

# **The Four Gospels**

by

Samuel Ridout

# THE FOUR GOSPELS

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## INTRODUCTORY: THE INCARNATION

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“ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.”

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**G**OD has been speaking from the beginning. Creation itself is an expression of His thought, and all His providential government—where there are eyes to see—gives witness to His eternal power and Godhead, so that men are without excuse. In a special way, He has spoken through the prophetic ministry of His servants during the entire period covered by the Old Testament. These Old Testament Scriptures give us the record and manner of God’s speaking in time past. The instruments He used were the prophets, but the Author is God.

But there is a change in the Gospels—the Son Himself has come, and is speaking. “In these last days”—an expression significant of a change

from His former methods of appealing to man, as well as *a* declaration that no further unfolding remains to be revealed-" He hath spoken unto us by His Son," or to be absolutely literal, " in a Son." This does not suggest that there are other sons, but gives the great **fact of His Son** standing out all alone. **There is but One;** no need even to designate Him in any exclusive way.

The expression shows us that God's manner of communication has changed. It is not merely that we have inspired and authoritative messengers who declare unto us the will of God in many parts and in many ways-in details of **biography**, in historic events, in types, etc.-but God Himself is present in the Son.

We have had foreshadows of this marvelous fact from the very beginning. There can be little doubt that creation itself and every succeeding step in the revelation of God to His intelligent creatures had in view the incarnation -was, we may say, a type of that. All inspiration, every appearance of the angel of Jehovah throughout the Old Testament, every ordinance and sacrifice, point to the fact now revealed, that God purposed to link Himself with His creation in a way of amazing condescension and intimacy which never could have entered into the thought of man, but which interpreted and met the *yearning* of his soul.

It is probably this which gives the various teachings of pantheism their speciousness. It has been said that "all error is part truth." The modicum of truth contained in the error appeals to man, whose will being unbroken and whose pride dictates to him, he is led on and away from the truth to link with it falsity and error. This Satanic work is in line with the lie of the great deceiver of mankind: "Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil," in one form or another still holds out this allurements to poor man, who, in spite of the knowledge that his sin necessarily keeps him out of the presence of God, would vainly intrude himself, unforgiven, into that holy Presence. Wherever this is done, man tramples upon the very first principle of relationship to God, obliterating the infinite distinction between the creature and the Creator. The sense of responsibility is lost. The sense, too, of the infiniteness of God is gone. Man has not been lifted up into the Infinite, but the thought of the Infinite has been degraded and dragged down to the petty limits of the poor, fallen, mortal, sinful creature.

But the fact that a great truth has been perverted and misused by Satan and fallen man must not make us close our eyes to the glorious fact that it is still the truth, and it is this which the incarnation sets forth. God has spoken unto us "in Son," as it has been literally rendered;



it is an adverbial phrase and modifies the verb expressing God's action with reference to man. God hath spoken "**in** Son." He has spoken, we may say, as Son. "God was in Christ." He Himself had drawn near, not merely now with some specific message, but in a Person and as a Person. It was God Himself who was here. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God ... and the Word was made **flesh** and dwelt among us."

This is the wondrous meaning of "Emmanuel," (God with us) ; not merely as omnipresent, filling heaven and earth and transcending all the bounds of His vast universe, but (amazing thought!) in the person of One who emptied Himself and took a servant's form and was made in the likeness of men; of One who was perfect Man in the fullest sense of the word, spirit, soul and body--" the Man Christ Jesus."

We do not go further into details of this transcendent fact which God has been pleased to reveal to us. "Will God in very truth dwell with man?"—there had been glimpses of this, but now it is an accomplished fact. The wisdom of the world, which confessedly knows not God, closes its eyes to the only way in which He could be known, and stumbles at the Babe of Bethlehem, where all the eternal majesty of the Godhead was veiled in human form. Grace has taught us, through the very knowledge of our

need, to welcome with adoring hearts this glorious, wondrous fact of "God with us."

It is the centre around which revolve all truths, past, present and future. Even the Cross-the amazing mystery of the sufferings of God incarnate, with all its blessed consequences for eternity, reaching out to the eternal reconciliation of all things in earth and in heaven-gains its significance from the great fact that "God was in Christ." Without incarnation, there could have been no Cross-no redemption, no resurrection, no forgiveness, no gift of the Holy Ghost, no formation of the Church, no kingdom of the Son of Man, no laying a ransomed creation at the feet of God, eternally bound to Him. Sin made the Cross a necessity; it brought out the sweetest proof of what divine love is, both in the objects upon which it rested and in the gift which it bestowed; but the Cross was a means-awful and necessary-for bringing man to God, removing barriers which neither justice nor love could ignore.

The incarnation, "God with us," shows the purpose of His heart, not only to have man with Him, but for Him to be with man. The Lord God walking amid the trees of the garden which His own hands had planted tells of the yearning of a heart which could not rest content, were He not with His creatures.

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possibly be any link with God by the incarnation merely. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." The very presence of God in the world only accentuated the awful fact of man's moral distance from Him. Man was no nearer to God at Bethlehem than outside the Garden of Eden, but God had drawn near to man with a purpose of love to remove the great barrier to true moral union. Most of those who speak of this union as being effected through incarnation will be found at bottom to be deniers of the true, essential deity of the Man Christ Jesus. His teachings, His example, His moral greatness, will be found to be considered as something to be imitated, a companionship after the manner of human friendship, to be enjoyed on a mere earthly plane, on the basis still of a fallen first creation. Even where His deity is not overtly denied, there is an implied ignoring of the necessity of redemption and the putting things upon an entirely different foundation than that which God has laid. It will be found that in some way or other, man as such has been introduced into the presence of God without the setting aside of all excellency of the flesh, and not having learned the dreadful fact that sin broke once and forever every link which bound him to God.

The resurrection and ascension, and the present display of divine grace in connection with the

gospel preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, forming a new and wondrous fact, in which a Man, who is also God, is seen on high upon the very throne of God, linking with Himself as Man by the Holy Spirit an innumerable company of sinners saved through the blood of His Cross and by the power of His grace, to share with Him in the glory which has been given to Him as Man, in Headship over all things, to enjoy companionship with Himself and to be the object of His affections, close by His side forevermore-this glorious fact is but the full result of His incarnation. It was for this that He came and for this that He died. His Cross can never be forgotten throughout eternity, for our eternal blessing rests upon it; but that He might have us with Himself as sharers of His joy, was what brought Him here and took Him back to heaven.

## CHAPTER I

### The Relation of the Gospels to the Other Scriptures

**I**T is the consideration of such amazing and wondrous themes as these which make the four Gospels unique in the entire word of God. These give us the history of the incarnation, and show us "that Eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." The Epistles give us the precious truths which flow from the great fact of the incarnation and the Cross, but the Gospels show us the Person Himself, how He lived and how He died. There must therefore be a special importance attaching to this narrative. No other part of the New Testament could be substituted for the Gospels. We will dwell upon this a little later, in seeing the relation between the Evangelists and the rest of the New Testament, but we will first take a backward glance.

#### The Relation of the Gospels to the Old Testament

We have already been dwelling upon this in what has been said above, and therefore add only a few words here relative to each of the four groups of the Old Testament.

1. *The relation of the Gospels to the Pentateuch.*

Genesis gives us the account of the origin of **all** things, together with the various lives of the patriarchs. The four Gospels give us a new Genesis, foreshadowed by all narrated in the first book of the Bible. We have here a new beginning in which there is no possibility of a fall, though Satan is unhindered in his assaults. We have a life, compared with which the most perfect in the Old Testament is but a faint reflection. We see there, in shadowy outline, moral and other characteristics which here we find in all their distinctness and perfection.

Exodus tells of a deliverer and a deliverance which meet their full realization only through the true Deliverer, revealed to us in the New Testament. So with all the sacrifices and other types; the Gospels give the substance. Thus the Pentateuch is preparatory to the Gospels, linking with them, not directly, but through the other Old Testament groups, unmistakably pointing forward to the coming of the Son of Man.

a. *The Relation of the Gospels to the Historical Books.* The historical books take up the same story. They would be a mere fragment, did our Bibles end with them. The prominent characteristics are either types of Him who was to come, or, by the very contrast, show the necessity for Christ. We delight to dwell upon the character of David, his rejection, his meekness,

his faith in God, his strength, his victories; but were David *all, we* could have but little interest in him. The special charm about him is that his whole soul was looking forward to the Son of promise. This was all his salvation and all his desire. "Solomon in all his glory" is attractive, chiefly as a type of a Greater than Solomon whom we see not in the glory of an outward display, but in the moral glory of His perfect life—one day to be manifested as "the King in His beauty."

3. *The Relation of the Gospels to the Prophets.* The nearer we draw to the time of the Gospels, the more do we find the faces of God's servants turned forward. We feel, in the Prophets, that things are at an end so far as the people are concerned. We can say with Isaiah: "Why will ye be stricken any more? The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint." The plowing up, the denunciations, the judgments and predictions of destruction to the nation, we feel are necessary, not so much to bring about a reformation of the people, which the Prophets do not dwell upon, but rather to show the necessity for the coming of Emmanuel. So we find, particularly in the Gospel of Matthew, that the predictions of the Prophets were being fulfilled by the advent of our Lord.

4. *The Relation of the Gospels to the Experience Books.* The same may be said here. The Psalms depict the experiences of the godly one sur-

rounded by opposition on every hand, which have their fullest illustration in our Lord's life, while the prophecies as to His coming kingdom necessarily are associated with the narrative of the Gospels.

Thus, the entire Old Testament is linked, not merely with the New, but in a special way with the Gospels. We could not, for instance, link the book of Acts so directly with the Prophets, nor yet the Epistles.

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Spirit upon earth, forming a people who are now the witnesses of His grace and will be the display of His special counsels regarding the glory of His Son throughout eternity. But Christ, and not even the blessings and glory of His people, is the theme of the Epistles. All is in subordination to Him who humbled Himself, and whom God has now glorified and made Head over all things to the Church. It would not be possible to understand the Epistles were there not the revelation of the person of Christ which we have in the Gospels.

It is to be feared that some Christians have allowed themselves to be turned from the simplicity of the Gospel narratives to the Epistles in such a way that the marvelous unfoldings of divine truth in these cannot be rightly valued because of a lack of personal acquaintance with Him who is revealed to us in the Gospels. When the apostle said: "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more," he most surely did not mean that the revelation of Christ in the Gospels is Christ after the flesh. We would rather say that it was Christ according to a mere carnal apprehension of Him, somewhat after the manner of even the apostles during our Lord's life among them, who failed to enter into the wondrous and peculiar privilege which they had. They looked upon Him as a greater David who, out of the materials at His

hand, was going to fashion a great nation and set up a kingdom ; but even the millennial kingdom is not built up of existing fragments, but formed of new-born souls who have had a true view of themselves and a right apprehension of what the King of Israel must be. The knowledge of " Christ after the flesh " does not therefore mean the knowledge of His moral dignity, grace, tenderness, compassion, wisdom, all the precious details dwelt upon in the Gospels. Indeed, we may *say* that the Epistles simply *give us* the Gospels in their highest setting.

We feel instinctively that He who moved about in Judea and Galilee, going about doing good and bearing witness to God, was a Stranger, an Exotic in a desert land. The Epistles transfer Him to His own place and show the same Jesus to us where He belongs. Therefore, the study of the Gospels is most essential to the right and full understanding of the truths of the Epistles.

3. *The Relation of the Gospels to the Book of Revelation.* Nothing special need be said of the relation of the Gospels to the Revelation. If we knew Him only as the One whose eyes were as a flame of fire, or the Rider coming forth out of heaven to execute vengeance upon His enemies, and did not know Him as revealed in the **Gos-**pels, we could not feel the thrill of delight nor understand what was meant by "The Lamb in the midst of the throne."

In brief then the four Gospels present to us the person of our blessed Lord Jesus, and therefore occupy a place in the written word of God analogous to that occupied by the Son of God Himself in relation to all else that God has revealed.

One or two other remarks may be added here to guard against possible misapprehension.

The link between the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament is of a much closer character than that, for instance, between the Old Testament and the Epistles. As has been pointed out elsewhere, the New Testament is not a fifth division of the entire Scriptures co-ordinate with the four in the Old Testament, except in a very modified degree. It is a second, with the blessed significance of salvation from sin through the Son and of fellowship with God, suggested by its numerical place.

