so the comfort the world can give to a man does but degrade his noble spirit.

Luk 15:16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat and no man gave unto him.

The prodigal cannot be brought any lower; he is made to herd with the swine, and he envies even them, because they are satisfied with the husks; he cannot eat of the same, and, therefore, he envies even the brutes. Surely, when a sinner becomes fully convinced of sin, he may well envy even the sparrows or the serpents because they have not sinned.

Luk 15:17-20. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him.

Remember Matthew Henry's paraphrase — here were eyes of mercy.

Luk 15:20. And had compassion,
Here was a heart of mercy

Luk 15:20. And ran,
Here were legs of mercy.

Luk 15:20. And fell on his neck,
Here were deeds of mercy.

Luk 15:20. And kissed him.
And here were lips of mercy.

Luk 15:21-22. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants,
Here were words of mercy, wonders of mercy, and, indeed, it is all mercy throughout.

Luk 15:22-25. Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field:

That is where these over-good elder sons always are; they are out at work, they are not at home in communion with God; they are in the field. Do not ask who the elder brother was; he is here tonight there is many an envious moralist ay, and an envious professor, too, who feels it hard that profligate offenders should be pardoned.

Luk 15:25-27. And as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry,
He did not want the fatted calf killed, if this reprobate brother were allowed to come in at the back door, and to eat with the servants, he thought that quite good enough, but for this rebel to be put upon an equality with himself — he could not bear that!

Luk 15:28. And would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.
See the tenderness of this father; the same arms which embraced the sinning one were also ready to clasp the self-righteous one. I always feel great pity and great admiration for this dear, dear father. What with a bad son and a good son he had two bad sons, for this good son, you see, had got in a pet just as I have seen some real Christians get into a very un-Christian frame of mind. Well, they do not like somehow receiving into their company the women that have gone astray — the men that have lost their reputation. He was angry, and would not go in, and now his father crowned his love. He ran to meet one son and now he comes out to reason with another who is unnaturally and ungraciously angry with his father.

Luk 15:29. And he answering said, to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:
I know the brother. He says, "I have been a consistent Christian: I have been diligent in the service of God: I have abounded in prayer, and yet all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning. I do not get much joy: I have such a sight and sense of temptation and sin that I am generally low spirited. I seldom get a drop of full assurance. I never get a kid given me, that I might make merry with my friends. Those who are under the law never do make merry. You never knew a man yet that was trying to save himself by keeping the commandments of God that could dare to make merry. No, they have to draw long faces, and well they may, for they have a long task before them; they put on a garb of sadness, being of a sad countenance, as the hypocrites are.

Luk 15:30-32 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

And so, dear friends, there is more joy over the prodigal when he returns than over the man who thinks he never has been astray.

Most of us recognize the beauty of this parable as it concerns the prodigal, and his boundless forgiveness by the father, but few of us probably have seen how the elder brother has his portrait painted also by our Lord, and how he sets forth the self-righteous professor who hates to have prodigals made much of.

Luk 15:25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. This was the better one of the two. I have heard him often greatly blamed, and so he deserves to be; but, for all that, he was a true son. He was not at home. He was out at work. There are some Christians that are all for work, and never seem to have any fellowship and communion. They are always active, but they are not always contemplative. He was in the field.

Luk 15:26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

He was a gloomy spirit, good, solid, regular, constant, but not very joyful. He took things rather severely, so he did not understand what this amusement could mean. "Some of the Salvation Army got in here," he said, "some of those boisterous Methodist people got her, and I do not like it. I am more regular than that. I do not like these rows and uproars. He asked of the servant what these things meant.

Luk 15:27-28. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come: and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound, And he was angry, and would not go in:

No, I dare say he was glad his brother was back, but he did not like such a fuss made over him, glad to see a wandering one restored, but why, why, why should there be all this extravagance of joy concerning this wandering young fellow, who had been no better than he should be? Why all this delight? And there are some kinds of Christians who always feel that when there is a sinner introduced into the church, "Well, I hope that it will turn out a genuine case," and always that is the first thought. They are afraid that it cannot be. They have never sinned in that way, They have been kept, by the grace of God, from outward transgression, and they are half afraid to hear of these outrageous sinners being brought in, and so much joy made over them. "He was angry, and would not go in."

Luk 15:28. Therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

He was worth fetching in. There was a good deal of solid worth in his character, and his father kindly came to ask him to come in and share the joy.

Luk 15:29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee
You may read it "slave for thee."

Luk 15:29. neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

Here have I been constant in the house of prayer, regular at my Sunday School class, and yet I get little or no joy of it. I go on just in the regular path of duty but I have no music and dancing. I have a great many doubts and fears, very little exhilaration, very little delight.

Luk 15:30. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. He has been a great sinner, and he is newly converted, and he has got all the joy. He has been running anyhow, and yet he is full of assurance full of delight, full of confidence. How can this be? I am a staid Christian having but slight joy, and he is but newly converted, and confident and full of delight. Thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. Even one of the little kid goats thou hast not give me. Thou has given him the fatted calf.

Luk 15:31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

Why did not this son wake up to his privileges? Instead of not having a kid, he might have had whatever he liked. "All that I have is thine." He had been put into such a position as that, instead of being badly treated, as he, perhaps, would half accuse his father of treating him. "Son, thou art ever with me; thou livest at my table. My house is thy house. I love thee and delight in thee. All that I have is thine."

Luk 15:32. It was meet

It was right, it was proper, it Was fitting —

Luk 15:32. That we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother.

“You call him my son, but he is your brother, and I remind you of it — this thy brother.”

Luk 15:32. Was dead, and is alive again: and was lost, and is found.

So if there be any here that do not take the joy which they ought in the conversion of great sinners, let them hear the gentle persuasive voice of God. You, as believers, have everything. Christ is yours. Heaven is yours. You are always with God, and all that he has belongs to you. But it is proper and fit that, when a sinner returns from the error of his ways, they should ring the bells of heaven and make a fuss over him, for he was dead and is alive again. I hope that you and I will never catch the spirit of the elder brother. Yet I remember that Krummacher says that he found that same spirit in himself sometimes. There was a man in the village where Krummacher lived, who was a great drunkard and everything that was bad; and on a sudden he came into a very large sum of money and became a wealthy man. Krummacher felt, “Well, this hardly looks like the right thing — so many good, honest, hard-working people in the parish still remaining poor, and this worthless man has suddenly become wealthy and well-to-do.” It seemed a strange way in the order of providence. Oh! we ought to rejoice and be glad when another person prospers, and wish that his prosperity may be blessed to him. I remember a minister years ago, when first Mr. Moody came, saying that he did not believe that Mr. Moody was sent of God “because,” said he, “I find that many of the people who are converted under him never went to a place of worship before. It is only the riff-raff that are brought in.” There is a nasty elder brother spirit. The riff-raff were just the people that we wanted to bring in, and if they had never been to a place of worship before, it was time that they should go. It was a mercy that they were brought in. Oh! instead of ever sniffing at sinners as if we were better than they, let us welcome them with all our heart and praise the heavenly Father that he so lovingly takes them in.

Luke 15:32 “It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad.”

The father in the parable was glad when his prodigal son was found. But he would have been gladder still had a brother found him.

Luke 16

Luke 16:24 “That he may ... cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”

It was not a metaphorical tongue, and it was not a metaphorical flame. It was not metaphorical water that he wanted. Real, positive, actual flames tormented the body of that rich man in hell. Wicked man, those very hands of yours that now grasp the wine cup shall grasp the cup of your damnation. The eyes that look on the spectacles of lust—it is no figure, sir—those same eyes shall see murderous spectacles of misery. The same head which has often here throbbed with headache shall there beat with pains you have not yet felt. Your heart for which you care so little shall become an emporium of miseries, where demons shall empty the scalding boilers of woe. It is not a fiction!

Luke 16:27, 28 “Send him ... for I have five brethren ... lest they also come into this place.”

Was not the rich man afraid to see them there, because their recriminations would increase his misery? It will be a horrible thing for a man who has been a debauched villain to confront his victims whom his lusts dragged down to hell! How will he quail as he hears them lay their damnation at his door!—15.587

Luke 16:31 “Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

Though one should rise from the grave with all the scars of his torments upon him, with his hair crisp by the hot fire of vengeance, his body scorched in the flames, though he should tell you with a tear at every word and a groan as a stop at every sentence and a deep sigh on every syllable how horribly he feels, how damnably he is tormented, still you would not repent.—2.92

Do not say in your heart, “I never will believe there is a hell unless one should come from it.” If one should come from it then you would not believe at all. You would say, “If one person came from hell, then another may, and I may myself.”—7.501

Luke 17

Luk 17:1. Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come:

We are so strangely made that even good men do not always agree, and there are so many bad men about that they will cast a stumbling-block in our way if they can.

Luk 17:1-2. But woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

To do grievous damage to the soul of the very least of Christ's people, is a great and ruinous sin; nothing can be worse. God grant that we may not do this even inadvertently! Let not the strong indulge in that which would be unsafe for the weak, lest the weak be led into sin through that which the strong brother might find lawful, but which certainly would not be expedient. May none of us ever willfully grieve any child of God!

Luk 17:3. Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, Thou shalt not believe in his penitence No, surely," say you, "that is incorrect." Yes, it is incorrect; but that is what many of you do. I was only reading as things generally are; but that is not Christ's direction.

Luk 17:3-4. Forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, That is seven times too often.

Luk 17:4. And seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Do you say, "That is too many times in a day to forgive him"? Let me ask,-" How many times in a day have you sinned? How many times in a day does God forgive you?" Ah! the seven times a day that you have to forgive your brother are but a small number compared with the innumerable forgivenesses granted to you by our ever-gracious God.

Luk 17:5. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

For this kind of patient forgiving seemed too much for them, unless they had a larger stock of faith; and therein they were right. Strength of faith gives strength of love, and strength of love makes forgiveness easy.

Luk 17:6. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Now, if faith as a grain of mustard seed can do this, what cannot strong faith do? What a mercy it is for us that there is so much power in such little faith! A very small piece of dynamite can work great wonders; and within the tiniest morsel of faith, if it be no bigger than a grain of mustard seed, there lies concealed almost omnipotent force. Why do we not exercise that faith more? Nothing is impossible to him that believeth. We could blast the very strongholds of Satan with this powerful powder if we would but try it.

Luke 17:6 "Say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up ... and it should obey you."

You say, "My bad temper is rooted in me. As a sycamore tree takes hold of the earth by its roots, so an ill temper has gone into the very depth of my nature. Constitutionally quick-tempered am I." If you have faith, you can say to that sycamore tree within you, "Be thou plucked up by the roots."

Luk 17:7-8. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

See, brethren, our position as believers; we are here as servants. It is not the time for feasting yet. Whatever work we have done, even if it is getting towards the evening of our life's day, we must not think of sitting down yet, and expecting our Master to wait upon us. No, we must go on with our service, and reckon it to be our highest privilege still to gird ourselves, and wait on him. This is not the place of resting or of feasting; this is the day of our holy servitude. Let us work on, ploughing while we have strength for it; and when the sun goes down at eventide, then waiting like servants at the table of their Lord.

Luk 17:9. Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

Do you take off your hat to your servants, and say, "I am very grateful to you for doing your duty"? Not so. And even he who serves God best, may he expect honour as his due? Ah! no; he shall have honour because of the grace of his Master; but it is not his place to look for it, much less is it right for him to expect it as his due.

Luk 17:10. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

And who shall praise us for that? The most self-denying servant of the Saviour, the most ardent labourer for the Lord, will expect nothing of God except to be blessed by his abounding grace. What can we deserve of the dear hands of him who bought us with his blood? Are we not the bondservants of Christ? "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price." Therefore, whatever service you can render is due to him; and unto him let it be freely given without one thought of self-praise or pride because it is given without one thought of self-praise or pride because it is done so well.

Luk 17:1. Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

Since the fall, we are so constituted that there are sure to be differences and disputes. It is a great mercy when men dwell together in unity. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is." It is a work of grace; but nature has its lustings, and lustings lead to strivings; And so, as long as the world is as it now is, "it is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come." Let us not, therefore, be either offence givers or offence takers. When anyone offends us, let us say, "It is impossible but that offences will come," and let us make light of it; and let us be very careful that we do not cause others to offend. As for him through whom the offence comes, —

Luk 17:2. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend — Or cause to offend —

Luk 17:2-4. One of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent: thou shalt forgive him.

Perhaps someone remarks, "It looks as if he would do nothing else but keep on sinning and repenting." Well, suppose he does so, that is precisely what you are doing, except that you do not go often repent when you sin. So, possibly, the offender is rather better than you are, after all, and if God is gentle in his dealings with you, you may well be gentle in your dealings with your neighbor.

Luk 17:5. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

They seemed so struck with the severity of this command that they asked for more faith that they might be able to obey it. And, dear friends, that is always the best thing to do. Do not refuse obedience to the Lord's precept, but say, "Lord, increase my faith that I may be able to obey it. It can be done, or else thou wouldst not have given me the command. I cannot do it as I am without an increase of strength, therefore, as faith is the medium by which strength is received, Lord, increase my faith."

Luk 17:6. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Meaning that anything and everything should be possible to our faith; but we need much more of it than the most of us have. Remember how holy Bernard says, "If thou hast a hard task, ask God to give thee a hard resolution." The diamond is difficult to cut, but it can be cut if you can find something harder. So, if there be a very difficult task set us, if we get faith that is more than equal to it, it will be accomplished. "With God all things are possible," which means not only that God can do all things, but that we also can do all things when God is with us.

Luk 17:7-8. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

This world is the place of service; we are not to be expecting to have the festival here. The great supper comes at the end of the day. This is the time for us to serve, even as Jesus did when he was here; and we are to serve right on till the close of the day, even as Jesus did.

Luk 17:9. Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

When the serving-man has done his day's work, his master does not say, "I am very grateful to you, John, for what you have done for me." He will have his wages, they will be his master's thanks.

Luk 17:10. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

"When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you." Ah! but we have not come anywhere near that yet; even if we had, we should still be "unprofitable servants." In our mind we should expect no thanks from our Master; but we should sorrow that we had not served him better.

Luk 17:11-12. And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

Lepers were allowed to enter villages, but not to go into the large walled towns. They were, however, commanded to stand at a certain distance from other people; and these men did so. This must have been a terrible sight, ten men afflicted with such a horrible disease all in one group. It shows how prevalent at that time was this disease, now happily so rare, at least among us: "Ten men that were lepers." It seemed as if the effect of sin in men became more conspicuous in the day when the Great Healer of men was here in person. Then Satan's chain was lengthened that he might have greater power over the bodies of men, that his Master might subdue him, and that Christ Jesus the Lord might have the greater victory over the prince of darkness.

Luk 17:13-14. And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, go show yourselves unto the priests.

There was a tacit promise in that they should be healed, for, of course, the showing themselves to the priests was not that they might be pronounced unclean, for they were so pronounced already by their own confession, but that they might be pronounced clean. They were to go to the priests, and there was an implied promise that, if they so went, when the priests looked upon them they would be healed.

Luk 17:14-16. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

He was probably the only one out of the ten that was a Samaritan. Though Jews and Samaritans did not usually agree, yet, as sorrow brings a man strange bedfellows, so in this case, these partners in a general sorrow forgot their sectarianism, and were blended into one sad company. Now that they were all healed, only one felt true gratitude to God, and to his Benefactor: "and he was a Samaritan." It is very singular to notice that Luke tells us that this man glorified God "with a loud voice." We have sometimes heard complaints that, at certain revival meetings, the singing was very loud and there was even shouting. Let the converts shout, brother, let them stout! They have good reason to shout, for Christ has made them whole. We have a great deal too much of respectable death about us, let us have a little even noisy life. I would sooner by half hear the praises of God shouted with a loud voice, than hear the mockery of praise in a tone that is scarcely to be heard, while some machine grinds out music to God's glory, and men forget to sing or are drowned in loud bursts of wind from the instrument. Do not be ashamed to let it be known that you are saved. Praise the Lord with all your might; and, if they say that you are excited, tell them that you are, and that you wonder if anybody could help being excited if he had been healed of leprosy or had his sins forgiven. But, at the same time, note the humility as well as the zeal of this man: he "fell down on his face at his feet." I would like to see more of this action. In some revivals, there is plenty of shouting, but very little falling down on the face at Christ's feet. Oh, for deep prostration of spirit, a humble waiting upon God, a gracious, tender confession of thanks to him for all that he has done for poor leprous sinners!

Luk 17:17-18. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save the stranger.

Often those who are thought to be the worst of people turn out the best. Many of the most precious pearls have been found in the deepest sea; and some of the most grateful hearts have been discovered among those who were most immersed in sin and error.

Luke 17:18 "There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger."

One would have thought that all who prayed would praise, but it is not so. Cases have been where a whole ship's crew in time of storm prayed, and yet none of that crew have sung the praise of God when the storm has become a calm. Multitudes of our fellow citizens pray when they are sick and near dying, but when they grow better, their praises grow sick unto death.

Luk 17:19. And he said unto him, arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.

Christ uses the word "whole" in an emphatic sense: "Not only thy body, but thy soul also is made whole, and thou art holy from this day." There is a wonderful connection between these two words "whole" and "holy." A holy man is a whole man, and he who is not holy is unsound, and not whole in the sight of God. The Lord make us wholly holy for Christ's sake! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from Psalms 146, and Luk 17:11-19

Luk 17:11. And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

There is but One of whom we will think tonight, our divine Lord, who was on his way to Jerusalem. Passing along the frontiers of Samaria and Galilee, he had the Jews on one side of him, and the Samaritans on the other. He took a middle course, as if to show how he was going up to the New Jerusalem, loaded with blessings for the Jews on one side, and Gentiles on the other.

Luk 17:12. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers,

Oh, the abundance of human misery that met the Saviour's eye: "ten men that were lepers"! I was reading only yesterday of what happened in Westminster, many years ago. When the king went along the highway, there were crowds of poor lepers on either side of the road, a shocking sight to see in this dear land of ours; and the king, in his tender mercy, simply passed a law that the lepers should not come near the road again to hook his gracious majesty with their misery. That is all he had to do for them; but our glorious King treated lepers very differently: "There met him ten men that were lepers."

Luk 17:12. Which stood afar off:

The rule was that they should never come upon the public road, or near the highway, lest the disease should be taken by others who might come near them.