As a complete division in itself, its various parts hold together much more closely, we may say, than even the other parts of Scripture. We must be careful here, however, not to intimate that there is any looseness in the structure of the Scriptures as a whole. They are a complete, living organism in which each part has its place and functions and is vitally connected with all the rest. We are speaking, however, of those special features which can be co-ordinated and which indicate a distinct advance. Thus, the entire New Testament is characterized by the

fact that God has spoken in His Son, and all that **comes** after this has this characteristic. This link between the Gospels and the remainder of the New Testament is suggested also in a further passage: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?" (Heb. 2 : 3, 4.)

Here, the "great salvation" is evidently connected in its beginning with our Lord's earthly ministry, as in Acts 1: 1, 2. His departure to heaven only opened up the great truth more fully, and continued the witness which He Himself had begun, a witness now confirmed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, He had declared to His disciples: "As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you;" and in the symbolic breathing upon them (John 20: 21, 22) we have the foreshadow of the gift of the Holy Ghost who came down upon the disciples at Pentecost and gave a specific character to all their testimony.

We notice further that our Lord during His life here spoke constantly with reference to both His cross and resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. He said unto them: "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you :

but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (John 16: 7). As we have already said, were the Gospels all, particularly the narrative of the life and teachings of our Lord up to the time of His death and resurrection, we would have perfection indeed, but the perfection of the corn of wheat which still abode alone, therefore a perfection which could be of no blessing to us. There was the absolute necessity of His death and resurrection. The Cross was to mark the end of the old man, and show the way in which the new man was created.

Indeed, the disciples themselves had but a feeble apprehension of the glorious privilege they enjoyed during the life of our Lord upon earth, nor did they clearly understand, as we have already remarked, the nature of His mission. We read: "These things understood not His disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him" (John 12: 16).

Of course, the four Gospels were written after the descent of the Holy Ghost, and, while giving a perfect narrative of our Lord's earthly life, it was, we may say, with reference to the present dispensation and, at least in the case of the Gospel of John, from that standpoint. As to the fourth Gospel, no one can doubt that from its very beginning, all is looked at outside of Juda-

ism and indeed of the earth. It is the Gospel of the new creation unquestionably ; but we do not go into details as yet.

It will thus be seen, we trust, that it is with no intention of putting a slur upon the revelations and the character of the Spirit's work introducing the present period, that we again repeat that the four Gospels present to us the person of Him whom to know is life eternal, and whose life, teachings, and death, are recorded for us in the Gospels.

At the conclusion of this part of our subject, even at the risk of repeating what has been already said, we would guard our readers from putting one portion of the word of God in antagonism to another. All of it is equally perfect, equally inspired ; all of it when rightly presented has Christ as its theme, but each part must be looked at in its own position, remembering ever that "The Lamb is the light thereof."

## CHAPTER II

### The Gospels Themselves : Preliminary Questions

**W**E come now to look at the Gospels themselves. A few characteristics lie upon the very surface here.

#### 1. Why are there Four?

In a general way, these are four parallel narratives of the life, works, teachings, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were written by four different individuals, and while narrating many things that are common to all or most of them, there are omissions and additions in each which even from a human standpoint would mark them out as four distinct and, we will add, independent narratives.

There are differences of style in language, method of treatment, arrangement of subjects, and other features which prove this. These will occupy us later when we come to take up the distinctive differences of the four Gospels. We merely mention here what the most casual reader will observe. We are, however, not looking at the four Gospels as human productions, but as a part of that perfect word of God inspired by the Spirit, where nothing is lacking and nothing is superfluous. The Spirit of God would never give



His sanction to a multiplication of narratives, were there not some special, defined and necessary reason for it. We may, then, here ask the question: Why are there four Gospels instead of one?

A few answers suggest themselves.

*The importance* of the subject. This is suggested by the four narratives. No ordinary reader could, when he came to the Gospels and read through the first, and then in the second found again a fresh narrative of the same life, and passing to the third, found the same blessed subject, which also is repeated again in the fourth Gospel—we say, no ordinary reader could fail to get the impression that here was the most important central fact in all the word of God, to which his attention was called in a special way.

Its *richness and fulness*. He would also, if thoughtful, have the conviction that there must be a richness and fulness in connection with this wondrous Person which could be most adequately set forth in four separate narratives.

*Each with a special object*. If he were a believer in inspiration, he would probably come to the conclusion that each Gospel must have been written with some special object in view, and therefore must present our Lord in a character appropriate to that object.

The *persons for whom written*. As in the Epistles some special condition in the local assembly

was frequently the occasion of, or at any rate, gave character to the epistle, so the question would naturally rise, Do similar reasons account in any measure for the different Gospels ?

*The authors of the Gospels.* This is always a minor question, except indeed where the writer comes with a special message, as the prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the epistles which they wrote. It is a proper question, however, to ask who the four Evangelists were, and to get what idea we can of those personal characteristics which would indicate their special fitness for the peculiar form of the narrative which they wrote and the object which the Spirit of God had in its production. The discussion of these last three points will be found summarized in the 4th section of Chapter III.

## 2. The Harmony of the Four Gospels \*

Had God intended that we should have but one narrative, He would have given us the record of the life of our Lord in that form. Our attention, therefore, should be directed to each separate Gospel to ascertain, as far as we may, its general character ; its main theme; its point of view; the manner in which it presents our Lord.

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\* The following pages originally written for this book are also inserted in "How to Study the Bible " under the head "Harmony Studies (pp. 107-117) as being an essential part of the. subject.

These questions, it will be found, affect the entire narrative, and the very arrangement of subjects will be seen to have been governed by the main object before the inspired writer,

We further remark that there is a fulness and multiplicity of detail in the life of our Lord and in His public ministry, crowded as it was in the three brief years usually allowed, which would furnish abundant material illustrative of the special object which each Evangelist had before him. We get intimations of this in various ways. For instance: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Here is a sample statement of the tireless activities of a Life which had no hours of relaxation or periods of rest.

No doubt that in the various conversations which are recorded, as for instance in John <sup>10</sup>, or the period just prior to the last Passover, when there were various discussions with the leaders of the people in the temple, we have abridgments; special attention being given to those features of the discourse which are more particularly related to the general theme of that Evangelist. This perhaps will account for the apparently different modes of expression in the different Gospels. For instance, in the parable of the vineyard in Matthew (chap. <sup>21</sup>:

40, 41), our Lord's question: "When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" is answered by those whom He was addressing; while in Mark He seems Himself to answer it (chap. 12 : 9), and in Luke also it is the same. We find, however, in examining more closely, that our Lord Himself in Matthew gives an answer in addition to that which His hearers gave (ver. 43): "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

This in itself indicates that the narrators are not in conflict with each other, but simply recording that portion of the conversation which had special reference to their main theme.

But we speak here more particularly of what are called "harmonies." This has been a favorite method of study by Bible students, and quite an account could be given of the various harmonies compiled from the first *diatessaron* to the latest harmonies of the four Gospels. While these have very much that is in common, and indeed we may say that the general outlines of the Gospel narratives are not so difficult of recognition, yet there is sufficient divergence in the details which indicates that it is very difficult, not to say impossible, to arrange every portion of the four narratives so as to blend them in one smoothly-connected whole. This is not be-

cause there are contradictions, but simply that this was not the object of the Spirit of God in giving us the fourfold record.

It is difficult for us to divest ourselves of a certain external exactitude, which is really not a proof of the highest kind of accuracy. Probably all of us have passed through-if we are not still in it-the stage in which our idea of harmony means that we can piece together the four narratives so completely as to leave no gaps. This might be possible, if, for instance, Matthew or any one of the other Evangelists had written four Gospels instead of one, with but the one object. In doing this, he could dwell in one upon certain features, making provision for the addition of other features which could be taken from a second or a third narrative. When, however, we have four different Evangelists with four different objects in view, as we have said, this becomes impracticable. The entire method of treatment is different.

Minute details may be recorded in one Evangelist which in another are passed over without **any allusion**, or in a few words of generalization. Sometimes indeed, the occurrence is so marked that we can decide its place without difficulty, and therefore find room next to it for what manifestly belongs there. For instance, in connection with the narrative of the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes in the Gospel of John,

we have the record of our Lord's discourse which was based upon that miracle. The feeding of the multitude took place at a distance, but we know that His return to Capernaum was on "the next day" or indeed during the same night, and that the discourse in the synagogue there upon "the Bread of God which came down from heaven" must thus be placed in connection with the miracle itself.

There are numbers of cases like this, particularly in the synoptic Gospels, all of which are an interesting and profitable subject of study with more or less definite conclusions to show as the result of our labors.

Thus, helpful books on "The Life of Christ" endeavor to weave together the one narrative from all four Gospels in the way above indicated, and we have no fault to find with that kind of study if it is prosecuted in a reverent spirit. But we rise from all such with the conviction that God's order is better than man's, and that in proportion to our understanding of each Gospel in its individual character, we shall have the material for a clear view of some of the blessed perfections which mark His life as a whole. We may say unhesitatingly that we would advise a more careful study of each Evangelist separately before attempting any harmony.

This brings us to notice another matter. The order in the Evangelists is by no means always

chronological. Our Lord's entrance into public ministry and the close of His precious life by His atoning sacrifice and death are at the beginning and the ending of each of the narratives, but it is difficult always to place in their chronological setting His various acts and teachings. Indeed, some have questioned whether His ministry was as much as three years, believing that the feast spoken of in the fifth of John is not the pass-over, but one of the other feasts. Thus, there would be but three passover seasons referred to in John-chap. 2, chap. 6 and chap. 13. If these are all the passovers in His public ministry, then it was evidently but two, not three, years in length. We do not believe however that such a conclusion is demanded by the facts, nor does it seem to allow for sufficient time in which to bring together all the occurrences of that wondrous life. Other considerations also confirm this. Certain expressions in Scripture we naturally connect with His life; three and a half years suggest that "midst of the week," to come at a later date, when the sacrifice and oblation shall be made to cease (Dan. g: 27). "Lo, these three years," when the Master was still seeking for fruit from the tree, intimates something similar.

As already said, the Evangelists are not giving us so much a consecutive, chronological narrative, as selecting certain features in our Lord's

life which illustrate the special themes of their Gospels. Luke, probably more than the others, gives what we may call the moral, rather than the chronological order. Events are grouped together by him, not in the sequence in which they occur-sometimes indeed being separated by quite a length of time-but according to their bearing upon some feature of our Lord's character to which the Spirit of God would call our attention. Instances of this will be given as we take up each Evangelist. We refer only to the general subject here.

We might remark in this connection, that a hard literalness will often mislead us. Even the use of certain adverbs usually indicating time does not necessarily imply chronological sequence. For instance, we use the adverb "then" in a moral as well as a chronological way in ordinary discourse. If we were giving a number of occurrences which illustrated a certain characteristic, we would connect them together by this adverb without the thought of succession, simply meaning that our evidence was cumulative.\*

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\* We give an illustration to make clear the statement. Suppose our object were to point out the unselfishness of a person demonstrated by a number of acts of kindness. We would not necessarily give these various acts in the order in which they occurred, but with reference to the special feature of his character which they illustrated. We might put it in some such way as follows:

"When a boy, he once gave up his holiday in order to spend,



In Matthew, as we shall find, our Lord's teachings are grouped together, and similarly His miracles. Very likely what had taken place over a considerable space of time is massed together with this object in view. It will be found, without doubt, that all is perfectly accurate, although some things may be quite beyond us, as for instance, the opening of the eyes of blind Bartimaeus. Did it take place before our Lord's entry into Jericho, as it seems to be from Luke 18: 35. or afterwards, as Matt. 20: 29 seems to indicate ?

There are a number of possible explanations: as for instance, that the narrative of the opening of the eyes in Matthew is not meant to show that our Lord had passed through Jericho before He opened the eyes of the two blind men, but that it falls into its place because of its reference to the beginning of His final presentation to the

the time with a sick comrade; then he relinquished all his right in his father's estate ; then, when he had a few dollars which he had been saving up to make a purchase for himself, he heard of a widow, an entire stranger, who was in need, and gave it all to her."

These three facts are arranged in a somewhat cumulative order, rather than chronological. They point out that the natural unselfishness of youth was not a boyish impulse, but found expression later on in a sacrifice of what was his own to other members of his family. The generous care for the utter stranger gives an added feature to the character, though the act itself may have taken place long before what is recorded in the second place. The adverb "then " would not imply the chronological, but rather the moral order.

people. Thus it would suggest that work of grace in the heart of the remnant which will take place in the latter days. Its relation to Jericho is not so much emphasized as that to Jerusalem: while in Luke the opening of the eyes took place before our Lord reached the spot, and our attention is therefore called to that act of grace earlier than in Matthew. But Matthew at least does not require us to believe that it took place after He left Jericho, while Luke does seem to show that it actually occurred before He reached the town.

Another explanation might be that our Lord lingered about Jericho, down in the valley before going up to Jerusalem, and that there may have been two approaches to the town, one of which is given in Matthew after He had wrought the miracle, but that He returned back eastward from Jericho and the miracle actually took place there as narrated by Luke.

We notice, too, that Matthew, as is his manner in several other cases, mentions more than one individual who was the subject of this mercy. There is doubtless a special reason for this, though probably Bartimaeus was prominent in the matter. If only we have it settled in our souls, that both accounts are absolutely true, and that all we need is to understand the special object of the Spirit of God in the form of the narrative, we will find no difficulty in believing literally both.

But we will not dwell upon further details. What has occupied us will be sufficient to show that an open and reverent spirit which is not seeking for contradictions will be amply rewarded. No doubt, further study and deeper familiarity with the manner of each narrator will reward our patient and prayerful examination into details which for the present seem impossible of being harmonized.

The opposite of this spirit is seen in much of the higher critical work. Apparent discrepancies are eagerly sought for and given as evidence of fallibility in the narrators. Thus, the feeding of the four thousand is but another and contradictory narrative of the feeding of the five thousand. The critics, however, seem to forget that both are not only recorded by the same Evangelist, but our Lord afterward speaks of both in connection with the question raised by His disciples. (See Mark 8:19-21.)

The two cleansings of the temple, one at the beginning of His public ministry, recorded in John, and the other at the close recorded in the synoptists, is another case in point. Each is in beautiful accord with the main object of the narrator. Both undoubtedly took place. In John, the one at the beginning of His ministry is given because in that Evangelist our Lord from the very first is seen as rejected: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." The

purging of the temple therefore, at the beginning of His Judean ministry and particularly recorded by John, shows our Lord as outside the system of things in which He yet tarried, if perchance they might repent. He repeats the same act at the close of His ministry as recorded in the other Gospels, at which time His rejection is especially emphasized.

It will be found that if there is a desire on our part to learn the reason why things are given to us in the order in which we have them, instead of stumbling over that which, after all, were it a mere question of common veracity would not be raised, the difficulties would largely vanish and we would be in a fair way to get explanations which the Spirit of God could not give us if we approached the subject in an irreverent, unbelieving manner. \*

### 3. The Question of Inspiration

Any measure of familiarity with the Gospels, and particularly with the synoptists,† leads to questions of accuracy in a narrative: for instance, as to the same event, its relation to other narratives, and the exact words used in conver-

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\* For other suggestions as to the study of Gospel Harmony, see Chapter V, "The Relation of the Gospels to Each Other."

† So called because they can be viewed *together* as presenting more marked similarities to each other than the Gospel of John does to them.

sations. We do not now speak of **the** willing use which unbelief has made of these seeming contradictions to throw discredit upon inspiration as a whole; but many sensitive consciences have been disturbed and much anxiety has been awakened by questions such as those indicated above, for which no definite answer could be given. It is as though a person had two dear friends, equally esteemed, but whose statements apparently differed to some extent and the question of their veracity was raised-not by themselves indeed, as though they were contradicting each other, but by those who heard them.

It must not be thought that questions of this kind indicate an infidel mind, nor can they be waved aside by a warning that such thingt lead to infidelity. The word of God courts the fullest and most rigid examination, and we shall find that while there are things beyond our present comprehension, nothing is beyond reverent belief. Sleepless nights have no doubt been passed by sincere Christians who found themselves unable to answer satisfactorily to their own conscience why there are the apparent differences indicated above. Must the doctrine of verbal inspiration therefore be abandoned? Does inspiration only mean inspired *thought*, but not inspired *language*? What is the relation of personal individuality to these apparent contradictions?

These are some of the questions which an upright mind can raise, and which must be *answered* if we are to go on in the truth. This is hardly the place to enter into a discussion of details, but, as the Lord enables, we shall refer to numbers of these apparent differences and contradictions as we proceed with our subject. Here, however, we speak in a more general way.

Recurring to our illustration of two friends, each of them entitled to the fullest credence, each of them narrating with the distinct purpose of accuracy, we would probably refer any discrepancies in their narratives to the infirmity which is common to man. In other words, we would not claim infallibility for the best of men. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that, in courts of justice, if two witnesses describe the same event in identical language, with not the slightest discrepancy, a suspicion arises that the identity is due to a collusion rather than to impartial and independent observation. The same is true in all the relations of life. We expect the narratives of different persons to bear marks of their individuality, different points of view, etc., together with any personal peculiarities which we know they possess.

But we must not go too fast. The word of God is not a mere narrative of ordinarily truthful men. If inspiration means anything, it *means* more than this. It means that in God's use of

the instruments whom He has chosen to record for us His narrative, no question of inaccuracy or human infirmity such as would be perfectly proper as to human productions, could be allowed as to Him who is holy and true, whose omniscience precludes the thought of imperfection and the essence of whose character is light. We know our Lord; we know the revelation which the Spirit of God has given, how it is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," how it speaks not as men, but with authority, and how we have been compelled to bow to that divine authority in our inmost soul. This precludes the thought of inaccuracy in the Gospel narratives.

"But," it will be said, "the difficulties still remain." Let them remain, if only to test our faith further and to make us realize that we know only in part. A few considerations, however, may be of service here.

1. God *does not* set *aside individuality*. The instrument whom He uses is not as a stick of wood or a lump of clay, but a living, sentient man whose whole soul is carried along with his subject, who feels that which he writes. It would be abhorrent to the Christian mind to think of Luke, for instance, being an unconverted man. With overflowing heart, surely, every stage of his narrative was written with wonder and delight, and so with all the other Evangelists.

2. *God has controlled and used it absolutely*. Some

might say, though it seems to go beyond what Scripture intimates, that the writers may not even have been conscious that they were under divine control. We instinctively feel that it is dangerous ground to take. We may say, however, that they wrote with perfect freedom; that their judgment and all other faculties were no doubt in full activity, but in this there was another Mind, another Heart, another Wisdom, permeating and controlling all; just as in creation God has not merely called all things into being and then left them alone, but "by Him all things consist." He controls, governs, and in a very real sense is in every vital process of nature.

3. *This illustrated.* We therefore expect, when we come to the written word of God, that the very peculiarities of the writers were not only overruled but used by the Spirit of God to bring out that which was His special purpose. For instance, Matthew, as a Jew, would naturally dwell upon those features of our Lord's life which were particularly connected with the national hopes and expectations of the remnant as predicted by the Prophets. He would thus observe and record matters of this kind and point out their connection with the Old Testament; but to say that his Gospel was merely the outcome of his individual and national peculiarities, would be distinctly a denial of inspiration.



Luke, as a Gentile, with therefore a wider view, would naturally point out features illustrating that view; but here also divine immanence and inspiration cannot be excluded. But we do not dwell upon further details.

*Conclusion.* In conclusion therefore, when we come to an apparent contradiction, we know that it is only apparent; instead of slurring it over, we should dwell upon it, ask as many questions as we can about it, pray for enlightenment *as* to it, and expect to find a solution which will not only justify the veracity of the writers, but which will show a special reason for the apparent discrepancy. Even where there is no thought of abandoning the truth of inspiration, the Lord's people may be great losers if they do not pause at the difficult passages in the Evangelists and dwell upon them in this way. As is often the case in nature, many beautiful jewels are contained within a stone whose outward appearance is uninviting; and as the very curves and knots in wood bring out a special beauty of grain, so it is in a higher sense in the Scriptures. The hard places will be found to have special beauty and suggestiveness.

So we come back to the simple statement: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." If every jot and tittle of the law is to be fulfilled, surely the Gospels will present a similar perfection.

## CHAPTER III

### The Object of each Gospel

**W**E come now to take up each Gospel with reference to the special object for which it was written, so far as we may be enabled to gather that object without going into a more detailed study of the entire book, which will occupy us later on.

Several questions will serve as heads for our investigation here. We will ask:

**First :** How is our Lord presented in each Gospel ?

**Second:** What is the nature of His death in each ?

*Third :* What is the character of His Resurrection ?

**Fourth :** What is the general theme in harmony with these?

#### I. THE MANNER IN WHICH OUR LORD IS PRESENTED

There have been several biographies of prominent historical persons, taking up special phases of their lives. We could easily conceive, for instance, of a biography of General Washington as a military commander, another of him as President, another of his personal life and character-

istics, and still another devoted to his career after his retirement from public life.

We could thus easily have four lives of a prominent character prepared by four biographers, in which the details would be arranged with special reference to the object in view. Several lives of the Earl of Shaftesbury might thus be written. One of these would give his personal life and characteristics, with special reference to his family connections. Another might dwell more upon details of his life in connection with his estates and the administration of his private affairs. In this, his kindness to his tenants, with acts of private benevolence and so on, would find a large place. A third might be with special reference to his public, philanthropic work; while a fourth narrative would give the record of his public services in the House of Lords.

It is quite evident that each of these narratives would have certain special characteristics. The same individual would be described in each, but with special reference to the immediate object of the biographer. Thus, in the narrative of his personal life, his family genealogy would be traced and its various connections with other prominent families. Narratives of *a* more intimate and personal character, which would hardly be suitable in the account of his more public services, would here find a place. For

instance, his hospitality, his approachability, would be dwelt upon; and so it would be in each of the other narratives respectively.

We would find some facts perhaps common to all four biographies, but each looked at with special reference to the object of the narrator, and given a greater or less prominence according to that object. Thus, all matters relating to benevolence would naturally have mention in all four biographies, for it formed the prominent characteristic of the Earl. The biographer of his personal life would recall his interest in the Sunday Closing movement as marking his strong religious convictions and personal interest in relieving the poor. The narrator of his public acts of benevolence would throw all this into the form of committee work and other public efforts which resulted in this outcome; while his Parliamentary life would give a report of his speeches with reference to the particular laws which led up to and accompanied the entire movement.

When we come to the Life of all lives, we find this same natural, simple method pursued by the inspired narrators.

### The presentation of Christ in Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew presents our Lord evidently in connection with the Hebrew nation, and more particularly as King of the Jews.

Thus we find His genealogy is given from Abraham on through David to Joseph, the lineal, legal heir to the throne of David. Our Lord is here presented as the Son of Abraham and Son of David. As the Son of Abraham, He is linked with Israel as a whole—we might add, with the whole house of faith *as well-and as* Son of David, He is more particularly connected with those promises of kingship which God made to David: “Once have I sworn by My holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me” (Ps. 89: 35, 36).

It was under the rule of such a King that the glorious promises made to Abraham with reference to his seed according to the flesh and to all the earth, were to be fulfilled. “He shall have dominion also from *sea to sea*, and from the river unto the ends of the earth ... the kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents . . . yea, all kings shall fall down before Him ; all nations shall serve Him” (Ps. 72: 8-11).

Matthew I establishes thus His connection with both these progenitors; chap. 2, in the visit of the wise men, gives a foreshadow of the tribute of the nations being brought to Him as predicted in the psalm we have just quoted ; while our Lord’s being brought up at Nazareth links Him with the remnant of the nation and gives a hint of the rejection which followed. Bethlehem, the

place of His birth, speaks of His being the Son of David, and Nazareth of His being the rejected Prophet of Israel.

At chapter 3 we enter upon what is the great theme of Matthew's Gospel-the Kingdom of Heaven-and we see here how all is subordinate to the King. In John the Baptist we have the forerunner of the King who announces the approach of the kingdom, and at our Lord's baptism, with what follows, we have the anointing and recognition of the King by Heaven,

Chapter 4 gives us the King subjected to the most rigorous tests at the hands of the great opposer to His kingly authority, Satan. No one who preceded our Lord in the royal line of David had met such assaults and come off unscathed. David the king himself had fallen before far less efforts of the enemy, and no one who succeeded him reached even as high as he. The righteous Ruler over men, ruling in the fear of God, could only thus be seen in the person of Him who was the fulfilment of all prophecy and prediction.

This brings us to notice what is a marked characteristic of Matthew. He presents our Lord so frequently as the Fulfiller of the words of the prophet, We find thus a characteristic expression, as will be noticed later, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet."