Luk 17:13. And they lifted up their voices,

Not much of voices were they likely to have, for the leprosy dries the throat, and the voice is low and husky, and when lepers cry, "Unclean, unclean," it is an awfully sad sound, but very weak. These ten lepers lifted up their poor voices.

Luk 17:13. And said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

They raised a plain cry, and the whole ten of them had to lift up their voices before they could be well heard.

Luk 17:14. And when he saw them,

Even before he heard them, he saw their pitiable condition.

Luk 17:14. He said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests.

That is all Jesus said to the lepers: "Go shew yourselves unto the priests." They were not to go to the priests till they were clean, for the priests could not heal them. It was the healed man who went to the priests to get a certificate that he was healed, and so might mingle in society again. It was a strange message, then, that the Saviour gave to these lepers: "Go shew yourselves unto the priests." And oh, the faith of these men! With only this shell of a promise, as it were, they cracked it, and found a promise inside it, for they said to themselves, "He would not send us to the priests for nothing; he would not mock our misery; he must mean to heal us:" and therefore away they went. A grand faith this! You are to come to Christ before you feel any grace in you; you are not to wait until you feel you are healed, and then come to him. Come just as you are, without any sense of grace, or any kind of feeling within you that is worth the having. Come just as you are.

Luk 17:14. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

As the sinner believes, he is saved. As a man begins to go towards the Saviour, the Saviour's grace meets him.

Luk 17:15. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed,

They all saw that they were healed, and they all must have felt extremely glad. Oh, the happiness of feeling the hot blood cooled, and full health taking the place of languor and disease!

Luk 17:15. Turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.

This was a sure sign that he was healed, that he had his voice back; the disease had so thoroughly gone that the sound, which seemed to hide away in his husky throat, now came out clear and loud, like the stroke of a bell.

Luk 17:16. And fell down, on his face at his feet, giving him thanks

When I read these words just now, I thought, that is where I would like to be, and that is what I would like to do, all my life, to fall down, "at his feet, giving him thanks."

Luk 17:16. And he was a Samaritan.

Ah, me! nine of the seed of Israel were ungrateful, and only one poor outcast Gentile was grateful to the Lord for the miracle of healing that had been wrought.

Luk 17:17-19. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There, are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith, hath made thee whole.

May the Lord Jesus thus speak to many a poor, leprous sinner here tonight! "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

This exposition consisted of readings from Psalms 113, and Luk 17:11-19.

Luk 17:11-12. And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers which stood afar off:

Leprosy was very common in Palestine in Christ's day. How thankful we ought to be that, in this country, at any rate, it has almost entirely died out! There used to be, in almost every town, a lazaret-house provided for lepers, so common was leprosy in this country. Certain diseases seem to die out by degrees, and we should be very grateful that some of the worst forms of disease, by which men have been afflicted, have passed away. In this case, there were no less than ten in one village. They "stood afar off," as was most proper, lest they should communicate the contagion to others. They had to cry out, and warn men not to come too near them, saying, with covered lip, "Unclean! unclean! unclean!" The muffled sound that they made, if the word could not be distinguished, helped to warn the passers-by to give them a wide berth.

Luk 17:13-14. And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests.

For no man could be pronounced clean even if he were healed, until he had undergone the ceremony prescribed in the Mosaic law. These lepers were to go to the priests just as they were, so their going was an act of faith.

Luk 17:14. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

What a wonderful thing that must have been!

Luk 17:15-16. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

One of those off-casts and out-casts that the Jews would not own, — one of the men that they said were of a mongrel breed, — only half Israelite and half idolater. "O grace, it is thy want, Into unlikeliest hearts to come!"

Luk 17:17-25. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. And when he who demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall

say to you 'See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

Though our Lord purposely left much with regard to his coming indefinite, he gave his disciples two instances, from the early history of the world, of the condition in which many would be found at his appearing.

Luk 17:26-32. And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Remember Lot's wife.

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when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Remember Lot's wife.

Luke 18

Luk 18:1. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

"Not to faint" in their expectation of answers to their supplications, and therefore give up prayer; but to persevere in presenting their petitions at the throne of grace, because prayer is never lost labour. There may be a time during which God does not appear to answer prayer, but he will ultimately answer it; therefore, "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" in prayer. If they do not pray, they will faint in many ways. Their courage will faint. All their hope as to the future will faint, and fall into a dead swoon as it were. So, dear friends, you have your choice between praying and fainting. The doctrine our Saviour laid down was "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" and this is the parable which he related in illustration of that truth: —

We must continue incessantly and constantly, and know no pause to our prayer till we win the mercy to the fullest possible extent. Week by week, month by month, year by year, the conversion of that dear child is to be the father's main plea. The bringing in of that unconverted husband is to lie on the wife's heart night and day till she gets it. She is not to take even ten or twenty years of unsuccessful prayer as a reason why she should cease.

"We ought always to pray, and not to faint" because we are always sinning.

I feel so grateful to the Holy Spirit that this text does not say, "Saints ought always to pray," because then I might ask myself, "Am I a saint?" Perhaps I might have to answer, "No, I am far from it." But the text does not say "saints," and it does not even say, "Tender-hearted, penitent persons ought always to pray." No, there is no description of character given in the text, for which I am deeply grateful.

"Men ought always to pray." It is always the wisest thing they can do. "Men ought always to pray." It is sometimes the only thing they can do. "Men ought always to pray," or else they take the matter out of God's hand. "Men ought always to pray," for they always need God's help, whether they think they do or not.

Luk 18:2. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

He was a most unfit person to be a judge, as many in Eastern cities still are. They are ready enough to take bribes, but they are not so prompt in giving just judgments. They generally attend to the business of the rich and the powerful, but neglect the poor and needy. So was it with this judge, who "feared not God, neither regarded man."

Luk 18:3. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

Probably someone had come, and taken away from her the little bit of land that her husband had left her, upon the produce of which she and the children might have lived; and she could not get it back again. So she comes to the judge, and cries, "Avenge me of mine adversary."

Luk 18:4. And he would not for a while —

He had plenty of applicants who could pay him better than this poor woman could, so he disregarded her petition; but he little knew that, in her, he had to deal with a woman who meant to be heard, and who intended to press her suit until she won it. She was evidently a very determined character. Though a broken-hearted widow, yet she was not broken-spirited even though the judge refused for a while to attend to her plea.

Luk 18:4-5. But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

She came again, and again, and again, and again; she would not leave off coming, for she meant to have the justice she sought, and she did get it. Now that is the way to pray, as if we would even weary God with our supplications, though we never can do so. It is impossible to weary him with earnest believing entreaties, yet we must show the same determination in prayer which this importunate widow manifested while pleading with the unjust judge.

Luk 18:6. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

He is unjust, but he is obliged to be just now. He is hard-hearted, but he is compelled to yield. The widow has conquered him, not by her money, but by her importunity. She is there so often that she troubles him, and he says he must give in, and grant her request.

Luk 18:7. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

He may seem to be slow about it; but when his people cry to him, he will hear them ultimately if he does not at once. Do not imagine that the children of God will always be laughed at, and downtrodden. God will yet arise, and take their side. They may be pushed into a corner for awhile, but they shall come out into a large room in due season, for God will certainly avenge his own elect.

Luk 18:8. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

If anybody could find it, he would, for he creates it all, and he knows where to look for it; yet there is so little of it that even he, whose eyes can detect the faith that is as small as a grain of mustard seed, can scarcely find it. There is all too little real faith in the world; and those who think they have most of it, when they get into troubled waters, soon find they have not any to spare, and much that they thought was faith does not turn out to be so. O men, brethren, fathers, how little do we trust our God compared with what he deserves!

Luk 18:9-10. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray;

They were both alike in going up to the temple, but they were very different in coming back from the temple. It is a very important thing to come to the house of God in a right state of heart; and it is a still better thing to go away from the Lord's house really benefited and improved. These two men went up to the temple with the same object; each of them went there "to pray." Both intended to pray, though they did not both do so; yet that was their ostensible object.

Luk 18:10. The one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

A tax-gatherer, one of the most hated people in Christ's day, because none but the lowest class of Jews would collect taxes for the Romans; and as a general rule, they farmed the taxes, and greatly increased them by demanding of the people much more than was due. They were therefore held in the worst possible repute. I am not sure that tax-gatherers are the objects of much love anywhere; but, among the Jews, they were detested because they were collecting tribute for the Romans whom the conquered nation abhorred.

Luk 18:11. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

So it is evident that he noticed one person who was there, though I do not find that the publican took any notice of him. We can tell by this remark that the mind of the Pharisee was wandering from his supposed devotions. It is a bad sign in a so-called worshipper when he knows a great deal about other people who are in the Lord's house. I have known many people, whose recollection, after a sermon, has been quite as much about who was there, and who was not there, as it has been about what was in the sermon, and what was not in it. So this Pharisee's eyes went gadding about, and he spied out the poor publican; but, after a contemptuous reference to him, he returned to the catalogue of his own virtues and excellences: —

Luk 18:12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

There his prayer ended, and he stood in a most enviable state of contentment, delighted with himself, lost in the contemplation of his own ineffable purity. I think I see him in all his glory, yet I quickly turn to the other part of the temple, further away from the most sacred place, for there I behold the true worshipper.

Luk 18:13. And the publican, standing afar off, —

Not afar off from the Pharisee only, but afar off from the sacred shrine, the innermost temple, as if unworthy to be there at all: "the publican, standing afar off," —

Luk 18:13. Would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, —

That throne of the Highest, — as if even a glance from his unholy eyes might defile that sacred place. He bowed his eyes downward, as if to read in the earth the record of his sin; he did not dare to look up; —

Luk 18:13. But smote upon his breast, —

His heart smote him, and he smote upon his heart, —

Luk 18:13-14. Saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The great Lord and Master acts as he would have his true servants do. It was said of some of them that they turned the world upside down, and that is exactly what he does. He abases those who exalt themselves, and he exalts those who abase themselves; he lifts up the lowly, and casts down them of high degree in their own estimation; and so shall it be to the end of the world.

Luke 18:13 “Standing afar ... [he] would not lift ... his eyes ... but smote upon his breast.”

His heart had sinned, and he smote it. His eyes had led him astray, and he made them look down to the earth. And as he himself had sinned by living far off from God, he banished himself far from the manifest presence. Every gesture and posture is significant, and yet all came spontaneously. He had no book of directions how to behave himself in the house of God. His sincerity guided him. If you want to know how to behave yourselves as penitents, be penitents. The best rubrics of worship are those which are written on broken hearts

Luke 18:133 God be merciful to me a sinner.”

The prayer of the publican is my everyday prayer. I have what I may call a Sunday prayer, a prayer for high days and holidays. But my everyday prayer, the one that I can use all through the week, the one that I can pick up when I cannot pick up anything else, is the publican's prayer: “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”

I never feel so well in spiritual health as when I cry out, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”

Luk 18:1. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

An old writer says that many of Christ's parables need a key to unlock them. Here, the key hangs outside the door; for, at the very beginning of the parable we are told what Christ meant to teach by it: “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” And this is the parable: —

Luk 18:2. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

It is a great pity for any city and for any country where the judges do not fear God, where they feel that they have been put into a high office in which they may do just as they please. There were such judges in the olden times even in this land; God grant that we may not see any more like them!

Luk 18:3. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

She had no friend to plead for her, she had nobody to help her; and, therefore, when she was robbed of her little patrimony, she went to the court, and asked the judge for justice.

Luk 18:4. And he would not for a while:

He preferred to be unjust; as he could do as he liked, he liked to do as he should not.

Luk 18:4-5. But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

She seems to have gone to him so often that he grew quite fatigued and pained by her persistence; the Greek words are very

expressive, as though she had beaten him in the eye, and so bruised him that he could not endure it any longer. Of course, the poor woman had not done anything of the kind; but the judge thus describes her continual importunity as a wounding of him, as an attacking of him, an assault upon him, for he had perhaps a little conscience left. He had, at least, enough honesty to confess that he did not fear God, nor regard man, and there are some, of whom that is true, who will not own to it; but this judge admitted it, and though he was but little troubled about it, he said, "that I may not be worried to death by this woman's continual coming, I will grant her request, and avenge her of her adversary."

Luk 18:6-7. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which I cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

He is no unjust judge; he is One who is perfectly holy, and just, and true, and who appears in a nearer and dearer character than that of judge, even as the One who chose his people from eternity. "Shall not God avenge his own elect?" Ay, that he will; only let them persevere in prayer, and "cry day and night unto him."

Luk 18:8. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? If anybody can find it, he can, for he is the Creator of it; yet, when he comes, there will be so little of it in proportion to what he deserves, and so little in proportion to the lovingkindness of the Lord, that it will seem as if even he could not find it, although, if there were only as much faith as a grain of mustard seed, he would be the first to spy it out.

Luk 18:9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: It seems as if these two things went together, and that, as our esteem of ourselves goes up, our esteem of others goes down; the scales seem to work that way.

Luk 18:10. Two men went up into the temple to pray;

It was the place that was specially dedicated for prayer; it was the place where God had promised to meet with suppliants. They did well, in those days, to go up into the temple to pray to God, though, in these days, —

"Where'er we seek him he is found,

And every place is hallowed ground."

It is sheer superstition which imagines that one place is better for prayer than another. So long as we can be quiet and still, let us pray wherever we may be.

Luk 18:10-11. The one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

It is possible that this was all true; we have no indication that he was a hypocrite, and if what he said was true, there was something in it for which he might well thank God. It was a great mercy not to be an extortioner, nor unjust, nor an adulterer, but what spoilt his expression of thankfulness was that back-handed blow at the other man who was praying in the same temple: "or even as this publican." What had the Pharisee to do with him? He had quite enough to occupy his thoughts if he could only see himself as he really was in God's sight.

Luk 18:12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Observe that there is no prayer in all that the Pharisee said. There was a great deal of self-righteousness and self-congratulation; but nothing else. There was certainly no prayer at all in it.

Luk 18:13. And the publican, standing afar off, —

Just on the edge of the crowd, keeping as far away as he could from the most holy place, —

Luk 18:13. Would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

That was all prayer; it was a prayer for mercy, it was a prayer in which the suppliant took his right place, for he was, as he said, "a

sinner.” He does not describe himself as a penitent sinner, or as a praying sinner, but simply as a sinner, and as a sinner he goes to God asking for mercy. Our English version does not give the full meaning of the publican’s prayer, it is, “God be propitious to me,” that is, “be gracious to me through the ordained sacrifice;” and that is one of the points of the prayer that made it so acceptable to God. There is a mention of the atonement in it, there is a pleading of the sacrificial blood. It was a real prayer, and an acceptable prayer, while the Pharisee’s boasting was not a prayer at all.

Luk 18:14. I tell you, this man —

This publican, sinner as he had been, though he had no broad phylacteries like the Pharisee had, though he may not have washed his hands before he came into the temple, as no doubt the Pharisee did, — this man, who could not congratulate himself upon his own excellence, “this man” —

Luk 18:14. Went down to his house justified rather than the other:

He obtained both justification and the peace of mind that comes from it. God smiled upon him, and set him at ease concerning his sin. The other man received no justification, he had not sought it, and he did not get it. He had a kind of spurious ease of mind when he went into the temple, and he probably carried it away with him, but he certainly was not justified in the sight of God.

Luk 18:14. For every one that exalted himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

God turns things upside down. If we think much of ourselves, he makes little of us, and if we make little of ourselves, we shall find that a humble and contrite heart he will not despise. May he teach us so to pray that we may go down to our house justified, as the publican was!

Luk 18:1-7. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

He hears their prayer a long time because it does not weary him. It pleases him, he loves to hear their sighs and cries, but will he not yield to their entreaties? What think you? Shall not the good, gracious, loving God yield at length?

Luk 18:8. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Faith enough to make such prayers as this; faith enough to pray with importunity? Oh, if we had faith enough to resolve to have a blessing, and determined never to cease crying to God until we had it, we should have far more favors than we have hitherto gained from our God.

Luk 18:9-12. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

A fine peacock, truly! See how he spreads out his feathers, and struts before God, glorifying himself.

Luk 18:13. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

“The sinner,” it should be; it is so emphatically in the Greek. There is a Pharisee, the righteous man according to his own estimate, and all the rest were sinners. Here is the publican, he is the sinner, and he thinks everybody else is righteous. These were two very conspicuous individuals, the self-righteous man and the sinner; and they are both here tonight. I will not ask them to stand up; but no doubt they are both of them present. Now what became of them?

Luk 18:14. I tell you, this man —

The sinner —

Luk 18:14. Went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

It is God's usual method to reverse what man does, and to turn things the other way upwards: "Everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." You remember how the Virgin Mary, in her song, praised the Lord for this very habit of his: "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away." That is his regular way of working, and he will continue so to do.

This exposition consisted of readings from Psalms 122 and Luk 18:1-14.

Luk 18:1. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

Especially, not to faint in prayer, not to become disheartened, or weary, even if their prayers should, for a long time, remain unanswered.

Luk 18:2-3. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

He would not have interested himself in her case simply because she was a poor widow, he had no bowels of compassion for her; nor would it have concerned him at all that her adversary had wronged her. He did not trouble to discharge the duties appertaining to his office. No fear of God and no respect for public opinion, affected him at all.

Luk 18:4. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

He even boasted of the very thing of which he ought to have been ashamed: "I fear not God, nor regard man; I care for nobody, and defy everyone."

Luk 18:5. Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

He cared for nobody but himself. He was concerned about his own peace of mind. The poor woman could win, through his selfishness, what she could not get from his sense of justice, since that had no weight with him. Her importunity won for her what nothing else could procure.

Luk 18:6-8. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith, and shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth.

God will hear the earnest, united, persistent cries of his people. His Church, today, is like a widow left forlorn. Her cries go up to God, pleading that he will vindicate her cause; and he will do so. He may wait a while; but the prayers of his people are not lost. By-and-by, he will avenge his own elect. So is it with regard to all true prayer. Though, for wise reasons, God may delay to reply, yet he files our petitions, they are registered in heaven. Their power is accumulating, it is all adding to the great pile of supplication which is the real strength of the Church of Christ. What a question that is, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" He can find it if anybody can, for he knows what faith is, and where faith is, but will he find any? Well, he will find so little, even amongst the best of his people, that the question may well be put; and amongst a great many who profess to have faith, he will find none at all. Brethren, we pray so feebly, we expect so little, we ask with such diffidence, we have such slight courage in prayer, that, if the Son of man himself came among us to search us, how little faith he would discover!