The King being thus announced by His herald,

and Himself following on with a like testimony, we next have (chaps. 5-7), the great principles of His kingdom enunciated. These form, we might say, the organic constitution of His kingdom, furnishing the principles upon which He will administer His government. The kingdom is seen to be, therefore, primarily a spiritual one in which all that is contrary to the mind of God as expressed in the law, is rejected. Indeed, we cannot fail to see the correspondence between the law given in the ten commandments and its enlargement, application, and enforcement, as given in the sermon on the mount.

The first was God's great charter for Israel, we might say, the constitution of a theocracy over the earthly people. The other is likewise a constitution, but reaching now not merely to the outward acts, but to the inward springs of conduct and judging these as unsparingly as the outward infractions of a statute.

Chapters 8 and 9 give, the outward proofs of our Lord's fitness for His kingly position. Here indeed are royal works by which the sufferers in His kingdom, those oppressed by the devil and with maladies resulting from their own sin and folly, are alike delivered and healed by the power of One who is not merely King, but infinitely more.

These, with chap. 10, give us a glimpse at the tender heart of the King. As He looked out over

His domain and yearned to bring to the knowledge of His poor and afflicted subjects, the blessed fact of His nearness, He would show them what the true King is and fulfil for them more than their fondest hopes had ever dreamed, but on the indispensable condition of repentance and obedience to Him. Chapter 10 more particularly shows us the messengers of the King who carry the news of His approach to all His subjects.

Chapter 11 shows us the shadow which already had begun to fall athwart our Lord's royal progress. It was no easy path for Him to the throne. The condition of the nation and of the world at large made sure His rejection, of which we have intimations in chapter 11, and which from this point becomes more manifest until the gloom deepens into the blackness of the cross. Even John has questions whether this is the true King of Israel ; and our Lord, while most delicately and secretly rebuking his unbelief, bears witness to the people of his loyalty and faithfulness amid all the abounding unbelief. None but those enlightened of the Father will come to Him, but to all such, babes in their own eyes and in the eyes of the world, He reaches out the inviting hand of love: "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Chapter 12 brings to an acute stage the question of the Sabbath, which was always a sore



point with the formalists. The Sabbath, as we find from the Old Testament, was indeed a special mark of God's covenant relation with His people ;\* but it presupposed a people who had preserved their right to consider themselves the chosen of the Lord by obedience to His commands. We will find, when we come to the Gospel of John, that this Sabbath question is treated by our Lord from a somewhat different point of view than in the synoptists, perhaps more particularly than in Matthew itself. The religious leaders accuse our Lord's disciples, and impliedly the Lord Himself, of violating the Sabbath by doing that which was allowed in the law, but which only the foolish traditions of man had prohibited. The enmity and opposition of the Jews therefore was raised to an acute point by the Lord's ignoring the Pharisees' rigid Sabbatarianism-by which He implied failure on their part to manifest themselves as having any right to be considered as the chosen nation. This question brings matters to an issue.

The Pharisees, with their blasphemous accusation of satanic power in our Lord, expose themselves to the awful warning of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost for which there can be no forgiveness. Those who would ascribe to the devil the evident power of God manifested be-

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\* See **Leviticus**, **Isaiah** and **Ezekiel**.

fore their eyes are in danger of what can never be forgiven-ascribing thus with open eyes the works of the Spirit of God to Satan, They are calling light, darkness, and good, evil.

The King is thus rejected by the responsible leaders, and in chapter 13 we have the kingdom described as it has existed during the rejection of its King. It is as though He would show how, during His absence, there would be a mixed condition even in that which made a profession of subjection to Himself.

Chapter 14 continues the works of the King. He is not exactly a fugitive, but occupies a place quite different from what we have in the earlier part of the Gospel. A false king, Herod, is seen here; the true One, however, is feeding His hungry subjects with something more than the bread which perisheth, and bringing them through storms other than those which fell upon the Sea of Galilee.

Chapter 15 dwells with some detail upon the punctilious follies of the Pharisees, whose outward life was so contradictory to their inward heart; and, in contrast with their formalism, gives us a glimpse of the heart of God going out now beyond the lost sheep of the house of Israel, even to the Gentiles.

Chapter 16 carries us on to Gentile ground, and in Peter's great confession of who the King is, "the Christ, the Son of the living God," we have

the foundation of something more than the kingdom-of that Church which is not revealed in Matthew, save to show us that upon which it rests, and against which the gates of hades cannot prevail.

In chapter 17 we see the King in His beauty, associated with the great witnesses of His glory, the law and the prophets. The glory, though displayed, is not for all. The nation in unbelief knew not the time of their visitation, and as our Lord comes down from the mountain, the satanic oppression of the people is manifested. A day is coming when the King of glory will deliver His oppressed people as a whole.

Chapter 18 emphasizes that lowly, childlike spirit without which none can enter the kingdom-the spirit which indeed was manifested by our Lord who, though King of kings, could say of Himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart."

Chapter 19 still presents the holy principles of His kingdom, into which none can enter but those who have more than the requirements of the natural man.

In chapter 20 we have the beginning of the last great journey of the King to His capital city. It begins at Jericho and ends, not upon the throne of David, but upon the cross of Calvary. We still see the King in this part of the Gospel.

In chapter 21 we see His royal entry into the

city, together with His masterly, convicting answers to every question of unbelief and enmity.

Chapter 22 tells us of the marriage feast yet to come, in which the King will have His guests at last about Himself.

In chapter 23 the time for forbearance is passed. All day long, the King had patiently waited upon His disobedient and rebellious people. He now denounces the ringleaders of this rebellion.

In chapters 24 and 25 the great events connected with the second coming of the King are set before us, when He shall establish His kingdom in power; when those who have rejected His proffers of mercy in the time of His humiliation will be compelled to bow before a glory which will no longer plead, but demand righteous judgment upon His enemies.

This concludes the manner of the presentation of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew. All has special reference to His kingly authority and position as the rightful Heir to the throne of David and Ruler of His people. The various stages of the opposition to His authority are traced for us, and the conclusion at which we arrive when we reach the 25th chapter is that such a kingdom cannot be established by such a King over such a people, except by the most unsparing judgment on the one side and by a work of grace which will produce in the hearts of others a faith which shall own Him as Lord

and cry: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Until that time, *even* the temple, the house of the divine King, is left to them desolate. They may do with it what they please. They may defile it with their merchandise and vain religious ceremonies. "Ichabod" is written over it all, and indeed it will be thrown to the ground until the time comes of which He speaks at the close of His solemn denunciations.

Of the remainder of the narrative in Matthew, we will speak later, under the subject of our Lord's death. We continue for the present our examination of the manner of our Lord's presentation in the other Gospels.

#### The presentation of Christ in Mark

Our Lord's Kingship is evidently not prominent in the Gospel of Mark. A measure of familiarity with its contents may suggest to us rather the tireless activity of One who had a special work to perform and carried it on with unremitting persistence until all was accomplished. This work naturally has two parts: ministry to the needy people all about Him, and the testimony for God constantly borne to His hearers. These two features of our Lord we find prominent throughout this Gospel.

We see Him as the Servant of man's need and the Prophet of God's truth. There is, therefore, but the briefest preface to His ministry, and

after the first thirteen verses we see our Lord intent upon the work which He came to do.

After calling His disciples about Him, to be witnesses of and successors in His labor, He takes up His life of toil. The demoniac is delivered; Peter's wife's mother cured of fever; multitudes afflicted with divers diseases healed; the leper cleansed. In the midst of all, however, there is leisure for what the perfect Servant felt His need of, prayer, with a diligent going forward, as though to remind them that His primary work was not healing of disease, but preaching: "Therefore came I forth."

The healing of the sick of the palsy comes next (chap. 2), and in the rest of the chapter His prophetic testimony is given.

In chapter 3 the withered hand is healed, and the opposition, mutterings of which had already been heard, becomes distinct and definite.

Chapter 4 gives us the substance, though not so fully, of Matthew 13. The storm is seen here after the *parables*, similar in moral character to its place in the Gospel of Matthew where it comes in shortly after the sermon on the mount. The Servant's path of rejection is clearly marked here as one of bitterest opposition, yet He goes on undisturbed in the steadfast purpose of service and testimony which He had set Himself to accomplish.

Chapter 5 shows us His power over Satan, when

most fully intrenched in men. While returning to Capernaum, the dead daughter of Jairus is raised. All is seen, we *may say*, as the activity of God's Prophet and Servant, rather than the authority of the King who had come to take His power and reign.

Chapter 6 is devoted to His rejection, both by Nazareth and impliedly by Herod, so that He is obliged to be in a desert place ; but nothing checks His ministry to the need of man. The five thousand are fed by One who was, humanly speaking, a fugitive for His life. So it is, wherever He goes, no matter how much He suffers; He can calm the raging waves for His trembling people and welcome the multitudes of weary, sick folk who are cast at His feet to be healed.

Chapter 7 puts side by side, as in Matthew 15, the empty, defiled heart of formalism, and the tender compassion of the heart of Christ for the poor Gentile stranger. Returning to His own country, He opens the deaf ears and stammering tongue of one who seems to be a type of the nation, one day to have its ears opened, its lips unsealed.

Chapter 8 is devoted in its first part to similar works, which seem to connect with the remnant of Israel, again feeding the multitude and reminding His disciples of His power to do this, while the opening of the eyes of the blind man at Bethsaida corresponds quite closely with the

narrative in the preceding chapter. The latter part of the chapter, from verse 27, transfers us to Gentile territory, where the full confession of who He is comes out.

In chapter g, we are with Him on the holy mount, but He does not linger long there, for need awaits Him below; the demon must be cast out of the child, as it will be out of Israel in the latter days.

From this point onward, our Lord speaks unequivocally of His rejection, as though the more clearly His glory shines forth, the more open the hostility of man becomes, emphasizing the necessity for His atoning work. Our Lord is not for a moment deterred by the glories which were upon Him in the mount, nor can the astonishment of the people at His miraculous works make Him forget the purpose for which He had come into the world. A glory ever rested upon Him, but it is the glory of meekness, "which is in the sight of God of great price," and which He presses upon His disciples.

Chapter 10 brings Him to the vicinity of Jerusalem, and the events of His closing days come into prominence.

Chapters 11 and 12 are parallel with the same narrative in Matthew, but with the characteristic brevity and definiteness of purpose which marks this entire Gospel.

Chapter 13 in like manner gives us the proph-



etic discourse, similar to that of Matthew 24 and 25, only briefer.

The remainder of the Gospel we defer examining until we speak of His death.

### The presentation of Christ in Luke

As a work of literature, the Gospel of Luke is perhaps superior to the other two synoptists. Written as it was by a Gentile, a physician also, and probably a man of culture, it has about it a charm naturally attaching to a finished production, but the charm is not so much natural and literary as in the method in which he presents the theme that occupies him.

In speaking thus, we would not for a moment have it thought that Matthew or Mark are incomplete or crude. Such is not the case. Matthew doubtless, as a Jew, while not a scribe, was thoroughly competent, as his Gospel shows, to present in just the right way *his* theme; as Mark is for *his*. The very conciseness and brevity of style in Mark express the theme which filled his heart.

In Luke, however, we have a delicacy of treatment which is peculiarly appropriate to the manner in which our Lord is presented to us. There are points in common both with Matthew and with Mark, but the range is evidently wider. The theme is not so much from the Jewish point of view, as from that of the gospel of the grace

of God; we therefore instinctively pass from his narrative of our Lord's earthly life to that of the Acts of the Apostles, recognizing they are from one author with a unity of purpose permeating them both. Indeed we might go further, and remembering that Luke was the companion of the apostle Paul in much of his work among the Gentiles, find his Gospel narrative and that of Acts a suitable introduction to the epistles of the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Our immediate purpose here, however, is not to take a general survey of all Luke's writings, nor as yet even of his Gospel, but rather to see, as we have already done in the previous Evangelists, the way in which he presents our Lord Jesus to us.

Chapter 1. We might almost imagine that this and the succeeding chapter should have been written by Matthew, as the scene is so largely Jewish; but if we look a little beneath the surface, we shall find its fitness to the general theme of Luke. The reality of faith in God, and separation of those who have this faith, as a remnant from the mass of the nation, is emphasized here. In Zacharias and Elizabeth we see this faith most beautifully, as well as in numbers of the lowly dwellers in the hill country of Judea, and in Simeon and Anna with others at Jerusalem.

We thus have a remnant, typical, no doubt, of what shall be in Israel in the latter days, but

which also connects intimately with the remnant of faith that is seen throughout the Gospel narrative, and which eventually widens out into the larger thought of the Church, including the Gentiles.