Luk 18:9-12. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

He could not even magnify his own excellencies without sneering at the poor publican who had said nothing against him, or about

him. That is a poor kind of religion which has to look down upon all others before it can look up to itself. What, O Pharisee, if others are not, apparently, so good as thou art in some things. Yet, in other things, they probably excel thee; and if thou thinkest thyself worthy of praise, thou hast never really seen thyself as thou art in God's sight! A correct knowledge of thine own heart would have led thee to a very different conclusion. It is a good thing that the Pharisee appeared to be thankful for something; but, probably, that was merely a complimentary speech, which meant very little. He did not thank God half as much as he praised himself.

Luk 18:13. And the publican, standing afar off, —

Away in some distant corner,

Luk 18:13. Would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

He makes no reflection upon others; but confesses his own sin, and appeals to the great Propitiation, for the word he used means, "God be propitious to me, a sinner."

Luk 18:14-15. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

Were not these children too little, and too unimportant for Christ to notice? Their understanding was not sufficiently developed to know anything that he might say; what was the use of bringing them for his blessing?

Luk 18:16. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God consists of child-like spirits, persons like these children. Instead of needing to grow bigger in order to be fit to be Christians, we need to grow smaller. It is not the supposed wisdom of manhood, but the simplicity of childhood, that will fit us for the reception of divine truth. Alas! we are often too much like men, if we were more like children, we should receive the kingdom of God far more readily.

Luk 18:17-19. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein. And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

Yet the ruler was right. He knew not that he was speaking to One who is, assuredly, God, and; in the highest sense, good; but, since he had asked, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Christ answered his enquiry.

Luk 18:20-21. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother, and he said, all these have I kept from my youth up.

All which appears to be simple enough, if you only look on the surface but when you come to recollect that there is an inward, spiritual meaning to all this, that a licentious look breaks the command about adultery, that a covetous desire is stealing, that the utterance of a slander is bearing false witness, and so on, who is he that shall enter into life upon such terms as these? Yet they cannot be lowered, for they are, spiritually, just and right.

Luk 18:22. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing:

Christ gives him a test. If he is what he thinks he is, he will be ready to obey whatever command God lays upon him. Christ is about to lay one upon him; let us see whether he will obey that.

Luk 18:22. Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

Now, which will he love the more, the Son of God, or his wealth?

Luk 18:23-27. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, and they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

Yet some men spend all their lives in the earnest endeavor to make it hard for them to be saved. They are trying, as much as ever they can, to block up the road to eternal life, hoarding up that which will be a grievous burden to them, even if God shall lead them in the way to heaven. How much better is it to live wholly unto God, and then, be we rich or be we poor, consecrate all to him, and live to his praise and glory!

Luk 18:31-34. Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall he accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spirited on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

It would be hard to imagine our Lord speaking more plainly. He tells them of his sufferings in detail — describes exactly what happened. But their thoughts did not run that way; and when you are not expecting a thing, it little matters how very plainly you may be told of it. You are doating upon something else, and, therefore, you do not readily perceive the meaning. You know how; when you are expecting to hear a thing said, you can hear it even at a great distance, or think you hear it, from the very motion of the man's lips. But if he should say something clean contrary to what you expect, then you do not so readily hear. And these disciples of our Lord were looking to see him made a king, and they could not comprehend that the only crown he was to have would be one of thorns, and that the homage paid to him would be to be scourged and to be spat upon. They did not understand. And do not you think that the run of our thoughts sometimes may be so contrary to divine truth that we may not be able to understand some very plain things in the Bible, which are only difficult to us because our thoughts are not yet running that way? And when one day we shall be more completely cleansed from the grossness of this world, many a riddle will become plain enough to us.

Luk 18:35-39. And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Only to think that there should be some who think that when results are to be seen they can ever be regarded as hindrances. For is it not a result of ministry — a result of Jesus passing by — that men cry out, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me"? And yet, when the wave-sheaf is before them, they seem to put it aside as though it were an impediment in the Saviour's way. "Let him go on sowing." Well, but, sir, it will not hinder him to let him also reap a little, for evidently there has been good seed shown in this heart, and here is the outcome of it, for the man is crying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." We do not get our sermons interrupted in this way, but what a mercy it will be when they are! And I suppose that in some better times when God's Spirit more mightily blesses the word, we shall have to stop in our sermons every now and then to deal with anxious souls, or get them to step aside where those that are skillful in heaven's surgery may bind up their wounds. They will be crying ever and anon, "Sirs, what must we do to be saved? Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

Luk 18:40-41. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, Saying, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?

If Christ were to come near to every unconverted person here, and say to him, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" do you know what it is you want? No. The unhappy circumstance is that the mass of mankind do not know what mercy they should ask for, even if they believed that they had only to ask and have. But, dear friend, you want deliverance from the power of sin. You want a new heart and a right spirit. You want to give up the sins you love, and to follow after the virtues which now you despise. May God give you grace to know that you want this. But this blind man knew what he wanted.

Luk 18:41-43. And he said, Lord that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith have saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

Luk 18:31-33. Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

Our Lord Jesus Christ often talked to his disciples about his death. Before the time for it came, he foresaw it, he thought and spoke

much of it, he even dwelt upon the terrible details of it very minutely: "He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death." Ah! dear friends, when our Lord Jesus died for us, he knew what he was doing. There are some men who, without a moment's consideration, could do a brave notion, but they could not sit down and coolly calculate all the consequences of doing it. They find themselves unexpectedly in the face of imminent danger, they see a person needing to be saved from peril and they make a rush for it, and the daring deed is done. But here our Saviour deliberately thinks and talks about his death, yet he never flinches, or looks back, but he prepares his heart for the solemn event, and sets his face like a flint to go through it all that he may save the souls of his people. We also ought to think and talk much of our Lord's death, since he thought and spake so much of it.

Luk 18:34. And they understood none of these things:

They could not make out what he meant, it was plain enough, but they could not believe that it should be so.

Luk 18:34-36. And this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken. And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

The blind man asked, as the familiar hymn puts it, —

"What means this eager, anxious throng,
Which moves with busy haste along?"

Luk 18:37-38. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

If he could not see, he could hear. So, dear friends, like this blind man, use what senses you have. "Faith cometh by hearing;" so it came to this man, and as soon as he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was passing by, he began to pray to him. Oh, that some of you would also pray to him as soon as you hear that he is nigh! Deep down, from your very soul, let this cry go up, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

Luk 18:39. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace:

I think I hear them saying, "Do not make such a disturbance. The Master is preaching, and we are losing his words through your noise. What is all that clamor about? Can you not have more respect to the Son of David than to cry in that fashion?"

Luk 18:39. But he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

That is a good thing for you also to do, not only to keep on crying to the Lord Jesus, but to grow more importunate when others rebuke you. If you are seeking the Saviour, do not be put back, and if others would hinder you, be the more resolute, the more determined, to be heard by him.

Luk 18:40. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him:

Jesus had been walking along, the crowd making way for him, but he was arrested by the cry of a blind beggar: "Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him:" —

Luk 18:40-41. And when he was come near, he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

A plain question and a very distinct answer. What is it that you, dear friends, want of Jesus? Could you all tell if the question were put to you? What is it that you would have the Lord do for you? Do you know? This man did know; and when we know, as he did, what we want from Christ, we shall soon get it. The sad fact concerning many people is that, though they are not blind with their natural eyes, they are so blind in heart that they cannot see their own needs.

Luk 18:42-43. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God:

Christ his only to speak, and the great work is done at once. The salvation of a soul from the power of sin is not the work of weeks; it can be done in a single moment. "Immediately he received his sight, and followed him." That is beautiful; as soon as he could see, he looked for Christ, and then followed him, "glorifying God." He clapped his hands, and followed Jesus, shouting and crying, "Blessed be God, I have found my sight! The darkness is over, and the light has broken in upon my soul."

Luk 18:43. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 18:31-43; Luk 19:1-10.

Luk 18:35-36. And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

If he could not see, he could hear, and he could speak. Use all the ability that you have, and God will give you more.

Luk 18:37-39. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace:

They told him that he was spoiling the Preacher's sermon. They had lost his last sentence; they could not catch the Saviour's meaning, so they cried out to the blind man, "Hold your tongue, sir."

Luk 18:39-40. But he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood,

I can see him stop. He had been walking on before, and talking as we went; but prayer can cause the Saviour to be spell-bound. Here Jesus stood,

Luk 18:40-41. And commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?

Our Lord likes us to know what it is that we want. He would have us feel our need, that we may have a distinct perception of the blessing when it comes, and know just what it is.

Luk 18:41. And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

He wanted nothing else; but oh, how badly he wanted that boon!

Luk 18:42. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight

Notice the echo. 'The blind man said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Jesus said, "Receive thy sight." With a little turn in the expression, Christ's answer is the echo of our prayer.

Luk 18:42. Thy faith hath saved thee.

No, surely it was Christ who saved him. Yes, but Christ delights to put his crown on faith's head, for faith always puts the crown back on Christ's head: "Thy faith hath saved thee."

Luk 18:43. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him,

What should we do when our eyes are opened by Christ but follow him? The moment that we can see him, we should begin to follow him.

Luk 18:43. Glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

May we have cause to praise the Lord tonight for many blind eyes opened!

This exposition consisted of readings from Isaiah 6; Mat 13:10-17; and Luk 18:35-43.

Luk 18:35-38. And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

He did not need to be told twice who was passing by, nor did he need any exhortation to seek Christ's help. It was enough for him that Jesus of Nazareth was near him; so he would cry to him for the help he alone could give. Oh, that we were half as sensible, Oh, that the blindness did not get into men's hearts! If it were not so, every blind soul would at once begin to cry to God for mercy; there is not one poor sinner here, who knows that, Jesus often passes this way, who would not begin at once to cry, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

Luk 18:39. And they which went before rebuked him,

"Be quiet," they cried.

Luk 18:39. That he should hold his peace:

"Do not interrupt the flow of those marvellous words, or break the thread of that matchless discourse."

Luk 18:39. But he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

They could not quench the fire that burned within his breast; they did but increase its intensity by all their efforts to put it out. The blind man was so earnest to get his eyes opened that his voice could not be silenced. This was a proof of his common sense and true wisdom. It is remarkable how clearly the blind people mentioned in the Scriptures could see. Oh, that those who think they can see could really see as plainly as this blind man could, and would act as wisely as he did! "He cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." This was his only hope;—perhaps, his last opportunity; so he availed himself of it to the full.

Luk 18:40-41. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee! And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

There was no waste of words. He said what he meant, and he meant what he said, and he knew what he wanted. It is a great thing, in prayer, to know what we really need,—a very important thing to be sensible enough not to multiply words, but to cry to the Lord with a definite object, as this blind man said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

Luk 18:42-43. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

That was a blessed praise-meeting, brought about by the healing of that one man. Now that his eyes were opened, he showed that his mouth was not closed. He proved that he could pray well; now he proves that he can also praise well. He prayed when they tried to stop him, and now nobody shall stop him from praise; and he so praised the great Physician that, with the flaming firebrand of his gratitude he set all other hearts in a blaze: "All the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God."

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 18:35-43; and Luk 19:1-10.

Luk 18:35-39. And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace:

"Hush!" they cried; "how can you disturb the blessed Master's discourse? Be quiet."

Luk 18:39-40. But he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood,—

Prayer held him fast. Here is a stationary Saviour, held in his place by the cries of a blind man. Oh, the power of prayer! It stays the onward march of the Son of God: "Jesus stood,"

Luk 18:40-41. And commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

It is a great thing to know what you really do want. There are some persons who are so blind that they do not know that they are blind; and because they say, "We see," therefore is their blindness the more intense. I fear that there is many a person, who professes to pray, yet who, if Christ should come into the room, and say, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" would not know how to answer the question. This man did; and he said, very briefly, and very clearly, but in a very full way, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

Luk 18:42. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight:

Often, the blessing from Christ's lip is the echo of the prayer which fell from ours. The blind man said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Echo answered, "Receive thy sight."

Luk 18:42-43. Thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight,—

See, how the prayer, the word of Christ, and the immediate effect of it, all tally. "That I might receive my sight." "Receive thy sight." "He received his sight."

Luk 18:43. And followed him,—

Christ likes not blind followers: "and followed him,"—

Luk 18:43. Glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

They seemed to be greatly impressed, but we shall see that some of them soon spoke in another fashion.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 18:35-43; and Luk 19:1-10.

Luke 19

Luk 19:1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

There was to be a miracle at each end of Jericho. Long before, it had been cursed; now it was to have a double blessing.

Luk 19:2. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans,—

That is, tax-gatherers—

Luk 19:2. And he was rich.

As they often were, for they farmed the taxes, and then squeezed every farthing they could out of the people.

Luk 19:3. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

That was a fortunate thing for him. We need not all wish to be so tall as some people are. Perhaps Zacchaeus would not have gone up the sycamore tree if he had been a tall man; but the whole story turns upon something which many regard as a disadvantage: "he was little of stature."

Luk 19:4-7. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy

house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured,—

There is a great contrast between this verse and the last one in the previous chapter: "All the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God." Here it is, "When they saw it, they murmured." Yet, very likely, many of them were the same people; certainly, they were the same sort of people that we hear of every now and then: "When they saw it, they all murmured." There are far too many of that kind about still; we do not quite know who they are, nor where they are, they have a sort of nondescript, mysterious existence that finds expression in the words, "They say so-and-so and so-and-so." They have been saying something about the minister, something about the Sunday-school, something about the Bible-class, something about your work and mine. You see, there always were such people about, and they always would talk, and their talk often took the form of complaining: "When they saw it, they all murmured,"

Luk 19:7. Saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

If he had not done so, he could not have gone anywhere, for all men are sinners. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But this man was a sinner above others, for he had sold himself to the hated Roman power, and was authorized to collect the conqueror's taxes from his own people; so, of course, in the estimation of the Jews, he was the worst kind of sinner that could be found anywhere.

Luk 19:8. And Zacchaeus stood,—

And he did not talk at all like a sinner,—

Luk 19:8. And said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor;—

Some of those saints, as they reckoned themselves, had not done anything like as much as that: "The half of my goods I give to the poor;"—

Luk 19:8. And if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

Which restitution was an act of justice; and when charity and justice go hand in hand, what more can we expect of men?

Luk 19:9-10. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

And that day he had both sought and saved one of the lost ones, for he had found Zacchaeus up in the sycamore tree, and he had brought salvation to the tax-gatherer's house. May he do the same for many who are here!

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 18:35-43; and Luk 19:1-10.

Luk 19:1. And Jesus entered—

That is, he entered at one end of the town,—

Luk 19:1. And passed through Jericho.

And so came out at the other end of it.

Luk 19:2. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

It was an important station for the collection of customs; there was a good deal of produce at Jericho upon which there was a tax, so Zacchaeus had a good post: he was rich.

Luk 19:3-7. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked

up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down and received him joyfully, And when they saw it, they all murmured,—

Some of the very people, I suppose, who had just before given praise to God. So fickle are the judgments of men that we need not be elated when all of them speak well of us. It only needs that the wind should veer just half a point, and they will all speak ill of us. The cry of men, even when it is most clear and strong, is not to be depended on. They shout “Hosanna,” today; but, before the week is out, they cry, “Crucify him; crucify him.” So, here, “They murmured,”—

Luk 19:7. Saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

I do not know where else he could have gone, for they were all sinners; but they meant that this tax-gatherer was “a sinner” by public reputation, he was an excommunicated person, who was regarded by everybody as “a sinner” in a very special sense.

Luk 19:8. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor;—

“Henceforth, one half of my income shall go in almsgiving; “—

Luk 19:8. And if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

“I will not give to the poor or to God that which is not lawfully mine. I will not steal a sheep, and give the feet to the poor; but I will give back, four times over, anything that I may have taken wrongfully, and still the half of my future income shall go to the poor.”

Luk 19:9-10. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 18:36-43; and Luk 19:1-10.

Luk 19:1-2. And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans and he was rich.

Jesus Christ had just blessed a blind man who was poor, so poor that he was a common wayside beggar; will he bless the rich man, too? Oh, yes! he knows no distinction of persons, he is ready to bless all classes; whether they be rich or poor is nothing to him.

Luk 19:3. And he sought to see Jesus who he was;

Possibly he had not much respect, but he had great curiosity; he would like to see the man about whom everybody was talking: “He sought to see Jesus who he was.”

Luk 19:3. And could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

The crowd round about him was so thick that the little short man could not see over the heads of the tall people. Though he pushed, and tried to get in front, there was always some bigger body before him, so that he could not see the great Teacher.

Luk 19:4. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree —

Do you not see the little short man running in front of the throng, and climbing up a tree that stood in the way? Rich men do not generally climb trees, but here was a man whose curiosity overcame his dignity, so he “climbed up into a sycamore tree” —

Luk 19:4-5. To see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him,

Cannot you imagine that you see the blessed Master stopping, and looking up at that tree? Somehow, he always made himself one with those whom he meant to bless. When he spoke to the blind man, he stood as if he were himself blind, and asked him, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?” And now he stops under this sycamore, and looks up at curious Zacchaeus as if he, too, were taken with a fit of curiosity, and asks, “Who is that up in this tree?” “He looked up and saw him,”-spied him out, —

Luk 19:5. And said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.

Oh, how astonished must the little Jew have been when he heard Christ's words! Never was a man so taken with surprise before, but with the word there came a divine softness into the heart of the chief of the publicans, and he yielded to that singularly condescending invitation, that strangely unexpected command.

Luk 19:6. And he made haste, and came down; and received him joyfully.

A great change had been suddenly wrought in him; the opening of the blind man's eyes was not at all more remarkable than the renewing of the heart of Zacchaeus: "He made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully."

Luk 19:7. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

I wonder where he could have gone and not been guest with a man that was a sinner; but Zacchaeus was thought to be a sinner beyond ordinary sinners. Our Lord still loves to be the guest of a man that is a sinner, he still wants a place where he can stay. O man, thou who art a sinner, ask him home with thee! O woman, thou who art in thy very trade a sinner, ask him home with thee, and we will say again, not murmuringly, but joyfully, "He has gone to be guest with one who is a sinner."

Luk 19:8. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor;

That was a grand proof that the conversion of Zacchaeus was genuine; I should like to see the same kind of proof in many professors whom I know: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor." I remember one who was converted in this place, and he at once gave £50 to some good object, and I said to his brother, "I think your brother I converted." He answered, "I hope he is, but he is a dreadful skin-flint." "But," I replied, "only yesterday, he gave £50 to such-and-such a work." "Ah, then!" said the brother, "I am sure he is converted, for nothing but the grace of God would make him do such a thing as that." Now Zacchaeus was, no doubt, a man of that kind, one who loved his money, and kept it to himself as long as ever he could; but now that he is converted, he says, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor;" —

Luk 19:8. And if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

He acts in charity and justice, for he is determined to do the right thing with his substance. You see, he was a rich man, so his money was a source of trouble. The blind beggar had no such difficulty, for he had not any money that he must distribute when he was converted; but this rich man —this camel, as our Saviour called such men, went through the eye of a needle by the grace of God, and thus the Lord proved the reality of his conversion.

Luk 19:9. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham.

"He does not look like it, he has become a tax-gatherer for the Romans, he has oppressed his own countrymen. But he is a son of Abraham, and salvation has come to him."

Luke 19:9 "This day is salvation come to this house."

Often the most unlikely persons are the first to receive the Savior. The least likely person in the city of Jericho to receive Christ was this rich little tax-gatherer, Zacchaeus. When Christ went to his house they all murmured, saying that he was to be the guest of a man that was a sinner. Yet he was the one person in that place who did entertain the Lord Jesus Christ. And many a time since has Christ been shut out of good men's doors, or the doors of those who have reckoned themselves as good men. But he has found shelter within the gates of sinners, and such sinners as have been reputed among men to be utterly given over and hopeless.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 18:31-43; Luk 19:1-10.

Luk 19:1-2. And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

Many of those tax-gatherers were rich; they usually farmed the taxes, and took care to extort all that they possibly could out of the

poverty of the people.

Luk 19:3. And he sought to see Jesus who he was;

He did not seek to hear him; his curiosity lay in another direction, — he desired to see him. Who could this man be who created such a stir? What kind of man was he?

Luk 19:3-5. And could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, —

Zacchaeus went up into the sycamore tree that he might see Jesus, but he was himself seen there by Jesus; and that, dear friends, is the first act in the process of salvation. Jesus looks at us, and then we look at him. So, here, the Lord spied out Zacchaeus up among the branches of the tree; “he looked up, and saw him,” —

Luk 19:5. And said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.

His surprise at receiving such a message must have been overwhelming, yet he did not suffer that surprise to delay his obedience to Christ’s command.

Luk 19:6-7. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

“This professedly superior teacher, this purist, this teacher of the highest morality, has gone to be guest with this tax gatherer, — a man who is a sort of outlaw, a disreputable person altogether.” Ah! how does the legal spirit, in self-righteous men, cry out against the sweet benevolence of our blessed Master, who comes into the world for this very purpose, — to be the Guest of sinners, that he may be the Physician of sinners!

Luk 19:8. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor;

There was not one among those self-righteous people who would have done a tenth as much as Zacchaeus declared that he would do.

Luk 19:8. And if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

There was not one among the murmurers who would have dared to say as much as that. There are a great many people who are quick to condemn those who are a hundred times better than themselves. I wonder whether there are any people of that sort here; I should not wonder if there are.

Luk 19:9. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

When our Lord was here, his personal mission as a soul-winner was to the Jews, to those who were of the house of Abraham; so he shows that however much despised this man might be, he came within the compass of the Christ’s immediate mission: “forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.”

Luk 19:10-11. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

Some of them dreamt of a temporal sovereignty with Christ at its head, so he taught them that his kingdom was something very different from that.

Luk 19:10. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

If, at this time, we ask our Lord Jesus, “Whither goest thou, Divine Master?” his answer still is, “I am come to seek and to save that which was lost.” “Art thou come after those who think themselves good enough without thee?” He shakes his head and says, “I am a Physician, and the whole have no need of a Physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to

repentance." The gospel of the grace of God is for the guilty; if you are not guilty, there is no gospel for you; but if you are guilty, and confess it, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

Luke 19:10 "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

If you would win souls, you must seek them. The sportsman knows that his game will not come to the window of his house to be shot. The fisherman knows that the fish will not come swimming up to his house. Do they not go abroad and seek their prey? And so must you and I

Martin Luther speaks in his book on Galatians of cutting the devil's head off with his own sword: "There," says Martin to the devil, "you say I am a great sinner. I thank you for that, for Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and so I feel he came to save me." And if the devil says to you, "You are lost altogether," off with his head, my brother, with his own sword. Rejoice that "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

They are so lost that they need saving, but they are also so lost that they need seeking. Persons may be so lost on land or on sea as to need saving and not seeking, but we were spiritually lost, so as to need both saving and seeking.

Mr. Whitefield's brother had once been a very sad backslider. He had gone far from the way of Christ. At last, his conscience was pricked, and he fell into despair. Sitting at tea one day with the Countess of Huntingdon, he said, "I know what you have said is very proper, and I believe in the infinite mercy and goodness of God. But I do not believe in its application to me, for I am a lost man."

The countess put down the tea and said, "I am glad to hear it, Mr. Whitefield!"

"Madam," he said, "I did not think you would rejoice and glory in a thing so terrible as that."

"I am glad to hear you say you are lost, Mr. Whitefield," she said, "for it is written that 'Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

His eyes sparkled, and he said, "I thank God for that text, and for the extraordinary power with which it has now come into my heart." He died that night, and God had just sent him the word of peace in time to gather him into the fold.

Luk 19:12-13. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

"Use these pounds on my account; be stewards of them for me until I return."

Luk 19:14-16. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

He was a modest man; he did not say, "I have gained ten pounds;" but, "Thy pound hath gained ten pounds." And if God has blessed anyone so as to enable him to bring in a large result from the talent entrusted to him, he must ascribe it all to God, and not to himself: "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds."

Luk 19:17-19. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

Observe that, whatever the triumph of Christ is to be, his faithful servants are to share in it. He is to be the King of the many cities in the rich provinces of his Father's domain; but he will give to one of his servants ten cities, and to another five cities. But what a vast dominion that must be out of which he can afford to give such rewards as this! Ten Cities, — can any earthly king give in this fashion? There are royal rewards at the last for those who are faithful now. No pitiful pence shall fall to the lot of those who diligently serve the Lord Christ; they shall have a rich reward, not of debt, but of grace; and, therefore, all the larger.

Luk 19:20. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

He had not lost it, he had not spent it, he had not even dug a hole in the earth and hidden it; but he had used a nice piece of linen to wrap it in, and had taken great care of it; and there it was just as when he received it. It had not diminished, neither had it grown at all.

Luk 19:21. For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou

didst not sow.

So there is a slavish kind of fear, a dread, a horror of God, which will even keep men out of his service. It ought not legitimately to do so, but, undoubtedly, there are some persons who, out of an evil timidity, are afraid to attempt anything for God or man, and hence their life is useless. Their talent cankers and rusts in the napkin in which they have wrapped it.

Luk 19:22. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, —

“That was thine opinion; according to thine own confession, that was thine idea concerning me: ‘Thou knewest that I was an austere man,’ —

Luk 19:22-23. Taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

“With proper interest.” God does not trouble about clearing his character with ungodly men. You and I are very particular and punctilious in defending ourselves against false accusations; but God’s character needs no clearing. It is so transparent that, if ungodly men choose to besmear it, he argues with them on their own ground, and does not stay to answer their slanders. When I have heard people say of God that he is unjust or too severe, all I have felt inclined to say in reply was just this, “Whatever he may be, he is the God who will judge you at the last; and if you think thus of him, so much the more ought you to yield yourself to him, and submit to his infinite majesty, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. It is an ill day when we attempt to be the judge of our Judge, and pretend to be the god of God. He is infinitely glorious, so let us bow before him.’

Luk 19:24-26. And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

They who have some already shall have more, especially in the matter of grace. If you serve God well, he will give you more to do. If you love him ardently, he will reward you by enabling you to have more love to him; and if you exercise great faith, he will give you yet more faith. The way to be truly enriched, spiritually, is to be faithful to God in what we have.

Luk 19:27. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

Whatever these words mean, it is certain that there is a terrible doom in store for all who are God’s enemies, May none of us be found among them!

Luk 19:1-5. And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.

Remember that the Lord Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, to suffer and to die; and there he was the patient, suffering Lamb of God; but here he speaks in that commanding tone which well became the Prince of the House of David: “Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.”

Luk 19:6. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

Solomon said, “Where the word of a king is, there is power;” omnipotence went with the word of this King of kings, so Zacchaeus was bound to obey it.

Luk 19:7-11. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

Their minds were full of thoughts concerning Christ’s coming as a King, and they had very mistaken notions concerning his kingdom,

so he indicates to them that, for the present, the practical matter to be remembered was that he had come “to seek and to save that which was lost.” If they had not been so full of their idle dreams of a temporal sovereignty, they would have perceived that, in the calling of Zacchaeus, Christ had manifested his Kingship in the realm of mercy, and had there exercised the sovereignty of his grace. In order that they might be able the better to understand the meaning of his spiritual kingdom, and not have their eyes so dazzled by the illusions which had so long deceived the Jews, our Lord pointed out to them, in the parable of the pounds, the practical way of preparing for his second coming.

Luk 19:12-15. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

It would have been well if our translators, instead of using that ugly Latin word, “occupy,” had kept to the expression, “trade with it,” for here we get the same words again: “that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.”

Luk 19:16. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

The genuine servant, with due humility, puts himself in the background. It is not he who has “gained ten pounds;” it is his Lord’s pound that has done it. He is pleased to bring the ten pounds; yet he claims no credit for himself, but says, “Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.”

Luk 19:17. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

There is no comparison between the servant’s work and the reward for its faithful performance. That ten pounds, if his Lord had given it all to him, would not have bought a house in a village, unless it had been a very tiny one, — “a cottage in a vineyard,” or “a lodge in a garden of cucumbers;” yet his Lord gives him “authority over ten cities.”

Luk 19:18-19. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

How he must have opened his eyes, when he received authority over five cities!

Luk 19:20. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

The napkin, with which he ought to have wiped away the sweat from his brow, he had used merely as a wrapper for the pound that his lord had entrusted to him for the purpose of trading with it. He had done nothing with the pound; he thought he was all right because he had not done any harm with his lord’s money. He had not joined the revolting citizens, who said, “We will not have this man to reign over us;” he had not spent the pound, nor embezzled his master’s money; in fact, he had been very careful to keep intact the treasure that had been entrusted to him, and he felt proud of his own prudence, and said, “Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.”

Luk 19:21. For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

This was impudence indeed; but his master took him on his own ground, and showed that, even if his statement had been true, he ought to have been the more diligent in obeying his lord’s command.

Luk 19:22-23. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

“Thou mightest have done that, at any rate, even if thou wast afraid to trade with it, as I bade thee.” God often deals with men on their own ground, and condemns them out of their own mouth. They say that God is very severe in threatening them with “the wrath to come.” Well, if you so believe, and so speak, there is the more reason why you should fear to disobey him, and so to incur his just displeasure. If, in spite of such terrible threatenings, you still defy him, it only brings out the more clearly the greatness of your guilt.

Luk 19:24-25. And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

They were quite astonished. “What! give more to the man who has so much already?” “Yes,” says the master, “that is my command.”

Luk 19:26. For I say unto you, That unto everyone which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Hear again the note of sovereignty. Christ will do as he wills; and his mode of action shall sometimes be so singular that even his own attendants will wonder at the strangeness of his procedure, and will begin to ask, “How is this?” But, as Elihu said to Job, “He giveth not account of any of his matters.”

Luk 19:27-31. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

Here we see Christ’s true royalty again flashing out from beneath the humiliation of his humanity. He lets us know that, although he is going up to Jerusalem to die, it is not because he is not Lord of all; but that, being Lord of all, he makes himself of no reputation, takes upon himself the form of a servant, is made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbles himself, and becomes “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Luk 19:32-34. And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

The word of the King was again with power, and the owners of the colt were willing to let the animal go since the King had “need of him.” They may have been secret disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we have no information upon that point. Our King’s warrant runs anywhere; and even when his personal presence is not consciously realized, his royal and divine word still rules the minds and hearts of men.

Luk 19:35-38. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen. Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

They were so jubilant that they seemed to have caught some notes from the song that the angels sang at the Saviour’s birth: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” There had been war in heaven, but these disciples of Christ sang, “Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.”

Luke 19:37 "The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God."

While the praise was multitudinous, it was quite select. It was the whole multitude of the disciples. The Pharisees did not praise him; they were murmuring. All true praise must come from true hearts

Luk 19:39-41. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

What a contrast! The King's courtiers shouting for joy, and the King himself weeping over the guilty city where the greatest tragedy in the history of the whole universe was about to take place. The King saw, in the near and more remote future, what no one else could see, so, "when he was come near, and beheld the city, he wept over it."

Luk 19:42-48. Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, and could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him. There was a popular wave of enthusiasm in his favor; but, alas! it soon ebbed away, and then the multitudes that had cried, "Hosanna!" were just as loud in their shouts of "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Luke 19:41 "He beheld the city, and wept over it."

Even if I knew that my hearers must be lost, I would pray to God to help me weep over them, because our Savior's tears over Jerusalem were accompanied with a distinct indication that it would be destroyed (Luke 19:44). Still he wept.

Luke 20

Luk 20:9. Then began he to speak to the people this parable, A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

It is a long time since Jesus left us, and he has not yet returned. Many say that he is coming back very soon; others say, "The Lord delayeth his coming."

Luk 20:10-11. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

They grow bolder, and more wicked, you see; first beating, and then adding shameful treatment to their former cruelty. Men do not come to ridicule religion, and persecute its advocates, all at once; this is an art which Satan teaches by degrees.

Luk 20:12. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

They are more violent this time; it comes to actual wounding, and to casting out the servant.

Luk 20:13. Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do?

A strange thing happens when the Lord himself comes to pass, and says, "What shall I do?" Here is infinite wisdom, as it were, at a non-plus; and in that extremity this is the Lord's last expedient: —

Luk 20:13-15. I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be our's. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

You know the story how this beloved Son of the Highest was all love and pity; and yet, with cruel hands, men cast him out of God's ancient vineyard, and crucified him, hoping that they should be allowed to remain lords of God's heritage.

Luk 20:15. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

What punishment can be sufficient to expiate such a crime? What vengeance will be poured out upon those who have killed him who came to do them good?

Luk 20:16. He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others.

And he did so; he scattered abroad the Jews, and gave the kingdom, for a while at least, unto the Gentiles, and they hear the gospel which the Jesus refused.

Luk 20:16. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

That is exactly what you and I would say, for we, too, have ill-treated the blessed Lord of the vineyard and his beloved Son. Lest we should have the heritage taken from us, let us yield up the fruit to him who has the best right to it all.

Luke 21

Luk 21:1-6. And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but like of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had. And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

This was literally true of the temple at Jerusalem; and today there remains nothing of it. It is also true of all earthly buildings and of all earthly things. However firm they appear to be, as though they might outlast the centuries themselves, yet the things which are seen are temporal, and like the baseless fabric of a vision, they shall all melt into thin air, and pass away. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Luk 21:7. And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

Those questions are always being asked, they are being asked at this very day about Christ's second coming. They shall have no answer, for Christ himself assures us that, as the Son of man, he knew not the day nor the hour of his own coming. As the Son of God he knew all things; but as a man like ourselves, he was willing to be a know-nothing upon that point.

Luk 21:8. And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and the time

draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

This passage refers, in the first place, to the siege of Jerusalem and in its second and yet fuller meaning, to the coming of the Lord. It looks to me that our Lord regarded the destruction of Jerusalem as “the beginning of the end,” the great type and anticipation of all that will take place when he himself shall stand in the latter day upon the earth. And, as before the destruction of Jerusalem there were many false christs, so will there be the more of them the nearer the end of the world shall be. This shall be to us one of the tokens of our Lord’s speedy appearing, but we shall not be deceived thereby. “Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.”

Luk 21:9. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified; for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

Everywhere throughout the Scriptures there is this double message of our Lord, — “Watch, for I may come at any moment. Expect me to come, and to come soon; yet never be terrified as though the time were immediately at hand, for there are certain events which must occur before my advent.” How to reconcile these two thoughts, I do not know, and I do not care to know. I would like to be found in that condition which consists in part of watching and in the other part of patiently waiting and working till Christ appears.

Luk 21:10-11. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

Someone says, perhaps, “All this we have had, times without number; yet Christ has not come.” Just so, for these signs are not sent to minister to our curiosity, but to keep us always on the watch; and whenever we mark these earthquakes, and wars, and famines, and pestilences, then are we to think, “Behold, he cometh,” and watch the more earnestly. You know how it is often with the man who is very sick. It is reported that he cannot last long; you call many times, yet he is still living, do you therefore conclude that he will not die? No, but you the more certainly expect that he will soon be gone. So is it with Christ’s second advent. He bids us note the signs of his coming, and yet, when some of those signs appear, he does not come, all this is to keep us still on the alert watching for him. Even in his own day, when he so spoke that his servants expected him to come at once, yet he also added words from which they might fairly judge that he would not come directly.

Luk 21:12-16. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Nowadays, the fashion is always to meditate, and think, and excogitate a gospel for yourself. To be a thinker, — that is the very crown of perfection to some minds, but it is not so according to our Master’s mind. His servants are to speak, not their own thoughts, but his thoughts. If they will keep to his gospel, he will give them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. We are to be the repeaters of a message which is given to us, not the manufacturers of tidings. There is to be an exhibitions of inventions very soon, and it is quite right and proper that there should be; but I pray that none of us may ever be the inventors of a new gospel, or of new doctrines, or of new systems of theology, but, on the contrary, let us settle it in our hearts that we will speak Christ’s Word all our days; and if thereby we are brought into trouble, we will depend upon him to give us a mouth and wisdom, which all our adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Luk 21:16. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

How true that has been many a time! For how long a period the saints were martyred! And the days of martyrdom are not yet over.