In the first chapter we have the announcement of the forerunner and the account of his birth, together with the more wonderful mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God. No holier place we might say can be found than that of the annunciation, where the handmaid of the Lord bows in chastened worship at the amazing grace which had been shown to her and to the sons of men. God was to visit not merely His people Israel, but to come into the world to be the Saviour of mankind.

Chapter 2. The machinery of the Roman empire is set in motion to bring to pass the prediction of the Spirit of God by the prophet that the Son of David should be born in Bethlehem, the city of David. It is touchingly appropriate that our Lord should be born at Bethlehem, the city of David in his lowliness, rather than at Jerusalem, the city of the great king, where David spent his royal life. In Matthew, wise men come to Jerusalem to learn where the King of the Jews is born. In Luke, we are not directed first to Jerusalem, but to the little village in the hill country where David spent his childhood and early days and

where the heavenly Babe was born. In Matthew, a star arises which guides the nations from afar to the birthplace of the King. In Luke, a heavenly messenger announces to the shepherds of Bethlehem the same glorious event, while the praise of the angels goes out beyond the confines of Israel's nation proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good will toward men."

Here we have a suggestion of Luke's theme, where our Lord is presented not merely in connection with the nation of Israel, but as Son of Man. He is indeed presented in the temple, but is soon carried from Bethlehem to Nazareth, where His private life is spent. We get but one glimpse of Him, a most significant one, which is also in the temple. It shows us the consciousness of His mission which was in Him from the beginning. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" sets at rest forever all the speculations of unbelief and the philosophic reasonings of the *Kenosis*. However much He had emptied Himself of His glory, He was still consciously the Son of God, claiming God as His Father. Thus, while the scenes of His childhood and early life are Jewish in character, they are not directly connected with the establishment of His kingdom as in Matthew, but lead on to the events of His public life. These also are largely Jewish in form, and yet go out beyond mere Judaism.

Chapter 3 is dramatic in its arrangement. The world is going on utterly unconscious of the reason of the pervading quiet. The Roman emperor is in the palace of the Cæsars, and his representative, Pilate, governor in Judea. A false king of the Jews, Herod, has his little kingdom in Galilee, with his brother Philip over another portion, and still another ruler in Abilene. The world seems to be suffering from no lack of rulers, and the same *plethora* exists in the office of the priesthood itself—Annas and Caia-phas dividing between them honors which were theirs not so much by divine right (although doubtless descendants of Aaron) as by Roman political management.

So the world, political and religious, seems provided for and at rest. It is indeed a rest of moral death. Into the midst of this comes the word of the living God which is going to shake the throne of Rome and the palace of the priests. It comes, however, not to emperor, governor or tetrach, nor yet to the occupants of the holy office of priesthood, but to a lowly man in his rejection, John, of the family of Aaron indeed, but like Ezekiel and Jeremiah of old a prophet rather than a priest. He shakes the people both religious and military, and they flock out to hear his preaching of repentance; but this is only to prepare them for the entrance of One greater far than himself, and the crowd opens as

we look upon it, and we see Another **standing** by the side of John as though a penitent; but neither John nor Heaven can look upon **Him** as that; it is One who in lowliness was taking His place with a penitent people to become their Surety and to open for them those heavens which now smile upon Him.

His genealogy follows, traced *back* here, not merely to David nor to Abraham, but to the first man, Adam, and thence to God. Thus we see our Lord's connection with the whole human family, rather than with Israel. It is supposed, and is probably correct, that we have here the genealogy of our Lord through His mother Mary, although being probably related to Joseph, her genealogy is his as well.

Chapter 4. We follow the life of the Son of Man spent within the limits of Israel, but with a constant outlook toward the world outside. We will find, therefore, beautifully prominent, the precious gospel of the grace of God which reaches out to all mankind. The law had indeed hedged Israel about as a nation, but as they did not keep it, it could not permanently mark them off from the rest of men.

After the temptation, our Lord goes to Galilee and is found at Nazareth, where He enunciates the great principle of which we have just spoken. The message of grace is sent to His own people, but it is received by Gentiles, even as of old the

widow of Zarepta, a Gentile, received the prophet and was fed during the time of famine, and as Naaman, a Syrian, had his leprosy cleansed. The poor Nazarenes would have shown the divine accuracy of our Lord's words in seeking to put *Him* to death; but neither the time nor manner was according to Scripture; so He passes on to minister in blessing to others.

Chapter 5 is filled with beautiful pictures of God's grace. The divine presence manifested in the draught of fishes convicts Peter of sin, while grace assures him and predicts his service in the gospel. Leprosy is cleansed and palsy healed, while between these acts of grace our Lord withdraws to pour out His soul in prayer. We might mention here that prayer is a prominent characteristic of the narrative of this Evangelist. Then publicans cluster about Him who exemplifies a grace which came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Chapter 6. The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath, which indeed was never meant to hold man in bondage but, had he been right in his soul, to give him honorable repose and delight in God. Helplessness, induced by bondage of which the withered arm was a type, is relieved in grace; and the remainder of the chapter gives us an abridgment of the sermon on the mount from the standpoint of the gospel for men rather than the kingdom for Israel.

Chapter 7. Our Lord ministers to the Roman centurion, and to Israel as typified in the widow of Nain, and justifies wisdom's children who acknowledge Him and justify Him in His ways. The lovely instance of grace in the Pharisee's house is in line with the theme of our Evangelist, for he ever delights to record the goings out of that grace.

In chapter 8 we have the parable of the sower alone of the sevenfold parabolic cycle of kingdom truth, which perhaps emphasizes Luke's theme of the gospel of the Son of man. The remaining narratives in this chapter are given in the other synoptists also, and doubtless in appropriate connections.

In chapter 9 the multitude is fed, but our Lord's rejection is more clearly manifested. The transfiguration, and healing of the demoniac child are soon followed by the development of His rejection. Chapter 9: 51 seems to include all the remainder of the Gospel narrative under this general subject. The journey led on to Jerusalem, the place where He was to be crucified, and everything is in the light of that. If men are to follow Him, it is following One who is going to the cross. Those who look back have not entered into the power of a life which will enable them to face death.

Chapter 10. Our Lord's activity and care for others is only intensified as His rejection is more



manifest. He will send messengers out with the gospel, and even the opposition and snares of the enemy furnish but further occasions for bringing out that gospel in its fulness, as the parable of the good Samaritan indicates.

Chapter 11 teaches, in the parable of the three loaves, that sincere prayer never fails. The remainder of the chapter shows the deadliness of the opposition, and our Lord meets this by manifesting the hypocrisy and perfidy of the Pharisees.

Chapter 12 sets before us the solemn realities of time and eternity, and gives us a view of the Son of Man in the intensity of His yearning to warn and to deliver men.

In chapter 13 the hopeless condition of Israel is dwelt upon, while there are also intimations of blessing and deliverance, as in the healing of the woman with the spirit of infirmity.

Chapter 14. We are in "gospel territory" here. The parable of the feast with its invitation to the poor and the maimed needs no comment; it shows the heart of One who would draw men to Himself and provides for the needy and the hungry.

Chapter 15—the pearl of the Gospel—needs no words to show its beauty. We only speak of it here as giving that aspect of our Lord consistent with the entire Gospel of Luke, the Son of Man presenting salvation to the world of sinners.

Chapter 16 gives the solemn reverse picture—the pride of man in rejecting Christ, and his ul-

timate doom. Instead of the feast at the Father's table, there is the place of the rich man in torment.

Chapter 17. In the cleansing of the lepers and the worship of the Samaritan, we have again the gospel theme of Luke; while the latter part of the chapter shows the future with its consequences for the impenitent.

In chapter 18 we see prevailing prayer, the gospel for the penitent, and its rejection by the self-sufficient. At the close, the final stage of the journey to Jerusalem is entered upon, marked as in all the synoptists by the healing of Bartimeus. Truly, Israel's eyes will be opened when she is ready to receive Him whom they now reject.

In chapter 19 Zaccheus the publican receives the Lord, illustrating again the theme of the Gospel. The parable of the ten pounds is similar to that of the talents, but has certain characteristics of its own. It was uttered because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and while speaking of responsibility in general, the form suggests the coming of the kingdom which He would establish. The journey into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple follow-all Jewish scenes.

In chapter 20 our Lord deals with the leaders of the people and their questionings, much after the manner of the other Evangelists. We may note details later on.

Chapter 21 is the prophetic discourse, in which all is in accord with the theme of the Gospel of the Son of Man.

### The presentation of Christ in John

The three synoptists, as has been frequently noticed, stand together and in separation from the fourth Gospel. Unbelief has endeavored to make capital out of the unique character of the Gospel of John ; but let them point out its divergence as much as possible, they will be but hewers of wood and drawers of water and furnish fresh material for the display of the glory of the eternal Son of God.

If Luke shows us the Son of *Man*, there can be no question that in the Gospel of John, throughout, we are face to face with the Son of *God*. It is not that His incarnation is overlooked; a few verses in the first chapter set this forth, but we plainly see that we are not tracing the glories of the King of Israel, although He who is here is also King; nor yet are we following the busy activities of the faithful Servant, although here we have One who came down from heaven not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. He has no halo about His head. The glory which faith beholds dwells in a tabernacle, for the Word has been made flesh, but it is the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father; a glory "full of grace and truth."

John therefore stands alone. The gospel is brought out with as great clearness as in Luke, but from the standpoint of our Lord's Godhead glory. There are characteristic expressions in our Evangelist which we shall examine in another place. It is sufficient here to remind ourselves that eternal life, the gift of Him who was in the bosom of the Father, is the form in which the gospel is presented to us in John. It is therefore the divine side of it. We will endeavor to mark the manner in which our Lord is presented in the various chapters.

Chapter I. Verses 1-5 stand, we might say, by themselves. The link of all that takes place in incarnation with what had previously been true, is here. "The Word," the expression of the mind, thought and purposes of God, is the name given to the Son. He was "in the beginning," that is, before creation took place. He was "with God," as associated with the Father and the Spirit; He "was God," for He Himself was that as well as the Father and the Spirit. The same One who afterwards manifested Himself in His manhood was unchangeably the same, the One who "was in the beginning with God."

Thus, the continuity, if we may so say, of His Godhead, is established in the most absolute way. There was in Him life. Life belonged to Himself as the self-existent One; but this Life, even as His title "The Word," suggests a going

out to His creatures and making God known to them; it is the light of men. It shone, however, in darkness—a moral darkness which could not comprehend it. Then the ministry of John is alluded to, the preaching of repentance, bringing home to man his need, and preparing him to receive the true Light which was coming into the world.

Our Lord thus comes into the world which His own hands had made, but He is seen from the beginning as the rejected One, both by the world at large, which knew Him not, and by His own Israel who received Him not. This was because of man's nature; but grace also was working, and therefore as many as received Him were brought into a place not of occasional blessing, but made members of the family of God-born of Him in connection with faith in the name of His Son.

Thus, the Word was made flesh ; incarnation has taken place; divine glory has consented to dwell in a lowly tabernacle which displays its beauties to faith alone. The glory of the uncreated God is brought nigh to men. Those who have eyes see it, and realize that the only begotten Son has declared Him whom no eye had ever seen.

John the Baptist, the preacher of repentance, points out our Lord as more than the incarnate Son, He is the Lamb of God who by His sacri-

## 2. THE ASPECT OF THE LORD'S DEATH AS PRESENTED IN EACH GOSPEL

**P**URSUING the method already used in tracing our Lord's life through the four Gospels, we will now ask reverently: In what way is His death presented to us in each Gospel ?

We may divide this precious subject thus:

1. The Last Supper.
2. Gethsemane and the Betrayal.
3. The Trial before the High Priest.
4. Pilate's Judgment Hall and Herod.
5. The Crucifixion.
6. The Burial.

We will look at these features separately.

### 1. The Last Supper

As has been already remarked, the closing scenes of our Lord's life begin in each Gospel with His entrance into Jerusalem; but for our purpose we begin with that which is immediately connected with His death, having already looked at that part which extends from Jericho up to the passover night.

In Matthew (chap. 26: 1-29), our Lord predicts His death as He had often done before, but now names the time, "after two days." He knows all that is to take place and this precedes the statement of the plot of the chief priests, who in fact decided not to deliver Him up on the

feast day, but whose counsels could not set aside God's pre-determined purpose.