Luk 21:17-18. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

During all the terrible siege of Jerusalem, it is believed that not one Christian perished, for God took special care of the followers of his Son. They were the most hated of all men, yet nobody could touch them. None of them took up arms, for it was contrary to their religion; as, indeed, if we are Christians, it is contrary to our religion to resist evil, but we are to bear and endure. The early

Christians did so; and because of their very defenselessness, they were safe under the guardian care of the Lord their God.

Luk 21:19-24. In your patience possess ye your souls. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

And it is so even to this day. Here is another instance in which the Lord bade his people expect his coming, and yet at the same time told them that he would not come so long as Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles. "Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" means the time when the Messiah shall gather in those Gentiles unto himself; for, when he shall appear, they shall look on him whom they have despised, and turn to him whom they have so long rejected.

Luk 21:25. And there shall be signs in the sun —

As there were at the destruction of Jerusalem, and as there will be at the second coming of Christ. We have had a rehearsal of that coming in the destruction of the favored city; but the grand event itself, who shall rightly speak of it?

Luk 21:25-27. And in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see —

Whether they wish to see him or not, "then shall they see" —

Luk 21:27-32. The Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

As I understand it, for the first time; and afterwards it shall be fulfilled again. It is a prophecy that bears two meanings, an outer and an inner; it has been fulfilled once, and it shall soon be fulfilled again.

Luk 21:33-34. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, —

Please notice that "cares of this life" are put down with over-eating and over-drinking, for men can be intoxicated and surfeited with care, either the care of getting, or the care of keeping, or the care of spending, or the care of losing. Any of these cares may cause a surfeit and a drunkenness wherefore, "take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life," —

Luk 21:34. And so that day come upon you unawares.

All that you can see in this world, you are to regard as being doomed to destruction; that destruction commenced, so to speak, when Jerusalem fell beneath the Roman sword. Everything earthly is doomed. You are living, not in your eternal mansions but you are living a makeshift life; you are passing through a wilderness, you are pilgrims, you are sojourners; this is not your rest. Do not get to love this world, or to be taken up with it. Do not strike your roots into it; you are not to dwell here, and to live here always. You are walking among shadows; regard them as such. Hug them not to your bosom; feed not your souls upon them, lest, when that day comes, before whose coming all of them shall melt away, you shall be filled with amazement and shame.

Luk 21:35-37. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

You know what he did there, for —
“Cold mountains and the midnight air,
Witnessed the fervor of his prayer.”

Jesus ever practiced what he preached. He said to his disciples, “Watch ye therefore, and pray always,” so he himself both watched and prayed.

Luk 21:38. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.
May we all be willing, not only to hear him, but also to heed what he says! Amen.

Luke 22

Luk 22:1-2. Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

Dastardly fear often drives men to the greatest crimes. He who is not brave enough to be master of his own spirit, and to follow the dictates of his own conscience, may do, before long, he little knows what. Because of the fear of the people, the chief priests and scribes were driven to compass the death of Christ by craft, and to bring him to his death by the cruel betrayal of Judas, one of his own apostles.

Luk 22:3-6. Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

Was it not a sad thing that the betrayer of Christ should be one of the twelve? Yet deeply trying as it must have been to the heart of Christ, there is something useful about even that horrible transaction. It says to all the professing Church of Christ, and it says to us who claim to be Christ's followers, “Do not think yourselves safe because you are in the visible church; do not imagine that even holding the highest office in the church can prevent you from committing the basest crime. Nay, for here is one of the twelve apostles, yet he betrays his Master. Sometimes, we have found this betrayal to be a source of comfort. I have myself desired, in receiving members into the church, to be very careful if possible only to receive good men and true; yet, though pastors and elders of the church may exercise the strictest watch, some of the worst of men will manage to get in. When that is the case, we say to ourselves, “No new thing has happened to us, for such a sinner as this marred the Church from the very beginning.” Here is Judas, when Christ himself is the Pastor, when the twelve apostles make up the main body of the Church, here is Judas, one of the twelve, ready to betray his Master for the paltry bribe of thirty pieces of silver, just the price of a slave. Yes, we might have been put out of heart in building up the Church of God if it had not been for this sad but truthful narrative concerning Judas and his betrayal of our Lord.

Luk 22:7-8. Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

Notice how carefully our Lord respected the ordinances of that dispensation so long as it lasted. The passover was an essential rite of the Jewish faith, and our Lord therefore duly observed it. Learn hence, dear brethren, to esteem very highly the ordinances of God's house; let baptism and the Lord's supper keep their proper places. You do them serious injury if you lift them out of their right places, and try to make saving ordinances of them; but, in avoiding that evil, do not fall into the opposite error of neglecting them. What Christ has ordained, it is for his people to maintain with care until he comes again; and if he kept up the passover even when, in himself, it was already on the point of being fulfilled, let us keep up the ordinances which he has enjoined upon us. If any of you have neglected either of them, let me remind you of his gracious words, “Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness,” and “This do ye, in remembrance of me.”

Luk 22:9-13. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Observe in this passage a singular blending of the human and the Divine; no mention is made of either as a matter of doctrine, but

incidentally our Lord's Divinity and humanity are most fully taught. Here is Christ so poor that he has not a room in which to celebrate the most necessary feast of his religion; he has made himself of no reputation, and he has no chamber which he can call his own; yet see the Godhead in him. He sends his messengers to a certain house, and tells them to say to the goodman of the house, "Where is the guestchamber?" It all turns out just as he said it would be, and he is welcomed to this man's best room, and to the furniture thereof. Jesus speaks here as did his Father when he said to Israel in the olden time, "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." All the guestchambers in Jerusalem were really at Christ's disposal; he had but to ask for them, and there they were all ready for him. Here we see the majesty of his Deity; but, inasmuch as he had no room that he could call his own, we see also the humility of his manhood.

Luk 22:14-16. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

This was to be his last meal with his disciples before he died, and he had looked forward to it with great desire. It was a most solemn occasion, and yet to him a most desirable one. May something of the Master's desire overflow into your hearts, beloved, whenever you are about to partake of the sacred feast which he instituted that night!

Luk 22:17-20. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Do you see how this new memorial was blended with the passover, how it melted into that social meal which formed part of the paschal celebration? There was a cup, then bread, and then the cup after supper; so there was a gracious melting of the one dispensation into the other. We see our Lord's wisdom in thus leading his children on from step to step, without a break, conducting them from one line of service to another and a still higher one.

Luke 22:19 "This do in remembrance of me."

Remember the Lord Jesus that you may follow him. In sickness recollect him in his patience. When you are persecuted, recollect him in his gentleness. In holy service remember him with his burning zeal. In your times of solitude remember him and his midnight prayers. And when you are in public and have to bear witness, remember him and his lionlike declarations of the gospel. Remember him so that he becomes your pattern, and you are the reproduction of himself, and so the best memorial of him.

Luk 22:21. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

This was a sad and solemn fact; yet it has often been so since that night. The nearer to Christ, the farther from him, — so has it sometimes happened since. He who was in some respects the highest in the College of the Apostles became the lowest in the ranks of the children of perdition.

Luk 22:22-23. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

Let us also pass that question round among ourselves.

"When any turn from Zion's way,

(Alas, what numbers do!)

Methinks I hear my Saviour say,

'Wilt thou forsake me, too?'

"Ah, Lord, with such a heart as mine,

Unless thou hold me fast,

I feel I must, I shall decline,

And prove like them at last.

"The help of men and angels join'd Could never reach my case;

Nor can I hope relief to find But in thy boundless grace.

"What anguish has that question stirr'd,

If I will also go;

Yet, Lord, relying on thy Word,
I humbly answer, No.”

God grant us more grace, that we may be held fast by the records of love!

Luk 22:24. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

Let me read you these two verses together; they strike me as being very remarkable. Here are two questions: “They began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing,” that is, betray their Lord. “And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.” What poor creatures we are! How we are tossed with contrary winds! The new question comes up; and yet the old question, which ought to have been smothered by it, still remains there. It is possible that Luke is here alluding to some dispute which the apostles had previously had; and now the Lord, remembering that even in the ashes of contention lived the wonted fires of ambition, would quench the last sparks of the evil fire.

Luke 22:44 “His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

Jesus is so utterly oblivious of self that instead of his agony driving his blood to the heart to nourish himself, it drives it outward to bedew the earth. The agony of Christ, inasmuch as it pours him out on the ground, pictures the fulness of the offering which he made for men.

Luk 22:25. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

The people are compelled to use sweet terms to express a very bitter bondage; so they call their tyrants “benefactors.”

Luk 22:26-27. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth?

The guest, or the waiter at the table?

Luk 22:27-31. Is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

As our Lord Jesus looked upon his eleven apostles, he felt that their time of greatest trial was fast approaching. Beyond anything they had ever endured before, they were now to be put into the devil’s sieve, and Satan would toss them to and fro, and seek, if possible, to destroy them.

Luk 22:32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: —

“I have made thee, Simon, a special object of thy prayer. All the brotherhood will be tried, but for thee I have especially prayed, for thou, who seemest to be the strongest, art the weakest of them all, so I have prayed specially for thee, that thy faith fail not.”

Luk 22:32. And when thou art converted, —

“When thou art restored,” —

Luk 22:32-39. Strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing.

Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip, and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough. And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

Luk 22:7-20. Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go

and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them. With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament —

(Or, covenant —)

Luk 22:20-21. In my blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

What a shadow this revelation must have cast over that solemn feast over the Saviour's heart, and over the minds of all his attached disciples! We can scarcely imagine what pangs tore his loving spirit. He could have used the language of David, with even deeper emphasis, and said, "It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance." "The hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." O beloved, I pray that you and I may never betray our Master; if ever we should so fail as to deny him, may the Lord stop us where Peter fell, and never suffer us to betray him as Judas did!

Luk 22:22. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

The decree of God does not lessen the responsibility of man for his action. Even though it is predetermined of God, the man does it of his own free will, and on him falls the full guilt of it.

Luk 22:23-24. And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

Be astonished, dear friends, as you read, in such a connection as this, "There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." What! while yet the anxious question as to which of them was the traitor was being passed round, "Lord, is it I?" Is it so closely followed by another question, "Which of us shall be highest in the kingdom?" Oh, the awful intrusiveness of pride sad ambition! How it will come in, and defile the very holy of holies! Nay God prevent our falling victims to it! The last question for a Christian ever to ask is, "How may I win honour among men?" The one question for a believer should be, "How can I glorify my Master?" Very often, that can best be done by taking the very lowest place in his church.

Luk 22:25-26. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

Let every respect be given to the elder, and let such as God honours be honoured among us; but let no man honour himself, or seek honour for himself. After all, in Christ's kingdom, the way to ascend is to descend. Did not the Master act thus? He descended, that he might ascend, and fill all things; and so must his disciples do. Less, and less, and less, and less, must we become; and so we shall really be, in his sight, more, and more, and more, and more.

Luk 22:27. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

For he had just then taken a towel, and girded himself, and washed their feet, so becoming *Servus servorum*, the Servant of servants, though he was in very truth the King of kings.

Luk 22:28. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

There is a reward to the righteous, though they serve not for reward, for the Lord says: —

Luk 22:29-30. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink; at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Ah, but see what follows! No sooner, in this chapter, does the thought seem to rise than it is dashed down again; the brightness ever has a shadow cast across it,

Luk 22:31-32. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

We are thinking about thrones, and about which of us shall have the loftiest throne, but see how the Master is thinking about the necessary while we are doting upon the superfluous. He thinks of our needs while we are dreaming of something great. What a blessing it is that we have our Saviour praying for us when we ourselves may be fancying that we need not pray! Our hands are ready for the scepter, and we are anxious to sit down on the throne, when the Lord knows that our proper place is at the footstool, pleading for mercy still.

Luk 22:33. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

That is bravely spoken, Peter; and yet it is very foolishly said, too. He spoke out of his very heart, and he meant what he said; but Peter did not know what a poor weak body Peter really was. His Master understood him far better.

Luk 22:34. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. And so it came to pass. Let us read a part of the sad story, beginning at the fifty-fourth verse.

Luk 22:54. Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priests house. And Peter followed afar off.

I do not think that he was to be blamed for that; I do not see how he could very well have followed any nearer, for he was already a marked man. That sword-cut of his upon the ear of Malchus had made him specially prominent amongst the apostles, even if he had not been well known before. He got into the crowd, and came after his Master at such a distance as seemed safe for him.

Luk 22:55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

I do think that he was to be blamed for that action, for it brought him into dangerous company. Better be cold, than go and warm your hands in ungodly society.

Luk 22:56. But a certain maid beheld him as he eat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him,—

As the flame came flashing up every now and then, she looked at him, and Peter was troubled by her gaze: she “earnestly looked upon him,”

Luk 22:56-59. And said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him; for he is a Galilaeen.

For he got talking to this ill company, and his speech had betrayed him.

Luk 22:60. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest.

Another Evangelist tells us that he began to curse and to swear, as if that was the surest proof that he could possibly give that he did not know Jesus; for, when you hear a man swear, you know at once that he is no Christian, you may conclude that safely enough. So Peter thought that, to prove that he was no follower of Christ, he would use such ill language as the ungodly speak.

Luk 22:60-61. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.

God has all things in his hands, he has servants everywhere, and the cock shall crow, by the secret movement of his providence, just when God wills; and there is, perhaps, as much of divine ordination about the crowing of a cock as about the ascending of an emperor to his throne. Things are only little and great according to their bearings; and God reckoned not the crowing bird to be a small thing, since it was to bring a wanderer back to his Saviour, for, just as the cock crew, “the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.” That was a different look from the one which the girl had given him, but that look broke his heart.

Luk 22:61. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

How many there are, who sin with Peter, but who never weep with Peter! Oh, if we have ever transgressed in such a way as he did, let us never cease to weep! Above all, let us begin at once to lament it, and rest not till the Master looks again, and says by that look, "I have blotted out all thy transgressions; return unto me."

Luke 22:61, 62 "And the Lord ... looked upon Peter ... And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

Observe the power there is in people's eyes. What a power there was in that maid's eye when she gazed earnestly on Peter! It was that earnest gaze of the girl that made Peter deny his Master. But then see the power for good that there was in Christ's eyes. Eyes can say far more than lips can. Often there is more heart-affecting eloquence in the eye than there is in the tongue. If the Lord will manage your eyes for you, you will find that they will be potent messengers of love for him. God give you to have those sanctified eyes which can work wonders for him!

Luk 22:7-13. Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good-man of the house, the Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

The hour of Christ's humiliation was drawing nigh, but he was still "The Master." He had but to send his servants, and his request was at once obeyed, just as he might have asked for more than twelve legions of angels and they would have been immediately placed at his disposal.

Luk 22:14-22. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

What consternation those sentences must have caused in that little company! Christ and his twelve apostles alone present, yet one of them was about to betray his Lord!

Luk 22:23-24. And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

How strange that such a quarrel should be going on just then! Their Master was going out to betrayal and crucifixion for them, yet they were disputing about which of them "should be accounted the greatest."

Luk 22:25-30 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

What folly and sin to quarrel about earthly precedence when such heavenly honours were awaiting them!

Luk 22:31-32. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Trial would be general to all the apostles: Satan hath desired to have you;" but the danger would be special to Peter on account of his tendency to presumptuous zeal: "'I have prayed for thee. Thy danger will be that, after having transgressed, thy faith will fail, so I have specially prayed about that. Where thy greatest danger lies, there have I planted my batteries of prayer: 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.'"

Luk 22:33. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

And I have no doubt that he thought he was ready to do all this; he spoke out of the fullness of his heart, but he did not know the weakness of his flesh. We are all too apt to promise great things, and to fail in the fulfillment of them.

Luk 22:34-36. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

At first, our Saviour had great popularity amongst the people; and, under the cover of this, his disciples were received with respect and kindness so that, though they went forth without purse or scrip, they lacked nothing. But, now, Christ warns them that there is to be a very different state of things. Jesus is about to die, and people will not be ready to entertain them; they will need to have a purse and scrip of their own. They will constantly be in peril of their lives, and they will need the sword now, and the scrip. This is all that the Saviour meant.

Luk 22:37. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

“They are drawing to their close. I am about to be put to death as a transgressor, and you will be treated as though you were the off-scouring of all things, and were not fit to live, because you are my followers.”

Luk 22:38. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

A smile must have passed over the Saviour's face as he saw how egregiously they had misunderstood him. He did not mean that they should literally carry swords, but that they should now have to go through an alien world, and to meet with no friends or helpers. He evidently did not mean that they were to defend him with the sword, for two such weapons would not have been “enough” against the Roman legionaries who were sent to seize him. How apt they were to misconstrue, and take literally that which he was accustomed to speak in figures, just as, to this day, some will have it that the bread on the communion table is Christ's body and the juice of the vine is his blood.

Luk 22:39-40. And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

“There is a peculiar temptation coming upon you. I have taught you to pray every day, ‘Lead us not into temptation;’ but, tonight, make very special use of that petition: ‘Pray that ye enter not into temptation.’”

Luk 22:41-44. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Was he heard? Ah, my brethren he was indeed heard, but especially in that part of his prayer, “nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done;” and that was the most vital part of his prayer; for, much as he shrank from that bitter cup, still more did he shrink from any thought of going contrary to the will of his Father. That ought to be the heart of all our prayers; whatever we are asking for, chiefly and above all else this should be our cry, “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Luk 22:45-46. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

There must have been some very peculiar temptation about that night, that Christ's disciples should have needed to be again and again commanded to pray this prayer.

Luk 22:47-50. And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

No doubt he meant to cut his head in twain, but the sword slipped, and merely took away his right ear.

Luk 22:51. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear and healed him.

There was no lasting mischief done; but, on the contrary, another instance given of the divine power of Christ. No other miracle of this kind is mentioned in Scripture; I mean, the healing of a wound received by violence, the restoration of a member which had been cut off: and Luke is the only Evangelist who mentions it:—it has been thought that, because he was a physician, and had a quick eye for acts of healing, that he mentions that Christ touched the ear of Malchus, and healed him.

Luk 22:52-54. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

Luk 22:14-16 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat the passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

This was to be the last occasion on which our Lord and his disciples would thus meet.

Luk 22:17-18. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

That was the passover cup. Now the passover melts into the Lord's supper; and, henceforth, the Lord's supper remains, and the passover has passed away.

Luk 22:19-21. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

What a sobering, saddening effect this must have had upon those who were at that festival! We have reason to fear that it will be true of our gathering also. There were only twelve apostles, yet there was a Judas among them; we shall have many hundreds at our observance of the ordinance, may we not fear that there will be many a Judas, too! Can we expect that we shall have a better selection of professed followers of Christ than the Lord had made for his apostles?

Luk 22:22-24. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

That had been their question among themselves, but now they have another enquiry, of quite a different sort, to answer. It was wise of the Master to give them a heart-searching question, to drive out that question of ambition which had filled them with pride and contention. Oh! if any of us ever had such a thought as that in our bosom,— which of us is greatest? — who can speak the best? — who can serve God the most? — who can take the lead?

— let all such questions be set aside while we sorrowfully enter in the other sad enquiry,— which of us will betray our Lord? God grant that none of us ever may do so!

This exposition consisted of readings from 1Co 11:17-34; and Luk 22:14-24.

Luk 22:14-16. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

And it is fulfilled, for Christ himself is the Lamb of our Passover. His blood has been shed and sprinkled; his people have been brought up out of their Egyptian bondage; and, by faith, they feed upon him, and are glad. How sweetly the passover melted away into the Lord's supper, and how graciously did our Saviour thus teach us that, as a rule, he does not make violent changes in the development of his people's spiritual life, but he leads them on gradually from one stage to another! There may be, sometimes, very sudden elevations; but, as a general rule, we go from strength to strength, a step at a time; and the truth is revealed to us little by little.

Luk 22:17-18. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

This was the passover cup,-the cup with which they concluded the paschal supper. At such times, they also usually began to chant a Psalm in happy unison. Just at that point, Christ interjected the first part of the celebration of the new ordinance,-the Lord's supper, into which the paschal supper was to melt.

Luk 22:19. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you this do in remembrance of me.

It was clearly impossible that he could have meant that bread to be literally his body, because his body was there at the table. Therefore, the misunderstanding, or misrepresentation, of the Church of Rome is altogether without excuse. Our Saviour plainly intended to say, "This bread represents my body; it is an emblem, a symbol, of my body." If this had been spoken concerning the bread after Christ had been dead and gone, and not before, there might have been some warrant for the teaching of the Papists; but there cannot be any such warrant, as he used the words while he was sitting there with his apostles. Let us be careful not to lose the true meaning of Christ's words, while we combat the false interpretation that has been given to them.

Luk 22:20. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

He could not have meant that, literally, that cup was the new covenant; I never heard of anybody who thought he did. Why, then, take one part of the ordinance literally, if not the other? But our Lord did mean that the contents of that cup represented the blood, which seals and ratifies the eternal covenant on which our hopes are built.

Luk 22:21. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

Lamentable circumstance,-sad index of what often still occurs! The worst traitors to Christ are not outside, but inside the visible church; there they have the best opportunity for doing mischief; there they can give the unkindest cut of all. God grant that none of us may be among that miserable number!

Luk 22:22. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined; but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

The fact that it was determined, in the eternal decrees of God, that Christ should die, did not at all diminish the responsibility of all had a share in bringing about that death. Learn, beloved, to believe firmly in Divine predestination without doubting human responsibility. Even though you may not be able to show how these two things agree, do not be anxious about that matter; be satisfied to believe what you cannot understand. Both these things are true, and they are both of them in this verse.

Luk 22:23-24. And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

What a strange thing that it should have been so! Is there any such strife among us here? If so, how utterly unworthy are we to be the disciples of such a Master as our Lord Jesus Christ!

Luk 22:25-26. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

You know, brethren, that it always will be so. If a man tries to be great in the church, somehow or other his brethren generally think very little of him; but he who is willing to serve,-whose one ambition it is to lay himself out for the glory of his Master, and for the general good,-that man usually has a great deal more honour than he would have expected to receive. The way to be great in the church is to be serviceable to all around us, to be meek and lowly, to be willing to wait upon others. We have good reason for being the servants of our brethren when we remember the humble position that our Lord himself assumed.

Luk 22:27. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

He served in the very humblest capacity, for did he not even wash the disciples' feet? And if he, who was the greatest of all, thus condescended to perform the lowliest service, who among us shall be so lifted up as to suppose that no common work is good enough for him? Brethren, we must be humble, or else we shall be humbled. And let me remark that the latter experience is by no means a pleasant one, while the former experience is most sweet and gracious. God give us the grace to be humble!

Luk 22:28-30. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath

appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Yes, there are thrones and a kingdom for those who are faithful to the King of kings; but there is something else to think of beside that kind of glory, for notice our Saviours next words,

Luk 22:31. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

And between us and the kingdom there will be struggles and dangers; and watchfulness and wrestling prayer will be required of us. And here is our only hope of escape from the perils of the way, as it was with poor Peter

Luk 22:32-34. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren; And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Though Peter did not really know himself, Christ knew him. That is one of our comforts,-that the Lord Jesus Christ foresees all future ill, and so provides against it; he looks down into our nature, and deals with us as we need to be dealt with. It is well for us that we are in his hands.

Luk 22:35-40. And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough. And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

Or, "into trial." We do not often enough present that petition, "Lead us not into temptation." We are not able to bear temptation if it goes beyond a certain point; and it is a greater mercy to escape temptation than it is to pass through it, and to overcome it. I mean, of course, only in some respects. We may ask to be delivered from the evil one if we must be tempted by him; but our first prayer should be that we may not enter into temptation.

Luk 22:41-42. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

We can read these words in a calm, quiet tone; but they were uttered by our Lord with an intensity of agony which we can scarcely call up before our mind's eye. So terrible was that agony, that our Saviour became utterly weak and faint through the intensity of his pleading.

Luk 22:43-44. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly:

More and more intense was that brief prayer as his supplication was continued.

Luk 22:44. And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Luke was a physician, you know, so he was the most likely one to record this phenomenon. It has happened-so we have been told,-to some other persons in intense fright or agony, that their sweat has been tinged with blood; but we never remember reading or hearing of anyone but our Lord of whom it could be said, "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Luk 22:45. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

Great sorrow may have quite opposite effects upon different men. You have, perhaps, sometimes noticed that intoxication produces upon some men exactly the opposite effect to that which it produces upon others; some become irritable and noisy, while others become taciturn and quiet. It is also quite a matter of fact that great sorrow has various effects upon different minds. In the Saviour's case, it aroused him to an awful agony of earnestness in prayer. In the disciples case, it sent them to sleep.

Luk 22:46. And said unto them, Why sleep ye! rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

The great trial for them, as well as for their Lord, was close at hand then. It was late at night, and they were drowsy and sleepy; yet

no time is amiss for supplication. Prayer is never out of season, and never unnecessary. We never know when temptation is near, so let us pray without ceasing to him who is able to preserve us from temptation, or to deliver us out of it.

In anticipation of the communion that is to follow this service, let us read once more the story of our Lord's agony and arrest, as recorded in the twenty-second chapter of the Gospel according to Luke. Probably we are all familiar with the narrative of the event which happened on that dreadful night; may the Holy Spirit teach us what they meant!

Luk 22:39. And Jesus came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

The garden of Gethsemane had often been the place of our Lord's private prayer, and it was therefore well selected as the scene of his fierce struggle with the foe. Where we get strength from God in private, it may often happen that we shall have to endure our greatest conflicts. Singularly enough, it is said that the Jews had a custom of taking the red heifer to the Mount of Olives before it was sacrificed, as if they set forth in that very act the leading of Christ Jesus into Gethsemane, and the bringing him back again with his raiment all red with his own blood. We might alter the prophet's words a little, and ask "Who is this that cometh from Olivet, with dyed garments from Gethsemane?" and the Divine Sufferer himself might answer, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

Luk 22:40. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

He knew what sore temptation meant, and he was about to feel it at its utmost, and he therefore exhorted his disciples to pray even as he had formerly taught them in the model prayer, "Lead us not into temptation."

Luk 22:41-43. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

This is so plain a proof of Christ's condescension as a man that it has overwhelmed some persons; they could hardly understand how it could be true. Hence, I believe this forty-third verse is omitted in some versions of the Scriptures, and there have been several learned men who, while they could not disprove the existence of the verse in the most ancient manuscripts, have yet laboured hard to cut it out, since they thought it too great a stoop for Christ to take. But, my dear friends, in this condescension of our Lord we learn how truly he was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Doubtless, we receive much strengthening from angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And why should not Christ, who was in all things made like unto his brethren, also be strengthened by an angel?

Luk 22:44. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

The Greek has the idea of the stretching of the sinews; Christ prayed to the very stretching of his nerves and sinews. As when men wrestle for their lives, so did Christ in prayer strain every power of mind and body that he might prevail. Luke alone describes this dread scene of Christ's agonizing even unto blood; but there is no doubt whatever, from this passage, that our Lord Jesus did actually sweat blood, — not something like blood, but blood itself, — and that in great drops and in such quantities that it did not only adhere to his flesh, and dye all his garments, but there was such an abundance of it that in great drops it fell down to the ground.

Luk 22:45-46. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Our Lord was himself so smarting under the pain of fierce temptation that he would have his disciples pray even unto an agony, that they might not be led into it. And oh! if you and I have to pray that we be not led into temptation, how much more should we be instant in supplication when we are in the furnace of temptation! Then, indeed, if we restrain prayer before God, we shall be in an evil case.

Luk 22:47. And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

It is a remarkable fact that we do not read in Scripture that any other of our Lord's apostles — not even John, — ever kissed the Saviour. It seems as if the most impudent familiarity was very near akin to dastardly treachery. The eleven would have thought it a high honour to be allowed even to kiss Christ's feet; but Judas, having lost his respect for his Master, it was no very great descent for him first to sell his Lord, and then to betray him with a kiss. Mark you, brethren, our Lord Jesus Christ is generally betrayed thus. How, for instance, do men usually begin their books when they mean to undermine the inspiration of Scripture? Why, with a declaration that they wish to promote the truth of Christ! There is the Judas-kiss, and the betrayal comes quickly afterwards. How is it

that Christ's name is often most grossly slandered among men? Why, by those who make a loud profession of love to him, and then sin foully as the chief of transgressors!

Luk 22:48. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

Christ might put that question to many of his nominal followers in the present day: "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Luk 22:49. When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, lord, shall we smite with the sword?

There is always that tendency, even among Christian people, to get their hands on the sword-hilt, and a good man's hand is never more out of place than there. When he has his hands clasped in prayer, or placed upon the promises of God, then it is well; but a Christian with his hand upon his sword is something like an angel putting forth his hand unto iniquity.

Luk 22:50-53. And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut of his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

"This is the time when I am given up, on the one hand to the temptations of Satan, — the power of darkness, — and, on the other hand, to you: 'This is your hour.'" And, as beasts that prowl in the darkness are generally the most ravenous and fierce, so were these chief priests and captains and elders most determined in seeking the blood of Christ. Paul afterwards wrote that none of the princes of this world knew the hidden wisdom, "for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." It was just the darkness of their minds that led them thus to hunt the only Saviour of sinners to his death. Satan himself would scarcely have had a hand in crucifying Christ had he understood that, by that very crucifixion, Christ would break the old serpent's head for ever.

Luk 22:54. Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

For which he is not to be altogether blamed. I do not find that any other disciple followed Christ so near as Peter did, John was, probably, even farther off at first. Yet, dear friends, you and I may rest assured that, if we follow Christ afar off, it will not be long before we deny him. Those disciples who are ashamed of their Master, who never come out and openly confess their faith in him, have the seeds of treachery already sown within them. O brethren and sisters, be bold, and cleave close to Christ, for this is the way to walk securely!

Luk 22:55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

"Evil communications corrupt good manners." Get up, Peter and run away; what business have you sitting there? Better be in the cold, far off from in company, than in the warm in the midst of sinners.

Luk 22:56-57. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

See how the most courageous are often cast down by the very slightest means. The tongue of a poor feeble woman is too much for this valiant Peter, who said that he never would deny his Master, even though he should die with him.

Luk 22:58-60. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest.

Matthew and Mark tell us that, to prove this statement, and to make it quite clear that he was not a follower of Christ, he began to curse and to swear, as if the best evidence that he was not a Christian would be afforded by his cursing and swearing.

Luk 22:60-61. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.

How that look must have pierced Peter through and through!

Luk 22:61-64. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

Upon this passage, a good man well observes that, one of these days, Christ will answer this taunt. With his unerring finger, the Judge of all shall point them out, and say to each one, "Thou art the man." There are many of you, perhaps, who are committing sin in private, and you think it is not known. You are almost ready to ask the question of him whom you look upon as a blindfolded God, "Who is it that smote thee?" Ah! but he sees you all the while, he reads the secret the thoughts of your hearts, and the day will come when he will let you know that nothing has escaped his all-seeing eye.

Luk 22:65. And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.
The Lord bless to us all the reading of this sad, sad story! Amen.

Luk 22:54-56. Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire,-The flickering light helped to reveal his features to this maid "as he sat by the fire,"

Luk 22:56-58. And earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

Both Matthew and Mark say that it was a maid, and another maid who spoke to Peter; and now Luke mentions a man; but there is no reason why all three of them should not have united in bringing this charge. One maid began the accusation, and the others joined with her.

Luk 22:59-61. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.

The Saviour had been standing in the upper part of the room, which was probably roofed over, while Peter and the rest were down below in the courtyard, which was open to the sky, and therefore they needed a fire to warm them. Jesus had been standing before his judge; but on a sudden, as the cock crew, he "turned, and looked upon Peter."

Luk 22:61. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. That cock crowing had come at the very moment Christ had foretold, for Peter had already denied his Master thrice.

Luk 22:62. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Now hear what John has to say about this matter. He wrote after the other three Evangelists, and he generally supplies their deficiencies. He it is who tells us how Simon Peter got into the hall. (See Joh 18:15-18; Joh 18:25-27)

This exposition consisted of readings from Mat 26:31-35; Mat 26:57-58; Mat 26:69-75 Mar 14:53-54; Mar 14:66-72 Luk 22:54-62; and Joh 18:15-18; Joh 18:25-27.

Luk 22:63-71. And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Thereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, what need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Luke 22:63-65 "Men that held Jesus mocked ... blindfolded him ... and ... blasphemously spake."

Was Jesus held captive? Then he shall hold me fast and never let me go. My Lord, I surrender myself, my life, my all to thee, to be thy willing captive forever! Then next, as they did despise him, I will despise the world that did despise my Lord and Savior. And as they blind folded Jesus, what then? Why, I will be blindfolded too. I will henceforth see no charm, no attraction anywhere but in my Lord. And inasmuch as these men said many other things blasphemously against him, let us say many things in his praise.

Luk 23:1. And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

This exposition consisted of readings from Joh 18:12-14; Joh 18:19-26; Mar 14:53-65; and Luk 22:63-71; Luk 23:1.

Luk 22:63-71. And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Thereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, what need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Luke 23

Luk 23:1. And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

Our Lord had been taken to the tribunal of Annas and of Caiaphas, and now the whole multitude of them arose and led him unto Pilate. The first two tribunals were ecclesiastical and religious. There they charged him with crimes against the law. Now they take him to Pilate, and bring accusations against him, concerning Caesar and the Roman Government. "The whole multitude of them arose and led him unto Pilate."

Luk 23:2. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

A wily charge. It was the duty of the ruler of the province to protect the province from any rebellion against Caesar; so they put in the, "He perverts the nation, forbids to give tribute to Caesar."

Luk 23:3. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews?

It must have seemed a strange question to himself, as he saw the poor emaciated form of Jesus of Nazareth standing before him. "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

Luk 23:3. And he answered him and said, Thou sayest

"It is even so."

Luk 23:4. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

He took him aside and conversed with him, and perceived that his kingdom was not of a kind that would interfere with Caesar. As he looked at him, he found that it was not a matter which really could concern the great Roman Empire. It was in no danger from him. Pilate said to the chief priests and the people, "I find no fault in this man."

Luk 23:5. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

He caught at that.

Luk 23:6-7. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction,

For Herod was ruler of Galilee.

Luk 23:7. He sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

By which he answered two purposes. First, he would get out of the scrape himself; and secondly, he would compliment Herod by acknowledging that, as the man was a Galilean, he was under Herod's jurisdiction. What devices men have to escape from responsibility! This vacillating Pilate knew the right, and did it not. He would be very glad to avoid coming to any decision about it at all.

Luk 23:8-9. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

Now was Christ the Lamb — the sheep before her shearers who is dumb. He did answer Pilate a little, There was a little that was good about Pilate, vacillating as he was; but Herod had not a trace of anything upon him upon which the good seed could possibly take root; so he answered him nothing.

Luke 23:9 "He answered him nothing."

Herod had already silenced the voice, and no wonder that he could not hear the word. For what was John? He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (John 1:23). What was Jesus but the word (John 1:1)? He that silences the voice may well be denied the word.

Luk 23:10-11. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

This robe was probably white, sparkling, splendid. It tended to mock him. It set the example to Pilate and his men to clothe him in a scarlet robe, and mock him yet again. There is a contagiousness about an evil example.

Luk 23:12. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves. Behold how sinners will agree when Christ is to be slaughtered. They shake hands together when he is to die.

Luk 23:13-16. And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people. Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

But what duplicity! If he is innocent, release him, but do not scourge him. If he is guilty, crucify him, but do not balk about releasing him. When men are wrong at heart, when they come to a resolution, it is self-contradictory. There is nothing more inconsistent than sin. It is an image whose head may be of gold, but the feet are always of clay. You cannot make sin hang together, and the verdict of one who is undecided and has two minds is always a very vicious one. "I will chastise him and release him."

Luk 23:1-2, And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him saying, We found this —

Put in what word you like — villains — scoundrel — our translators could not find a better word than that inexpressive-expressive word "fellow." "We found Eats fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ, a King." They shift the charge, you see, now; before, it was blasphemy, now it is sedition.

Luk 23:2-3. Fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar saying that he himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.

Another of the evangelists tells us that he first asked Pilate what he meant by the question, explaining that he only claimed the kingdom in a spiritual sense.

Luk 23:4-5. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. And they were the more fierce, saying. He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

When Pilate heard them say Galilee, he caught at that; 'he did not wish to displease the multitude.

Luk 23:6-7. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

So away the Master goes; he must be dragged through the streets again to a third tribunal. Oh! thou blessed Lamb of God! Never were sheep driven to the shambles as thou wert driven to death!