The anointing in the house of Simon the leper, at Bethany, by the nameless woman, is evidently that recorded in John. Minor details of apparent differences will be noted elsewhere. Appropriately to this Gospel, the ointment is spoken of as put upon His Head, as if crowned by it. The plot of the traitor Judas is put side by side with this fragrant act of worship, the memorial of which, according to our Lord's words, remains ever with us. The place where to eat the passover is provided for; and at this, which preceded the institution of the Lord's Supper, the betrayal of Judas Iscariot is fully declared.

The passover was the Jewish feast, and in this Gospel which gives us things from a Jewish standpoint, it is fitting that Judaism as such should be seen as set aside. After the fulfilment of what the passover implied Judaism retained nothing but the treachery which, while it centered in Judas, characterized the nation as a whole.

The Lord's Supper is given very briefly, but most precious. The bread is His body; the cup is His blood of the new covenant as contrasted with the old, now about to be forever set aside. The cup that remained for Him was one of sorrow unutterable. His joy waited until He should drink it in a new way with His disciples in His Father's kingdom.

**In Mark** (chap. 14: 1-25) the narrative is almost identical with that in Matthew. The place where they are to eat the passover supper is pointed out by our Lord; the man with a pitcher of water would guide them there. The details as to the traitor, and as to the Lord's Supper give no new features. When we come to consider the character of the two Gospels, the reason for all this will be evident, and more especially when we look at the typical significance of His death.

**In Luke** (chap. 22: 1-30), the anointing is not spoken of; possibly because being a semi-official act it would not be appropriate to the theme which filled the mind of the Evangelist-the Son of Man, bringing men into the presence of God in peace and communion.

The preliminary arrangement of the passover supper is the same as in the other synoptists. The Lord's Supper, however, stands out here after the manner of Luke, in the place of special prominence rather than its probable order.

Verse 15 speaks of eating this the last passover, which had been His earnest desire. Never again would He partake of it until all was fulfilled in the kingdom of God. The cup spoken of in verse 17 is the closing cup of the Passover, and not to be confounded with the cup also given to them in establishing the new feast.

Verses 19 and 20 give us this which is to be done as a memorial of Himself. The traitor is



spoken of after this, not necessarily to indicate his presence at the Lord's Supper. Indeed, what we have in Matthew and Mark, and especially in John, would show that he was *not* present at the Lord's Supper. He goes out immediately after receiving the sop. (See John 13: 30.)

Closely connected with the perfidy of Judas, though distinctly differing from it, is the pride and strife amongst the disciples as to who should be the greatest. Truly, if through grace delivered from the former, we must recognize our constant danger of falling into the latter sin.

**John** (chaps. 12: 1-g; 13: 1-17). We shall see later on, how the marked individuality of the fourth Gospel separates it from the other three, and nowhere is this more manifest than in that which now occupies us. While the actual institution of the Lord's Supper is not directly mentioned, only implied, there is a fulness of discourse in John which is absent from the other Gospels.

In the feast at Bethany the names of Martha and Mary are prominent in service and worship. We are not told just the connection between them and Simon the leper (of course a cleansed leper), at whose house, as we learn in Matthew, the anointing took place. There is no need for the supposition which some have made that Martha was married to him ; others, that while the feast was in his house, the hosts were the

family so devoted to our Lord. This latter, however, is not unnatural to Jewish customs. “*There they made Him a supper*” (John 12:2) might thus include both Simon who opened his house, and Martha and her family who gladly ministered there.

In the anointing by Mary, the spikenard is not put upon His head, but upon His feet. Doubtless, this last was the more prominent part of the act; the anointing of the head, Matthew only records. In wiping His feet with her hair Mary lays her glory there as a tribute to Him whose death was all in all to her.

The washing of the disciples’ feet in chapter 13 seems clearly to be in connection with the passover supper. Ver. 2 should read “Supper being come.” It was at the beginning, not at the end, of the passover feast. The strife amongst them narrated by Luke is met by the washing of the feet. He who was “over all, God blessed forever,” would take the lowest place, while they were engaged in dispute for supremacy.

The declaration as to the traitor is given here with greater fulness. Our Lord’s omniscience, appropriately with this Gospel, is brought into somewhat greater prominence. We do not speak of the conversation which took place upon the departure of Judas; but it seems clear that just at the close of chapter 13, the Lord’s Supper was instituted, leaving the precious discourses of

chapters **14-16** and the prayer of chapter **17** to take place at or after that feast.

The apparent movement in chapter **14: 31**, "Arise, let us go hence," may suggest, as some have thought, that chapters **15** and **16** were spoken on the way to Gethsemane and the prayer of chapter **17** uttered in some quiet place by the wayside. We are not careful as to these details beyond what the Spirit of God has seen fit to make known. The discourse and prayer, however, have an appropriate connection with the Lord's Supper which we should not overlook.

## 2. Gethsemane and the Betrayal

Perhaps nowhere in the entire sad record of our Lord's suffering do we find more tender manifestations of His devotion to His Father than in Gethsemane. It has a character peculiar to itself, different from the "horror of great darkness" of the cross which it precedes, and marked off, too, in a well defined way from what had gone before. It stands out indeed as the "oil press," which its name signifies, where the sweet ointment of a love and obedience which nothing could divert from its steadfast course is manifested, in a fragrance all its own, a sweet perfume and holy anointing oil meet to adorn His head alone.

**Matthew** (chap. 26: 30-56). The hymn (ver. 30) closes the scene at the Supper. It has been

thought, and with much show of reason, that this was a part of the great Hallel (Ps. 115-118) which was sung by the Jews at the close of the pass-over supper. If so, it included the 116th psalm, which is Messiah's own utterance, celebrating His deliverance from the gates of death. How blessedly appropriate that, ere He entered that gloomy portal, He could in anticipation celebrate His deliverance from it and declare that the Stone which the builders were so soon finally to reject had become the Head of the corner (Ps. 118). This is according to the manner of the Psalms, where the results are declared at the outset, and the stages through which those results are reached follow afterwards ; or, as we might say, here again we see the singers put in the forefront of the battle.

Knowing all that should come to pass, the scattering of His entire little flock and the special denial of the chiefest of them, the Lord appoints a meeting place with them in Galilee, which is peculiar to this Gospel and Mark's, suggesting the dispensational character which marks it throughout.

The thrice-repeated prayer, with its entreaty that the cup pass from Him, coupled with perfect submission, show at once His holiness which shrank from what was coming, and the obedience which was a part of His moral being. The weakness of the disciples who could sleep in a scene

like this shows how immeasurably the best of men are separated from His sorrow, the like of which there never had been.

The narrative of the betrayal, with its kiss of perfidy, follows. While perfectly submissive to the vested authority of those led by the traitor, we get a glimpse, also a governmental one, of our Lord's conscious kingly authority: "Think-est thou not that I cannot now pray to My Father and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? " Instead of the twelve legions, He stops the rash act of one not named here, reminding him that they that take the sword-in their own strength-shall perish with the sword. To those who were sent to lay hold of Him He would not even tacitly acquiesce in any thought of guilt on His part, but reminds them that He had sat daily with them, teaching in the temple; it was the fulfilment of Scripture which He alone acknowledged.

In Mark (chap. 14: 26-52), the narrative follows closely that of Matthew, as is to be expected when we consider the similarity of their themes. In Mark, the detail of the cock's crowing twice is given, which was only referred to generally in Matthew. In the agony in the garden, the Father is addressed by the dearest of all titles: "Abba." Most appropriate is it that the Gospel which shows the greatest depths of distance should precede its narrative with the term of

closest filial endearment. And how near we have been brought by that sacrifice, to be able by the Spirit to use the same language !

Nothing calls for special remark in the arrest except, "a certain young man " who by some has been thought to be the Evangelist himself. He who was the sin offering must be alone; none could follow Him, save at a distance. Where there is an attempt to do this, it will but manifest the shame of the one who makes it.

In Luke (chap. 22: 31-53), the prediction of Peter's denial is given first, but he is only one among the rest. They are all to be sifted as wheat, and Peter is the object of special testing in this connection, that he might be especially used for the confirmation of others later on.

The remarkable utterance about the swords is peculiar to Luke. It was, as though the Lord would say He would be taken from them, and they, humanly speaking, would be cast upon themselves for sustenance and defence; and to their answer, showing Him two swords, He replies, as closing the subject: " It is enough"-surely not sufficient if they were to rely upon human weapons. Indeed, He undoes later what the sword attempts.

The ministry of the angel and His agony and bloody sweat are peculiar to Luke who makes prominent the perfect humanity of our Lord. The kiss of the traitor is characterized as that,

and the whole dark scene described in those brief words : " This is your hour and the power of darkness. "

In **John** (chap. 18 : 1-11), the dignity of the divine Son is seen in the brief narrative given. The traitor is there, but no record of the kiss is allowed, and the officers who accompany him fall prostrate in the presence of a power which was not to be put forth for His own deliverance. His care for His own is seen and those whom the Father has given Him are kept inviolate, even though Peter is named as the offender in the matter of Malchus.

The " cup " is mentioned, not in the agony of entreaty and shrinking from its dreadful bitterness, but as given to Him of His Father, to be drunk in a submission which ever found its meat and drink in doing His will.

### 3. The trial before the high priest

The trial of our Lord, if such a mockery can be called that, divides into two parts: that before the high priest, which may be termed the religious side; and that before Pilate, or the political. The Jews had no power of executing the death penalty, which rested in the hands of the Romans. This explains why the Lord, after His condemnation at the hands of the Jews was brought before the Gentile power.

In **Matthew** (chap. 26: 57-75), the travesty of

a trial before the Sanhedrin is gone through. The very priests and leaders who were to be His judges seek for false witness upon whose testimony they will render their verdict. Can the ignominy of such a trial be more strongly exhibited? False witnesses, predicted long before, laid things to His charge which He knew not. A modicum of truth is perverted, as is often the case, in the most awful form of falsehood. The temple of God was indeed to be destroyed, but not by Him; and restored, but not in the way their testimony would imply. Indeed, none knew better than themselves that He meant nothing of this kind. Later on we see how this perversion was passed out among the people, and taken by them as the true ground for His condemnation. Thus easily a false insinuation is fostered until it is accepted for the truth.

The high priest, however, simply uses this as an occasion to extort from the Lord, if possible, an admission upon which He can be convicted. Receiving no answer as to the accusation of the false witnesses, He is adjured to declare whether or no He is the Christ the Son of God. To such an adjuration, even from such polluted lips, our Lord responds. Indeed, He goes further and solemnly declares not only His Messiahship and Sonship, but His exaltation and coming in judgment. Well might their hearts quake, had they not been so blinded, when thus reminded of One



who was to sit upon the right hand of Jehovah until His enemies were made His footstool. But their wicked will blinds them to everything but their purpose. At once, the charge of blasphemy is made and He is declared to be guilty of death.

Free rein is now given to the malice seen long before and recorded in the words of the prophet: "I gave My back to the smiters and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not My face from shame and spitting."

In divine faithfulness, Peter's denial is placed side by side with the holy confession of our Lord: the One, undeterred from the purposes of His love by the malice, bigotry, and certainty of death at the hands of His enemies; the other, too weak to stand before the word of a maid. Thrice he repeats his denial, but the crowing of the cock foretells, at the darkest hour, the coming of the morning, and Peter's tears are precursors of a new day for himself.

In **Mark** (chap. 14: 53-72), the narrative follows closely that of Matthew. In addition to Peter's following afar off, we have the added touch.: "He... warmed himself at the fire"-in too close association with the enemies of our Lord. The false witnesses, the adjuration of the priest, and the condemnation follow in the same order. The denial, with the exception that the crow of the cock is twice repeated, is the same as in Matthew.

In Luke (chap. 22:54-71), the order is reversed, and Peter's denial with all the details comes first. Then the mockery to which the Lord is subjected, and the decision of the council is given last. We might say we have the moral order here-denied by His own, mocked of His enemies, which is crowned by the deliberate judgment of the council.

John (chap. 18: 12-27). A preliminary examination seems to have been made at the house of Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas. This is noted alone in John. The main trial, however, takes place in the high priest's palace. It is in accord with the manner of the entire Gospel of John, that the Evangelist who speaks of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" or "another disciple," never giving his name, should be seen here close to the One upon whose bosom he had leaned. It was through him that Peter was able to go as he did to the Sanhedrim, but this nearness only brought in the occasion for his denial. This is first made at the door as he is let in; then, undeterred by his denial, he stands with the servants and officers and warms himself at their fire. Before the wretched weakness culminates in the third denial, the Evangelist turns us to the patient Witness in whose blessed heart was no thought of denying aught that He had ever stood for, cost what it may.