Luk 23:8. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad; for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

But the Lord never worked miracles yet, to gratify idle curiosity. He who would have worked a miracle to heal the poorest beggar in the street would not work a wonder to please the king in whose power he was.

Luk 23:9. Then he questioned with him in many words: but he answered him nothing.

“No,” says good Christopher Ness — “John Baptist was Christ’s voice, and Herod had stopped him; there Christ would not speak; as if he would say, ‘No, no’; thou didst cut off John Baptist’s head, who was my messenger, and since thou hast ill-treated my emir, I, the King of kings, will have nothing to say to thee.”

Luk 23:10. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

The original word is made nought of him — made him ads nothing.

Luk 23:11-12. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Two dogs could well agree to hunt the same prey, and sinners who quarrel on other things will often be quite agreed to persecute the gospel.

Luk 23:13-16. And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people; and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

Ah! that word “chastise” shim so glibly over the tongue, but you know what it meant, when the Roman lectors laid bare the back and used the terrific scourge? “I will scourge him,” said Pilate. Perhaps he thought that if he scourged him, his suffering would induce the Jews to spare his life.

Luk 23:17-20. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast). And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison). Pilate, therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

He seems to have gone backward and forward many times, desiring to save the life of Christ, but not having the moral courage to do it.

Luk 23:21-26. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired.’ but he delivered Jesus to their will. And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

This exposition consisted of readings from Mat 26:59-68; Luke 23.

Luk 23:13-15. And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him: and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

They were judges not at all inclined to favor him; but yet, though his accusers were mad again him, nothing could be brought before these two judgment-seats which would hold water for a single moment. Holy and harmless was Christ, and, therefore, his accusers knew not what to say against him.

Luk 23:16-23. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison). Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified.

Never did man's enmity to God become more clear than when God, in human flesh, descending upon an errand of mercy, must, nevertheless, be hunted down by these cruel cries of "Crucify him, crucify him." Man would be a Decide if he could. "The fool hath said in his heart, "No God." To get rid of God — to get rid of God, even in human form, is the enmity of man's heart. He will have it if he can.

Luk 23:23-26. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition, and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will. And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

Fit type of all Christ's followers, who must expect to carry Christ's cross, and who should be happy and honoured in carrying it after Jesus.

Luk 23:27-28. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. He had the siege of Jerusalem before his mind, and, therefore, in tender pity he bade them save their tears for other sorrows.

Our Lord's last days gave tragic proof of the hate and cruel mockery of his foes; yet how marvelously he endured!

Luk 23:18-19. And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

Do you not see how they refuted their own accusation? If Christ was really the leader of sedition, would they have asked that he should be put to death? Would they have preferred a murderer to him? There can be no danger of a man leading people astray when those very people were crying, "Let him be put to death." It must have been a transparent fraud. Pilate must have loathed them. Mean as he was, he must have seen through their meanness.

Luke 23:18 "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas."

The perfect, loving, tender, sympathizing Savior was met with the words, "Crucify him!" and Barabbas, the thief, was preferred. "Well," says one, "that was atrocious."

The same thing is put before you, and every unregenerate man will make the same choice that the Jews did. Only men renewed by grace will act on the contrary principle. This day I put before you Christ Jesus or your sins. The reason why many come not to Christ is because they cannot give up their lusts, their pleasures, their profits. Sin is Barabbas. Sin is a thief. It will rob your soul of its life. It will rob God of his glory. Sin is a murderer. It stabbed our father, Adam. It slew our purity. Sin is a traitor. It rebels against the king of heaven and earth.

Luk 23:20-22. Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

He thinks a great deal of his own inconsistent conclusion, and so many men do. When they came to a conclusion, bad as it is, contradictory, they will stick to it. Adhesive to nothing but to wrong, like a pendulum swinging between right and wrong, was this Pilate. Yet he will keep on the swing. He is only steady in that, — "I will, therefore, chastise him and release him." Oh! dear friends, it would be better for you to come to thorough decision one way or the other — Christ, or no Christ; true religion, or no religion; but to halt between the two is a lame business that will be ruinous to you.

Luk 23:23. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

These men were bribed. The popular feeling was with our Lord to a very large extent, but, under the influence of threats and bribes, they found a mob to cry, "Crucify him." You know the old saying, Vox populi vox Dei, There is no truth in it. The voice of the people is not the voice of God, for they said, "Crucify him, crucify him."

Luk 23:24. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

Again attempting to evade the responsibility by saying that they should be both accusers and judges.

Luk 23:25. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Sad scene. May our hearts be broken, and made tender, and sanctified by meditation upon it.

Let us turn now to the later events.

Luk 23:32-33. And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary,

The margin reads, or the place of a skull, when they were come to the place which is called a skull.

Luk 23:33. There they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Come hither, soul. Thou who readest this chapter, come to this place of a skull. It is the first resting-place of every weary soul. There is no rest for the sole of your foot till first you come to Calvary, and see your Saviour die.

Luk 23:34. Then said Jesus,

As they crucify him.

Luk 23:34. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Now, Luke supplies some particulars which Mark has left out. Turn, therefore, to the 23rd chapter of Luke and the 26th verse. Luke, also, tells us of Simon.

Luk 23:26. And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

Now these are the things which Mark has not put in.

Luke 23:28 "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves."

You need not weep because Christ died one tenth as much as because your sins rendered it necessary that he should die. You need not weep over the crucifixion, but weep over your transgression, for your sins nailed the Redeemer to the accursed tree. To weep over a dying Savior is to lament the remedy. It were wiser to bewail the disease. To weep over the dying Savior is to wet the surgeon's knife with tears. It were better to bewail that spreading tumor which that knife must cut away.

Luk 23:27; Luk 23:29. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

This was accounted a curse, but their curses should seem blessings unto them when compared with the curse of the dreadful slaughter at Jerusalem.

Luk 23:30-31. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree what shall be done in the dry?

If they do these things while yet the Jewish State is standing, what will they do when that State is broken up? If they do these things to innocent persons, a green tree, what will they do to the unhallowed person, the ungodly and the rebellions, who are like dry, rotten trees? How will the flame lay hold on those branches out of which the sap of virtue has long ago been dried?

Luk 23:32. And there were also two other malefactors,

It should be others—there should be an "s" there.

Luk 23:32-33. Led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

Shall we refuse to take up our cross and follow the Lord Jesus Christ? I think not. If any ask us whether we will leave him because of the fears which may be excited by the world's frowns, this shall be our answer—let us sing it—with regard to the world and all its temptations:—

“No, facing all its frowns or smiles,
Counting its gain but loss;
Without the camp we take our place,
With Jesus bear the cross.”

This exposition consisted of readings from Psa 69:1-21. Mar 15:15-23. Luk 23:26-33.

Luk 23:27. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. Their best Friend, the Healer of their sick, the Lover of their children, was about to be put to death, so they might well bewail and lament.

Luk 23:28-30. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave sack. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. Our Saviour looked forward to the terrible siege of Jerusalem, the most tragical of all human transactions. I think I do not exaggerate when I say that history contains nothing equal to it. It stands alone in the unutterable agony of men, women, and children in that dreadful time of suffering.

Luk 23:31. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?
If the Christ of God is put to death even while the Jewish capital seems vigorous and flourishing, what shall be done when it is all dry and dead, and the Roman legions are round about the doomed city?

Luk 23:32. And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. Every item of scorn was added to our Saviour's death; and yet the Scriptures were thus literally fulfilled, for “He was numbered with the transgressors.”

Luk 23:33-34. And when they were come to the place, which, is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Do you hear the hammer fall? “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Do you see the bleeding hands and feet of Jesus? This is all that is extracted by that fearful pressure, nothing but words of pardoning love, a prayer for those who are killing him: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

What an example our Lord herein presents to us! Let us continue in prayer as long as our heart beats. Let no excess of suffering drive us away from the throne of grace, but rather let it drive us closer to it.

On that day when Peter stood up with the eleven and charged the people that with wicked hands they had slain the Savior, three thousand of these persons who were thus justly accused of his crucifixion became believers in him (Acts 2). That was an answer to Jesus' prayer.

Christ prays for you when you do not pray for yourselves. “Father, forgive them” was a prayer for those who had never sought forgiveness for themselves. And when under a sense of sin you dare not lift so much as your eyes toward heaven, he is pleading for you. And when you cannot plead, when the language of supplication seems to blister your lips because you feel yourself to be so unworthy, he still pleads for you. Oh, what encouragement this ought to give you!

Say, “Father, forgive me.” Shall my Master say, “Father, forgive him,” and will not you pray for yourself? Do not use Christ's plea; that is his, not yours. He could say, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” You must use another plea: “Father, forgive me through thy Son's precious blood.”

Luk 23:35. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

You know how mockery puts salt and vinegar into a wound. A man does not at any time like to be reviled; but when he is full of physical and mental anguish, and his heart is heavy within him, then ridicule is peculiarly full of acid to him.

Luke 23:35 "He saved others; let him save himself."

Perhaps this dying thief read the gospel out of the lips of Christ's enemies. They said, "He saved others."

"Ah!" thought he, "Did he save others? Why should he not save me?"

What a grand bit of gospel that was for the dying thief!

Luk 23:36-37. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

These rough legionaries knew how to put their jests in the most cruel shape, and to press home their scoffs upon their suffering victim.

Luk 23:38. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew,

These were the three languages that could be understood by all the people round about.

Luk 23:38. THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

And so be is, and so he shall be. He has never quitted the throne. The Son of David is still King of the Jews, though they continue to reject him; but the day shall come when they shall recognize and receive the Messiah. "Then shall they look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

Luk 23:39. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

Matthew and Mark speak of both the thieves as railing at Jesus. We must take their expressions as being literally correct; and if so, both the malefactors at first cast reproaches in Christ's teeth.

Luk 23:40-41. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath, done nothing amiss.

Not only has he done nothing worthy of death, but he has done nothing improper, nothing out of place: "This man hath done nothing amiss." The thief bears testimony to the perfect character of this wondrous Man, whom he nevertheless recognized to be divine, as we shall see in the next verse.

Luk 23:42-47. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou, comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with, a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion, saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

He was set there at the head of the guard, to watch the execution; and he could not help saying, as he observed the wonderful signs in heaven and earth, "Certainly this was a righteous man."

Luk 23:48. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

What a change must have come over that ribald crowd! They had shouted, "Crucify him;" they had stood there, and mocked him; and now they are overcome with the sight, and they smite their breasts. Ah, dear friends, their grief did not come to much! Men may smite their breasts; but unless God smites their hearts, all the outward signs of a gracious work will come to nothing at all.

Luk 23:49. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

Let "these things" be before your mind's eye this evening, and think much of your crucified Lord, all you who are of his acquaintance,

and who are numbered amongst his followers.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 23:27-49, and Mat 27:50-54.

Luk 23:27-31. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

Our Saviour, even amidst the greatest sufferings, seemed almost to forget them in the deep sympathy that he had for the people around him. He pictured in his mind's eye that awful siege of Jerusalem. Who can read it, as Josephus describes it, without feeling the deepest horror? Oh, the misery of the women and of the children in that dreadful day when the zealots turned against each other within the city, and fought to the death, and when the Roman soldiery, pitiless as wolves, at last stormed the place! Truly did the Saviour say of it that there should be no day like to it; neither was there it was the concentration of human misery; and our Lord wept because he foresaw what it would be, and he bade these poor women reserve their tears for those awful sorrows.

Luk 23:32-33 And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

O blessed Master they did not spare thee any scorn! There was no mode of expressing their contempt, which their malignity did not invent. Truly, "he was cumbered with the transgressors." You could not count the three sufferers on Calvary without counting him; he was so completely numbered with the others that he must be reckoned as one of them.

Luk 23:34. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

It was all that he could say in their favor, and he did say that. If there is anything to be said in thy favor, O my fellow-sinner, Christ will say it; and if there is nothing good in thee that his eyes can light upon, he will pray for his own account, "Father, forgive them for my sake."

Luk 23:34. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

His garments were the executioners' perquisites; pitilessly they took them from him, and left him naked in his shameful sorrow.

Luk 23:35. And the people stood beholding.

There was no pity in their eyes. No one of them turned away his face because he could not look upon so disgraceful a deed.

Luk 23:35. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

I have already reminded you that there was a deep truth hidden away in what these cruel mockers said, for Jesus must give himself up as a ransom if we were to be redeemed.

Luk 23:36-38. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, For these were the three languages known to the throng, and Pilate invited them all to read in "Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew,"-

Luk 23:38-39. THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

Poor man; even though he is dying a felon's death, he must be in the swim with the multitude, he must keep in with the fashion, so strong, so powerful, is the popular current with all mankind.

Luk 23:40-42. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

It was strange that Christ should find a friend dying on the cross by his side. Nobody else spoke to him about a kingdom. I am afraid

that even his former followers began to think that it was all a delusion; but this dying thief cheers the heart of Jesus by the mention of a kingdom, and by making a request to him concerning that kingdom even when the King was in his death agony.

Luke 23:42 "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

The thief does not even seem to have had an instruction, an invitation, or an expostulation addressed to him, and yet this man became a sincere and accepted believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many who have been instructed from their childhood, who have been admonished and warned and entreated and invited, and yet they have not come to Christ, while this man, without any of these advantages, nevertheless believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and found eternal life. You who have lived under the sound of the gospel from your childhood, the thief does not comfort you, he accuses you!

Luk 23:43. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

The Master, you see, uses his old phraseology. In his preaching, he had been accustomed to say, "Verily, verily," and here he is, even on the cross, the same Preacher still, for there was such assurance, such confidence, such verity, in all his words, that he never had to alter his style of speaking. "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Well does our poet put it,—"

He that distributes crowns and thrones,
Hangs on a tree, and bleeds and groans."

He was distributing these crowns and thrones even while hanging on the tree. "Tell it out among the nations that the Lord reigneth from the tree," may not be an exact translation of the Psalm, but it is true, Psalm or no Psalm.

Luk 23:44. And it was about the sixth hour,
About noon, when the sun was at its height.

Luk 23:44. And there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.
Three o'clock in the afternoon.

Luk 23:45. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

As if the great light of heaven and the pattern of heavenly things were both disturbed. The sun puts on mourning, and the temple rends her veil in horror at the awful deed enacted on the cross.

Luk 23:46. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father,
Is it not sweet to see how Jesus begins and ends his prayers on the cross with "Father"?

Luk 23:46-48. Into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things, which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

A strange ending to that day, was it not? The three hours' darkness and the death-cry of the Christ had not converted them, but it had convicted them of sin. They felt that a great and heinous crime had been committed; and, though they had come together as to a mere show or sight, they went away from the spectacle impressed as they had never been before: "All the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned."

Luk 23:49. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

In these doings on Calvary you and I have a share,-in their guilt, or else in their merit. Oh, that we may not be condemned with those who were guilty of his death, but may we be cleansed by that precious blood which puts away the sin of all who believe on him!

This exposition consisted of readings from Mar 15:15-39; and Luk 23:27-49.

We have often read the story of our Saviour's sufferings; but we cannot read it too often. Let us, therefore, once again repair to "the place which is called Calvary." As we just now sang, —

“Come, let us stand beneath the cross;
So may the blood from out his side Fall gently on us drop by drop;
Jesus, our Lord is crucified.”
We will read, first, Luke’s account of our Lord’s crucifixion and death.

Luk 23:33. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one of the right hand, and the other on the left.

They gave Jesus the place of dishonour. Reckoning him to be the worst criminal of the three, they put him between the other two. They heaped upon him the utmost scorn which they could give to a malefactor; and in so doing they unconsciously honoured him. Jesus always deserves the chief place wherever he is. In all things he must have the pre-eminence. He is King of sufferers as well as King of saints.

Luk 23:34. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

How startled they must have been to hear such words from one who was about to be put to death for a supposed crime! The men that drove the nails, the men that lifted up the tree, must have been started back with amazement when they heard Jesus talk to God as his Father, and pray for them: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Did ever Roman legionary hear such words before? I should say not. They were so distinctly and diametrically opposed to the whole spirit of Rome. There is was blow for blow; only in the case of Jesus they gave blows where none had been received. The crushing cruelty of the Roman must have been startled indeed at such words as these, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Luk 23:34. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding.

The gambling soldiers little dreamed that they were fulfilling Scriptures while they were raffling for the raiment of the illustrious Sufferer on the cross; yet so it was. In the twenty-second Psalm, which so fully sets forth our Saviour’s sufferings, and which he probably repeated while he hung on the tree, David wrote, “They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” “And the people stood beholding,” gazing, looking on the cruel spectacle. You and I would not have done that; there is a public sentiment which has trained us to hate the sight of cruelty, especially of deadly cruelty to one of our own race; but these people thought that they did no harm when they “stood beholding.” They also were thus fulfilling the Scriptures; for the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second Psalm says, “They look and stare upon me.”

Luk 23:35. And the rulers also with them derided him,
Laughed at him, made him the object of course jests.

Luk 23:35. Saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar.

In mockery, not giving it to him, as they did later in mercy; but in mockery, pretending to present him with weak wine, such as they drank.

Luk 23:37. And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

I fancy the scorn that they threw into their taunt: “If thou be the king of the Jews;” that was a bit of their own. “Save thyself;” that they borrowed from the rulers. Sometimes a scoffer or a mocker cannot exhibit all the bitterness that is in his heart except by using borrowed terms, as these soldiers did.

Luk 23:38. And a superscription also was written over him in the letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

John tells us that Pilate wrote this title, and that the chief priests tried in vain to get him to alter it. It was written in the three current languages of the time, so that the Greek, the Roman, and the Jew might alike understand who he was who was thus put to death. Pilate did not know as much about Christ as we do, or he might have written, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS, and OF THE GENTILES, TOO.

Luk 23:39. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

He, too, borrows this speech from the rulers who derided Christ, only putting the words “and us” as a bit of originality. “If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us.”

Luk 23:40. But the other answering rebuked him saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

A fine testimony to Christ: “This man hath done nothing amiss;” nothing unbecoming, nothing out of order, nothing criminal, certainly; but nothing even “amiss.” This testimony was well spoken by this dying thief.

Luk 23:42. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up his ghost.