The false witnesses are not spoken of here:

the interrogations are made directly, and the Lord refers them to His public teaching. When rebuked and struck for answering (an entirely righteous act on His part), His calm reply shows how perfectly He was master of every feeling and of the whole situation.

#### 4. Pilate's Judgment Hall and Herod

The civil trial follows upon the ecclesiastical, for the reasons already noted. All four **Evan-**gelists note this. It would seem that while the actual trial and condemnation of our Lord occurred during the night (a thing prohibited by Jewish oral law) the formal sentence was not pronounced until the morning. The religion of the flesh is ever noted for straining out *a* gnat and swallowing a camel. They had no scruple about imbruing their hands in the blood of the Innocent, but, as John tells us, they would not go into Pilate's judgment hall, lest they should be defiled and prevented from eating the pass-over.

In **Matthew** (chap. 27 : 1-31), the morning sentence is recorded; and then the Lord is delivered over to the Roman governor. The culmination of Judas' crime is next mentioned (vers. 3-10); alas, his repentance is without sorrow, with a heart unchanged, which can only pronounce its own doom and then *carry* it into execution. **How** solemnly does Judas stand for

the apostate nation! They, too, for imagined temporal advantage, sold their Messiah, and with the price have gained but a burial place for strangers-which the world has been to them ever since.

The difficulty as to the quotation from Jeremy the prophet, which seems actually to be from Zechariah, has often been commented upon. Unbelief seeks to prove a contradiction. Faith reverently inquires and gets answers which meet the difficulties. Jeremiah is the first who speaks of the potter, and it is appropriate that what he says (compare Jer. 19 with Zech. II: 13) of Israel's sin and their rejection, together with the burial place in the valley of Hinnom, should be connected with the detail of the purchase of that burying place as predicted in Zechariah.

We come to the "good confession" before Pilate. The charge, it will be remembered, upon which He was convicted by the council, was blasphemy against God. This would not do to present before a secular ruler. Another charge must therefore be made which would involve Him before the Roman tribunal. Rebellion against Cæsar, in setting Himself up as a king, is the charge. Here again the element of truth perverted into actual falsehood shows the crooked ways of those who were determined to carry out their own wicked will.

Our Lord answers nothing to the charge; and

Pilate, apparently convinced already of His innocence, instead of dismissing the case with reprimand to His false accusers, proposes a compromise - always a fatal thing; for evil will not be satisfied with a part. If that is yielded, the whole is demanded. Our Lord needed not a pardon on the ground of its being the time of the Passover. Blessed results indeed were to flow from this passover for many ; *a* prisoner would be set free, but not the One whose love alone made Him a bondman to work liberty for others at infinite cost to Himself.

The warning of Pilate's wife is recorded in Matthew alone. As of old God rebuked the madness of the prophet Ralaam by a dumb brute, so here, through the dream of a woman, He would arrest the hand about to shed innocent blood.

Barabbas is chosen by the people instead of Christ, for whom nothing but the cross will do. Barabbas, " the *son* of the Father," strange name indeed for one who was chosen by the apostate people instead of the true Son of the Father! Their choice of a leader in lawlessness and a murderer reminds us of our Lord's words as to the coming Antichrist: " I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." The Antichrist heads up the mystery of lawlessness which is already at work, and the people in the last days will choose him rather than the

One whom they have pierced. It is this which distinguishes the godly remnant from the mass of the nation in a way that could not be mistaken. The one chooses Barabbas, the Anti-christ; the other, the true Son of the Father.

In vain poor Pilate, in the wickedness of moral weakness, washes his hands but not in innocence. Neither his refusal of responsibility as to the blood of the Just One nor the people's acceptance of it will excuse him or them in the day when God shall make inquisition for blood.

The mocking which follows is much the same as in Mark.

**Mark** (chap. 15 : 1-20). No added features of the trial before Pilate are given in Mark, which closely follows Matthew, without, however, the record of the dream of Pilate's wife. After the sentence has been given against the Lord, certain details of wanton cruelty are mentioned. The governor orders Him to be scourged, and the soldiers hold a mock court of honor in which they go through the semblance of crowning and enthroning Him as king. The crown of thorns and a purple robe of royalty are put upon Him, a reed instead of a sceptre, and while bowing the knee, their spittle shows their contempt. After the mock homage He is reclothed in His own garments-for He could be none other than Himself-and led away to be crucified.

**Luke** (chap. 23: x-25) . Minuter details of the

trial are given here. Question and answer pass between Pilate and the people. In this Evangelist alone we see the futile effort of poor Pilate to rid himself of responsibility by turning our Lord over to king Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, in whose jurisdiction He was. Herod and his men join in the mockery which everywhere is meted out to the Lord, who in the meekness of holiness is silent amid it all. He is returned to Pilate who cannot escape responsibility in this way; and the friendship thus regained with Herod is sealed by mutual guilt in the condemnation of the Just. Willing enough to compromise with the people by chastising One whom he had just pronounced innocent, he again would make use of the passover custom to release the Lord. But the people clamor for a robber and a murderer rather than the Lord; thirsty for His blood, they prevail over Pilate, and Jesus is delivered to their will.

**John** (chaps. 18: 28—19: 1-16). This narrative goes deeper than the others, as might be expected from the character in which our Lord is presented throughout this Gospel. The religious scruples of the Jews will not allow them to enter the judgment hall, and contrary to Roman law which demanded that accused and accuser should be brought face to face, the pitiful spectacle is presented of the representative of the Emperor passing like a shuttle from his

judgment hall, where the innocent Victim stood, to the mob outside clamoring for His blood.

The formal charge is evidently the same as given in the other Gospels: our Lord was amenable to Roman law because He had made Himself a king. Pilate invites them to deal with Him according to *their* law; but this would not satisfy them, for it was His *life* they wanted, and the Romans had taken the death penalty from them.

Passing into the judgment hall, Pilate questions the Lord. How solemn is the scene! Judge and Accused change places. It is not the Roman who pronounces sentence, but rather the Accused standing there and bearing witness to the truth which condemns the unjust judge, looking for an opening to find Him guilty. He is a king, but not in any sense of which Pilate could take account. His kingdom is not of this world. If it were (though one day it will be, and all the the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords), His servants would fight. Now it is the kingdom of truth of which He is the embodiment and Lord: as such He detects the untruth of the man who stands there for justice but does what he knows is not the truth. Alas, Pilate knows not, or professes not to know the meaning of all this, but feels it enough to go out and make another futile effort at compromise with the people.



These, however, know their lesson well, and show a firmness in wickedness which Pilate cannot show for righteousness.

The matter is now practically settled; but the last scene is yet more solemn. Jesus is scourged; the soldiers crown and adorn Him in mock homage as King of the Jews. Still protesting the innocence of the Lord, Pilate leads Him forth to the awful mob without, clothed in garments which could not detract from His holy and divine dignity. "Behold the Man!" exclaims Pilate. "Crucify Him, crucify Him" cry out the leaders; but now in answer to the almost pitiful pleading of Pilate, they give the true accusation: "He made Himself the Son of God." This strikes fresh terror into Pilate's heart. Who is this mysterious person? He takes Him back into the judgment hall and seeks, not to know the truth, but apparently to probe into this awful mystery, possibly to justify himself in consenting to the accusation of the Jews. Our Lord cannot answer inquiries such as these, though the faintest desire to know the real truth was always met by Him. The poor governor tries to work himself into a rage: he speaks of his power and authority, only to be met by the calmness of divine Truth, which shows how helpless Pilate in his weakness, as the people in their wickedness, are to do aught contrary to the eternal purposes of God.

Pilate's efforts to free Him are now redoubled, but he has already put himself into the enemies' hands and they will find a sure and short way of ending his weak protests. They intimate that they will accuse him to his master, Caesar. "Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." This ends the unequal contest. Alas, those who tell us of the good which lies at the bottom of every heart fail to find it here in the heart of Pilate. He sits down now to pronounce the final sentence, Is He a king ? Then he will accept the charge. "Behold your king," he says. Must I crucify him? They answer : " We have no king but Caesar." So there seems to be a great victory for the Roman authority. Does Pilate delude himself into thinking he has made the imperial power more stable? We cannot believe it. However, he goes through the awful mockery, and Jesus is led away to be crucified.

### 5. The Crucifixion

The cross, in one point of view, was the dark goal which was before the Son of God ere He came to earth. Incarnation was necessary in order that He might make atonement. "A body hast Thou prepared Me". .." By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. " This shows that the prepared body of His incarnation was with a view to the full accomplishment of the will of God in

His death. The cross is the great dividing point in the history of fallen man; we may say indeed, "the centre of two eternities" toward which all things converged, from which all radiate. It well becomes us, then, to stand by the cross and gaze with wonder at the divine transaction which took place there. It has a special connection with all classes and all subjects. There, on the one side, every attribute of the character of God is displayed, and on the other, all the history of man and the possibilities of the human heart exhibited. Satan is seen there in the cunning of a malice which is limited only by his capacity for evil, and the world as a system under the control of its prince, is there manifested in its true character.

If we wish to know what sin is, what Satanic energy is, what Christless self-righteousness is, we look at the Cross and see them displayed there. If we wish to know what divine justice and righteousness are, what holiness in its perfection is, where wisdom and the perfect measure of love are displayed, what grace and mercy mean, we have to look at the Cross. If we wish to understand how come the blessed fruits of redemption, it is not in the transformed lives of men we should seek it (though they are illustrations of them), but at the Cross from which they spring. Here we learn what forgiveness is and what peace with God means! Here, too, we see the

basis and power for deliverance, the title to glory — in short, every blessing, temporal and eternal for the people of God, finds its origin here. No flowers and fruits of divine grace and love, of obedience, of service, of joy, of peace — no graces of meekness, of gentleness, of self-denial — no fruits which have transformed the desert of fallen manhood and make it blossom as the rose, but have their roots running down to Calvary from which they spring and by which they are nourished.

If we wish to know the certainty of the doom awaiting the rejecters of Christ, the unutterable terror of final judgment, the eternity of future punishment, we find them in the cross where divine judgment and wrath were poured upon the spotless Substitute to deliver men from the inevitable consequences of their own sin.

We need not be surprised, therefore, that the crucifixion is given in much detail in each of the narratives. Here also we find that the special theme of each Evangelist is adhered to, which so far from contradicting the full truth, only brings out the perfections of the narrative all the more clearly.

Matthew (chap. 27: 32-56). The incident of Simon the Cyrenian (ver. 32) is suggestive. It is he who bears the cross. Its significance, however, may well suggest that participation in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ which it is the

privilege of all who follow Him. The contrast between the two Simons has been suggested ; the one who protested fullest obedience but who in the hour of testing denied his Lord, and this man who bears the cross. It does not seem that he voluntarily offered himself, however, but was impressed into service by the exigencies of the occasion. However, it is not said that he refused. The Spirit of God has recorded this incident, and it demands our careful attention.

It is fitting that the place of execution should bear the gruesome name of Golgotha, Calvary, "the place of a skull." Indeed, the whole world was that in the eyes of God, a lifeless, hideous travesty of what had come so fair from his hands. It is more than mere scorn when the cynic says:

"Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modelled on a skull."

Calvary was thus a witness of the moral condition of the whole world, also of the love and grace which would come down to the very place where the hideousness of sin was manifested, there to triumph over it. From the skull of Calvary springs the beauty of the resurrection; not only for the Son of God over whom indeed death had no power, and whom it could not disfigure, though it might eclipse His beauty to the eye of man, but for the whole family of the

redeemed who are risen with Christ, eternally beyond the power of death to mar or disfigure,

The draft of vinegar mingled with gall seems to have a twofold meaning. There was a fulfilment of the prophecy: "They gave Me also gall for My meat, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink. " It reminds us of the bitterness of the "cup" which our Lord drank at the hands of man. It also implies a rough attempt at mitigating the intensity of His physical sufferings, after the manner of an opiate. This seems to be the ground of our Lord's refusing to drink it. He would not allow anything to dull the acuteness of those sufferings, of which the physical were the least.

We are spared the pain of details in the actual immolation of the blessed Sufferer, which is described in the brief words: "They crucified Him." We know from other scriptures it was by nailing Him to the cross which was lifted up from earth, with Him suspended upon it, hanging upon the tree.