He yielded his life. He did not die, as we have to do, because our appointed time has come, but willingly the great Sacrifice parted with his life: “He gave up the ghost.” He was a willing sacrifice for guilty men. Now let us see what John says concerning these hours of agony, these hours of triumph.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 23:33-46; Joh 19:25-30

Luke 24

Luk 24:1-4. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

Brethren, they might have been much more perplexed if they had found the body of Jesus there, for then his promises would not have been fulfilled, and all their hopes would have been blighted forever. Unbelief is often the mother of needless perplexity. The resurrection of Christ is plain enough to us now; but to those who had seen him die, and whose faith was so very weak, it was a cause for perplexity that they could not find his dead body. They meant to embalm it, they had brought sweet spices with them for that purpose. It was well that it was in their heart, although it was an unwise and needless project. Yet I doubt not that the Lord thought those spices were very sweet, and that he accepted them because of the love they represented; and, sometimes, you and I, in our ignorance, have tried to do for Christ what he would not wish to have us do, but he has understood our motive, and accepted our intention, albeit that there was a mistake lurking behind it.

Luk 24:5-8. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, —

It is well to know Christ’s words, even though we often forget them; because we could not remember them if we had not once known them. Even though our leaky memory lets so much run through, there will be enough remaining in the soul to come back with great sweetness, by-and- by, in sometime of special need. Thus, those holy women, who had often ministered to Christ, “remembered his words,” —

Luk 24:9-12. And returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulcher; —

He must needs go and see for himself, impetuous spirit that he was; so he “ran unto the sepulcher;” —

Luk 24:12. And stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

Thus that notable day wore on. Christ had risen, but his people had not risen to full belief in him; they were still in the grave of distress and doubt, though their Master had left the grave of death.

Luk 24:13-15. And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

Where two, whose hearts are right, and whose talk is heavenly, keep company with one another, Christ is very likely to make a third.

Sometimes, when he does not come to one, he reveals himself to two; as he said to his disciples, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And often, when two believers agree in communion, there is a sweet magnetic force about their fellowship which brings the Saviour to them, and retains him in their company.

Luk 24:16. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

Oh, these eyes of ours! They let us see a great deal that we had better not see; and there are some things, which we might almost die to see, which we see not. I doubt not that, often, spiritual beings are about us, but we do not discern them; and, certainly, the Master himself oftentimes draws near, yet our eyes are holden, and we do not see him. This may even happen at the communion table; we may see the signs and symbols, but see not Christ, the signified and symbolized One. It is ill when it is so.

Luk 24:17-25. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, —

I feel sure that he said that word very gently; — not as you and I might say it, in a pet. Yet, truly, as we read the story, we cannot help feeling that they were very foolish and stupid. Their own tale convicts them. So no wonder Christ said unto them, "O fools," —

Luk 24:25-27. And slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses —

At the very Pentateuch, —

Luk 24:27. And all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

We may well wish that we might have been there. What a privilege it was for those two disciples, — a walk and a talk combined! But what heavenly talk, all concerning himself! I know that you, dear friends, never relish a discourse unless Christ is foremost in it; but when Christ is the sole subject, and even Scripture itself is made subordinate to the display of Christ, then are you well content.

Luk 24:28. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went:

And sorry, I have no doubt, they were to do so. One would like to walk on to all eternity with Christ thus talking by the way.

Luk 24:28-30. And he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

That was the old sign, well known to them and to him, — that blessing and breaking of the bread.

Luk 24:31. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

It is sometimes so with us; we have just recognized our Lord, and, lo! he has gone.

Luk 24:32. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, —
Oh, blessed heart-burn!

Luk 24:32-33. While he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, —
They could not stop away from their fellow-disciples; they must tell such glorious tidings as they had, so “they rose up the same hour,” —

Luk 24:33-36. And returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, —
That is usually his way; while we are talking about manifestations of Christ in the past, he often comes again among us, and gives us a new revelation of himself.

Luk 24:36-41. And saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy —

That is a singular combination. At first, they believed not for grief; and now the pendulum swings the other way, and they believe not for joy. There is a kind of unbelief that is begotten of excessive delight. We know something to be true, and yet there comes the recoil, and the doubt, “Surely it is too good to be true; can it really be so?” See how Jesus convinced them that he was not a spirit: “while they yet believed not for joy,” —

Luk 24:41. And wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?
“Anything to eat?”

Luk 24:42-43. And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them.
That was proof positive that he was still composed of flesh and bones, a real person, and no phantom.

Luk 24:44-51. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

He went away in the act of blessing, and he has never left off blessing his people from that day to this.

Luk 24:52-53. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Luk 24:1-11. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned to the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

What an emptying power unbelief has! No news could ever be more full of solace than the news of a risen Saviour; but to the ears of

unbelief this news, which made all heaven glad, seemed to the apostles but as idle tales. Unbelief tied the hands of Jesus once when he was at Nazareth, for "he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief:" and unbelief seems often to tie our heart-strings too, so that they can give forth no sweet music. O Lord, help us to overcome our unbelief, and enable us ever confidently to believe the truth that comes to us supported by such testimony as these good women gave to the apostles!

Luk 24:12-14. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulcher; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three score furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

As was most proper, they that feared the Lord spake often one to another. Just as Elijah and Elisha talked with each other as they went towards the Jordan where Elijah was to be translated, so these two disciples were talking together of the great events that had recently happened; and especially talking of the death and the reported resurrection of Christ. This was most natural, for what is uppermost in the heart will soon be uppermost upon the tongue. They had had their minds greatly exercised concerning the departure of their Lord, and it was only natural that they should speak of it. If we never talk of Christ, we have great reason to suspect whether he is really in our hearts at all. Christ's declaration to his disciples, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," was literally fulfilled in the case of these two disciples going to Emmaus.

Luk 24:15. And it came to pass that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. And, beloved, if you would have communion with Christ, have communion with one another. If my Lord will not reveal himself to me, perhaps he will reveal himself to others, therefore let me get into the company of his chosen, and then, surely, when he appears in the midst of their assembly, I shall have a share of the fellowship that they will enjoy.

Luk 24:16-19. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communication are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: —

What a little advance these disciples had made in the knowledge of Christ! He had been their Teacher, they had seen his miracles, and yet, though they had been constantly under his superintendence, they had not learned enough to know that he was divine. The Holy Ghost had not yet been given; and, without the Holy Spirit's divine instruction, these disciples could only say that Christ "was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:" —

Luk 24:20-25. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain woman also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Supposing him to be a stranger in Jerusalem, yet one who was well acquainted with Jewish prophecy, they had told him exactly what the prophecies had foretold concerning the Messiah. If they had meant to refer to the various prophecies concerning Christ, they could not have detailed facts which would have more accurately fulfilled them, and therefore Christ said to them "O you foolish men, how slow of heart you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"

Luk 24:26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, —

"Are not those just the very things which the prophets say that the Christ, the Anointed, must suffer? 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,'" —

Luk 24:26-28. And to enter into his glory and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

For Christ never forces his company upon anyone; and if we are willing to let him go, he will go, nor will he return until we are heartily sick of having treated him coldly. When we can no longer bear the absence of Christ, then he will speedily return to us. There

is an instance of this in the life of Christmas Evans, which impressed me very much when I read it. Sandemanianism had spread very much through Wales, and he had been very busy attacking it; but it seemed as if, in doing so, his sermons had lost all their former power and unction, and his own soul also grew very dry and barren, and he had little or no fellowship with Christ. He said that, at last, his soul grew utterly weary of being absent from his Lord and he could not endure it any longer, but felt that he must once again enjoy communion with his Lord, and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in his preaching. So he stopped at the foot of Cader Idris and spent some three hours in an intense agony of prayer; and the result was that, when he next preached, he did so with all the unction and power which had formerly rested upon him. He had grown weary of the absence of Christ and therefore Christ returned to him. O brethren, if Christ makes as though he would go further, do not let him go, but hold him fast!

Luk 24:29-33. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, —

This shows their zeal and also their courage; this news was too good to be kept to themselves, and although it was nearly night, and they had a good distance to go, in a country that was far from safe for travelers, they “returned to Jerusalem,” —

Luk 24:33-36. And found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

No more appropriate greeting could have been given to the troubled disciples.

Luk 24:37-45. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

And he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in the name of all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Luk 24:13-15. And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

Where two talk of heavenly things they shall not be long without a third. Jesus loves holy company, and he will join himself to those who in their conversation join themselves to him.

Luk 24:16-17. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

The first part of that question some professors might be ashamed to answer, “What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk?” It is not always that all Sunday talk is Sabbath talk —not always that we converse as we should upon the things of God. We are, many of us, blameworthy here.

Luk 24:18-19. And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and in word before God and all the people:

Just as a schoolmaster, though he knows more than the children, yet asks them questions to see what they know. So did the Saviour, "What things?... And they said to him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in word and deed." I ought to have said, "in deed and word." You see my mistake. That is how we put it, "word and deed," for our words go first, but, with Christ, the practical comes first, and then commences the doctrinal.

Luk 24:20-24. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

They made out a very clear case against their own unbelief here. They had the evidence of the women, and they had the evidence of the men of their own company; the women, they knew were honest. About their own company they could have no doubt, but yet they did not draw the inference which was clear enough, namely, that Jesus had risen, and that what he said he was he had proved himself to be.

Luk 24:25-26. Then he said unto them. O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?
Is not this just what he said he would do?

Luk 24:27-28. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. Never had they had a shorter walk in their lives; his holy talk had made the journey seem as nothing, and sorry they were to see the village, and especially when they found, that their companion had an idea of going further.

Luk 24:29. But they constrained him saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.
O wise disciple, when thou hast thy Master to hold him. "I held him," says the spouse; "I held him, and I would not let him go." So may it be with us.

Luk 24:30-31. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

Sometimes when you do not remember a friend who has greatly changed, or from whom you have been long apart, some old familiar sign will bring it all back as with a rush of memory; you know him at once. Now if this were an ordinary meal, as perhaps it was, Jesus was so in the habit of giving thanks that they knew him by that. I wish we knew every Christian by the same sign. Or if this were, indeed, a celebration of his own sacred festival, then again they knew, for is not this the sign between Christ and his people, and is not this table the place where Jesus meets his beloved? "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him." But they knew him to see him no more that night.

Luk 24:32-35. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

Did they go to their beds? The day was far spent; late traveling was dangerous in Israel. Ah! dangerous or not, they are so overwhelmed with joy that they must go and communicate what they had seen.

Luk 24:13-15. And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

When two saints are talking together, Jesus is very likely to come and make the third one in the company. Talk of him, and you will soon talk with him. I would that believers more often spoke the one to the other about the things of God. It has been said that, in the olden time, God's people spake often one to another; and now we have altered that, and God's people speak often one against

another. It is an alteration; but it certainly is not an improvement. May we get together again, and, like these two disciples, talk of all the things that happened in Jerusalem eighteen centuries ago! If we have less of reasoning than they had, let us have more of communion.

Luk 24:16. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

Christ was there; but they did not perceive him. Our eyes may be very easily shut so that we do not see Christ even when he is close to us; we see a thousand things; but we miss the Master.

Luk 24:17. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? Christian people, why are you sad? It should not be so. And when you talk, why do you increase each other's sadness? Is that wisdom? Surely, the Master might say to some here present, "Why are ye sad?" I hope that he will enable you to shake off the sadness, and to rejoice in him.

Luk 24:18-20. And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

These were sad things to talk about. They thought that they had lost all when they had lost Christ; and yet there is no theme in all the world that is more full of joy than talk about the crucified Christ. This is strange, is it not? If we look beneath the surface, we shall see that the darkest deed that was ever perpetrated has turned out to be the greatest blessing to mankind; and that the cruellest crime ever committed by mortal man has been made the channel of the divinest benediction of God.

Luk 24:21-23. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

How innocently they tell the story! How they convict themselves of stark unbelief! And the Master hears it all patiently and quietly. What a strange sensation it must have been for him to hear them talking about him in this singular way when, all the while, they did not know who the "stranger" was to whom they were speaking! Have you ever thought of what the Saviour must think of many things that we say? We think them wise; but they must be very foolish to the eye of his infinite wisdom, and very shallow to him who sees everything to the bottom.

Luk 24:24-25. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

He loved them tenderly, but he rebuked them strongly, I had almost said sternly: "O fools, and slow of heart!" I am afraid that is our name: "fools." I am afraid that it may be said of us that we are "slow of heart to believe." We want so many proofs. We very readily disbelieve, but we very slowly believe. If you had a piano in your house, and you left it for months; and when you came back, you found it all in beautiful tune, you would be sure that somebody must have been there to put it in tune; but if, on the other hand, you left it to itself, and it got out of tune, you would say that such a condition was only what was to be expected. So it is natural for us to get out of tune. Sometimes we ring out glad music on the high sounding cymbals, and we lift up the loud hallelujahs of exultant joy; but soon we are down again in the deeps, and strike a minor key. Grace alone can raise us; nature, alas! sinks if left to itself.

Luk 24:26-27. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

The best Book, with the best Teacher, descanting upon the best of subjects. Everywhere this Book speaks about Christ; and when Christ explains it, he only brings himself more clearly before our minds.

Luk 24:28. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went:

They were sorry to be nearing their destination. They would have liked to walk to the ends of the earth in such company, and listening to such conversation.

Luk 24:28. And he made as though he would have gone further.
Christ intended to go further unless the two disciples constrained him to tarry with them.

Luk 24:29. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for 'it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.
That is our prayer to the Lord Jesus tonight, "Abide with us, dear Master; we had thy blessed company this morning; and now the sun is almost down, abide with us!" Let each one of us pray the prayer that we often sing, for, morning, noon, and night, this is a suitable supplication:-"

Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without thee I cannot live;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without thee I dare not die."

Luk 24:29-31. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him;
In the breaking of bread Christ is often known. It is a wonderful emblem. Even if this breaking of bread were not the observance of the Lord's Supper, it was something very like it. Christ's blessing and breaking of bread anywhere are the true token of himself.

Luk 24:31-33. And he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem,
It was getting late; but it is never too late to tell of Christ's appearing, and never too early. Such a secret ought not to be kept an hour, and therefore "they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem."

Luk 24:33-36. And found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them,
You see that, while they were talking about Christ, he came, and stood in their midst. Speak of your Master, and he will appear. Oh, happy people! who have but to talk of Jesus, and lo! he comes to them.

Luk 24:37-40. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.
They knew those signs, the marks of his crucifixion. They ought to have been convinced at once that it was even he.

Luk 24:41. And while they yet believed not for joy,
Does joy stop faith? Beloved, anything stops faith if we will let it. Faith is a divine miracle. Wherever it exists, God creates it, and God sustains it; but without God, anything can hinder it: "while they yet believed not for joy,"-

Luk 24:41. And wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?
That is, "anything eatable."

Luk 24:42. And they gave him apiece of a broiled fish,
Which, as fishermen, they were pretty sure always to have.

Luk 24:42. And of an honeycomb.
As a second course, to complete the meal.

Luk 24:43. And he took it, and did eat before them.
Some of the old versions add, "and gave the rest to them," which I think is very likely to have been the case. It would be all the more convincing to them if he really ate before them, and then that they also partook of the same food of which he had taken part.

Luk 24:44-45. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Good Master, do the same with us tonight!

Luk 24:46-47. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

This gospel message was to be proclaimed among all nations, "beginning at Jerusalem", but not ending there. It has been preached to us; let us see to it that we pass it on to those who have never heard it yet.

Luk 24:48. And ye are witnesses of these things.

We also are called to be "witnesses of these things." May the Lord make us to be faithful and true witnesses, for his name's sake! Amen.

Luk 24:32-35. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

These were the two disciples who had recognized their Lord in the breaking of bread, though they did not know him during their walk with him to Emmaus.

Luk 24:36. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in time midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

This was the common Jewish salutation; but, henceforth, it would be sanctified most divinely, and it would be a Christian greeting to say, "Peace be unto you."

Luk 24:37-44. But they were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things 'must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Notice the seals which our Lord continually set upon the Old Testament, the manner in which he always treated the Scripture, the reverent way in which he confessed its infallibility, and his determination that, in every item, every jot and tittle, it should be fulfilled by himself. This was often manifested before his death; and, on his return from the grave, he had not changed his mind. He here speaks of the three great parts into which the Old Testament was divided by the Jews, and he expressly sets the seal of his royal assent upon "the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms." May we, in like manner, prize the whole-inspired Word!

This exposition consisted of readings from Mar 16:1-14; Luk 24:32-44.

This Exposition belongs to last week's Sermon, but there was no space available for its insertion there, and no Exposition appears to have been given before the preceding discourse.

Luk 24:49. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The promise of the Father was, as you know, the gift of the Holy Spirit. By this gift our Lord's rising again into glory was celebrated. The Holy Spirit was the heavenly largess of the great King by which he did honour to the return of his Son to his ancient throne. The apostles and the other disciples were to wait for this gift. They might have to wait for some days, but it is better to wait for divine equipment than to go out to holy service in our own strength. All that you do will have to be undone unless it is done in the power of the Holy Ghost. "But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Has that command ever struck some people who profess to be serving the Lord? Are there not men who preach whom God never sent to preach? The best advice

we could give them would be, "Tarry ye." Are there not some who teach, and some who take office in the church, whom God has never endowed with gifts or graces for such work? Powerless workers stand in the way of true workers, they block up the path of those whom God sends to serve him.

Luk 24:50. And he led them out as far as to Bethany," —

The ruling passion was strong in the hour of his departure. Well did he know that place, Bethany, — the place of love, where he had received a welcome such as he had experienced nowhere else on earth, — where lived Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus; — there did he bid "Good-bye" to his disciples.

Luk 24:50. And he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

He never had lifted up his hands to strike them, or to invoke curses upon them. Those hands were filled with blessings, and the last thing that was seen of Jesus by human eyes was his hands uplifted in the act of blessing.

Luk 24:51-52. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, —

Then they were not Unitarians — "They worshipped him," — and there were angels present at the time who would have been sure to have rebuked them if it had been a wrong thing for them to worship him. Indeed, they themselves, both as Jews and as Christians, would have felt, in their inmost soul, that they could not worship anyone but God; but Christ is God, so they did well to worship him.

Luk 24:52. And returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

Back to the place of his murder, — back to the place where they were likely to be themselves murdered.

Luk 24:53. And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

So bold were they that the very central spot for the worship of Jehovah we made the place where Christ's divine sovereignty was proclaimed.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 24:49-53; and Act 1:1-12