The parting His garments and casting lots is a fulfilment of another scripture. He was stripped of every honor by the ruthless hands of those who nailed Him to the cross. Then, sitting down they watched Him as a guard to see that no one interfered to bring Him relief or to deliver Him. No need for this, indeed; it was His own love that took Him to the cross

and kept Him there ; but His enemies are thus made to bear witness to the fact of His crucifixion as, a little later on, the guard about the closed sepulchre is made to testify to His resurrection. The accusation set over His cross is that which Pilate had pronounced as his sentence of condemnation. It was the technical charge upon which He had been declared guilty. It meant, of course, the end of all Jewish kingship, in addition to much else. Here we see, in this Gospel of the kingdom, the final rejection of their King by the Jews.

The two thieves crucified with Him show how completely He was "numbered with the transgressors." The ribald crowd taunt Him, taking up the false witness that had been borne against Him : "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself." Unconsciously, they use the very language of the tempter himself in the wilderness: "If Thou be the Son of God;" but if Satan was again tempting Him, he could no more move Him to descend from the cross than to make bread of the stones or cast Himself down from the temple.

The chief priests and other leaders of the people join in the mockery. As has often been the case, the very reproach which they cast upon Him is His glory. It was indeed true, in a way which poor malice never dreamed of, that "He saved others; Himself He cannot save"-not the

“cannot ” of weakness or inability, bat of divine love. In their wicked glee, they promise to believe on Him if He would come down from the cross and thus prove Himself to be the King of Israel. Alas, when a mightier proof is given them by His resurrection from the dead, they could corrupt the Roman soldiers to hide the dreaded truth. Thinly veiled indeed from their own consciences must have been the evidences of His kingship, manifested as it had been in His wondrous works ; but His was a kingdom in which they could have no place unless transformed by the power of divine grace. And the work for which He had come in flesh must now be accomplished upon the cross, that thus He might acquire the right which divine love craved, to bring poor sinners back to God, ere He returns to administer His kingdom in righteousness.

The language of the leaders is practically a direct quotation from the 22nd psalm, and illustrates the blindness of which the apostle speaks when he says: “They that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him” (Acts 13: 27). These voices touch upon the real reason of their hatred of Him—His divine Sonship.

In all this mockery, the two thieves have their share. It shows that punishment and suffering



have in themselves no efficacy to purify that which is impure. This only brings out all the more clearly the grace which Luke records as to one of these thieves.

We then see our Lord passing into the dark shadow, even "the blackness of darkness " in which all His sufferings at the hands of man are overshadowed. From the sixth hour (*noon*), with the sun in mid-heaven, to the ninth-three full hours (suggesting the fulness of the measure of the cup of wrath poured out to Him) there was darkness over all the land. " God is light," and from our sin-Bearer the light is absolutely withdrawn. The eclipsing of the sun was but *a figure* of a more awful eclipse upon the soul of the holy Son of God. It is of this that He cries in the period of His anguish, using still that inspired Word which dwelt within His heart, which the Spirit of God long ago had prophesied of through David : "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* "

We have here the central point of atonement, without which it would not have been truly that. The absolute forsaking of God-the complete withdrawal not merely of earthly succor or providential care or the joys of communion which were our Lord's constant portion throughout His life, but of complete desertion, leaving the blessed Sufferer alone to drink the unmingled cup of divine indignation against sin. This is what is meant by these awful words; and here,

blessed be God, is where our once guilty souls can now rest, and for all eternity. Yea, where God's throne of justice and of glory also rests, and from which the entire economy of the divine rule in blessedness in heaven and in earth will forever be displayed. The cup has been drunk; the wrath has been borne; its full terror has pierced His inmost soul; our Lord no longer refuses to take the vinegar—not the deadening gall—that the very last word of Scripture may be fulfilled. The poor crowd are as ignorant of the scripture they were fulfilling on the one side as of the place Elias occupied on the other. He was calling upon the Lord God of Elijah, not upon His servant.

The end has come ; all has been accomplished. The victory is with the glorious King: as though to show that all was even yet completely voluntary on His part, with strength undiminished He cries with a loud voice, and in kingly dignity completes the mighty transaction of redeeming love by dismissing His spirit.

The blessed consequences of the atoning work are at once seen. God would straightway glorify His Son. The veil of the temple that separated the presence of God from man, that hid the Throne and barred the way of access into His presence, was now rent in twain from the top to the bottom—not drawn aside or uplifted, but completely *rent*—thus declaring it never again

could be put back. Scripture tells us the veil pictured the flesh of our Lord; how appropriate, then, that as His blessed body was rent for our sins, that which was a type of Himself-in His personal perfection, and a witness against all sin-should be rent in twain to show how completely our sins had been put away.

Other results follow: the earth itself trembles ; its adamantine rocks are rent, and the graves also are opened. The rending thus extends throughout the whole domain of the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is sweet to remember that hearts harder than the adamantine rock have from that day to this been rent in true penitence and delivered from the power of sin and death through this same Sacrifice.

Matthew goes on anticipatively to our Lord's resurrection to show the full, governmental results of His death. Not only were the graves opened, but many of the bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after His resurrection, appearing in the holy city. Thus we have a sample of that first resurrection which shall include the whole family of the redeemed, down to the last martyr that shall suffer before the introduction of our Lord's millennial kingdom. A deathless eternity of bliss is the final outcome of the amazing work our Lord accomplished on Calvary.

The scene closes now with the testimony of

the centurion who, in fear, is constrained to acknowledge that this was the Son of God. The women who had followed Him are privileged to stand afar off and to gaze upon that wondrous sight. A little later they are to know the fullness of what it means.

**Mark (chap. 15: 21-41).** As we have already found, the narrative of Mark closely resembles that of Matthew. A few things only therefore claim our attention. Simon is further identified for us as the father of Alexander and Rufus, evidently well known Christians at the time this Gospel was written. (See also Rom. 16: 13, "Rufus, ... his mother and mine.") This falls in line with what we have already said about Simon.

In verse 23, the drink is spoken of as wine and myrrh instead of the vinegar and gall of Matthew. The wine was the ordinary, sour wine of the East, practically vinegar, and the bitter myrrh may have been a more specific name for the gall, though some think two substances are meant.

The hour when the actual crucifixion began is mentioned alone in Mark of the three synoptists (ver. 25). A briefer statement of the superscription is given here than in Matthew, His name being omitted. In connection with the crucifixion of the two thieves, the scripture which was thus fulfilled is quoted (ver. &)-though some manuscripts omit this verse entirely.

The cry of our Lord is given in Aramaic form, the "*Eli*" becoming "*Eloi*." One explanation of this would be that in Matthew we have the Hebrew quotation from the 22nd psalm, while in Mark we have the form in which the exclamation was actually made by the blessed Sufferer. We do not dwell upon other possible explanations, while remembering there is a divine reason for the use of the two words. It has been suggested that the expression as given in Matthew, quoting directly from the Hebrew, is more appropriate to the close link of that governmental Gospel with the Old Testament.

Our Lord's death is also described by a different word. It is here simply "expired," "breathed His last." The differences in detail are without doubt appropriate to the differences of the two Gospels, though, as we shall find when gathering up the results of our examination, there is a close similarity between the kingly office characterizing Matthew, and the prophetic, largely prominent in Mark, which would account for the close resemblance of the two narratives of the atoning work of our Lord.

**Luke** (chap. 23: 26-49). Simon the Cyrenian is mentioned here also, but our Lord addressing the company of women who followed in the sad procession is peculiar to Luke: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." The consequences

of His rejection are solemnly set forth, even looking forward to the time when men shall call upon the mountains and hills to cover them.

If the "green tree"-the living Lord-is thus, for reasons of divine love, put into the fire of judgment, what shall be done with the dead, lifeless tree of formal Judaism, or with apostate Christendom ?

Verse 34 gives us a beautiful touch peculiar also to Luke. He makes "intercession for the transgressors." This is in beautiful accord with the view of our Lord in Luke where He is ever seeking to bring man in peace to God. The soldiers seem to bear a special part here, joining in the general mockery of the ribald throng. The accusation against our Lord is similar to that in Matthew and Mark, while it tells us, appropriately with the world-wide theme of the Evangelist, that it was written in the three languages of the civilized world: in Greek, the language of literature, culture and business; in Latin, that of the political world; and in Hebrew, that of the religious. Thus all classes of men could read in their own tongue the record of their common guilt, and a witness of the wonderful love of God, conveyed in their own language—a little foreshadow of Pentecost.

The record of the salvation of one of the thieves is reserved for Luke. It is fitting that the Evan-

gelist who has the gospel upon his heart throughout should give us this blessed instance of divine mercy. The more closely we examine it, the more will it be found that it is not an exceptional case, but the normal method of salvation. The one who but recently was a railer, is brought to repentance and saved by faith in Christ alone. Surely, we can say it is true of us also.

There is no cry of forsaken anguish here, although the darkness is mentioned and the rending of the veil. Luke does not dwell upon the depths of the atoning work, but turns to its blessed *results*. We hear again the "loud voice" of our Lord, as He now commends His spirit into the Father's hands, a statement peculiar to Luke, and the word for His death is the same as that in Mark, "He expired."

Appropriate to Luke, the centurion bears his witness that our Lord was a righteous Man; while the women and acquaintance are seen as they are in the other synoptists.

**John** (chap. 19: 17-37). Several marked peculiarities are noticeable in the fourth Gospel, appropriate to the theme of the Evangelist. In general, we may say that they suggest the divine dignity of our Lord, recalling His words: "No man taketh it (My life) from Me ... I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." Thus, He is seen bearing His own cross. This in no way contradicts the fact that

they compelled Simon the Cyrenian to bear it after Him. From the Gospel of Mark we would judge that at the beginning of the journey to Golgotha our Lord was bearing His own cross; and on the way, meeting Simon coming out of the country, they took the cross from our Lord and put it upon him.

John selects those features which emphasize his theme. We must not think that the change of the cross from our Lord to Simon intimated an inability on His part to bear the burden further. We refuse the thought; although it may be urged, as not inconsistent with the fact that in the agony of the Garden an angel appeared unto Him, strengthening Him. We instinctively shrink from an analysis of these holy subjects, yet would reverently consider every detail which the Spirit of God has given. There is always blessing in this. That our Lord was weary with His journey, that He slept, that He hungered and thirsted, and in every way, apart from sin, felt the pressure of the wilderness, we are plainly told. That in the Garden this pressure was immeasurably intensified, as seen in His sweat of as it were great drops of blood, indicating the extreme of physical tension, in which God was pleased to minister to Him through an angel, as after the temptation in the wilderness—all this is perfectly true; but let us guard against any thought of. 'infirmity or of inability to carry out



to the full the work which He had set Himself to do.

There were other reasons beside that of weakness which would have led Him to yield up the cross to another, reasons at which we have already looked. That after still further anguish He was able at the close to cry with a loud voice, shows that His death was not due to exhaustion, but was the willing giving up in undiminished perfection the life He had taken in order that He might lay it down.

The title put on the cross is given more fully in John: "Jesus of *Nazareth*, the King of the Jews." In common with Matthew, our Lord's personal name is given. No kingly dignity is equal to the dignity of what He was in Himself; even His divine glory as Son of God is pleased to dwell in this tabernacle, the lowly Jesus. Nazareth emphasizes still further this lowliness. Nathaniel had asked at the beginning: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and here, at the cross, that despised name has a place of honor in connection with the title of His royal dignity.

All four Evangelists state the same central fact, "The King of the Jews." It is this which the leaders seek to have set aside. It too plainly proclaimed the simple facts and their shame to all the world, written in Greek and Latin, as well as their own tongue. Pilate had just asked:

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of His rejection are solemnly set forth, even looking forward to the time when men shall call upon the mountains and hills to cover them.

If the "green tree"-the living Lord-is thus, for reasons of divine love, put into the fire of judgment, what shall be done with the dead, lifeless tree of formal Judaism, or with apostate Christendom ?

Verse 34 gives us a beautiful touch peculiar also to Luke. He makes "intercession for the transgressors." This is in beautiful accord with the view of our Lord in Luke where He is ever seeking to bring man in peace to God. The soldiers seem to bear a special part here, joining in the general mockery of the ribald throng. The accusation against our Lord is similar to that in Matthew and Mark, while it tells us, appropriately with the world-wide theme of the Evangelist, that it was written in the three languages of the civilized world: in Greek, the language of literature, culture and business; in Latin, that of the political world; and in Hebrew, that of the religious. Thus all classes of men could read in their own tongue the record of their common guilt, and a witness of the wonderful love of God, conveyed in their own language—a little foreshadow of Pentecost.

The record of the salvation of one of the thieves is reserved for Luke. It is fitting that the Evan-

gelist who has the gospel upon his heart throughout should give us this blessed instance of divine mercy. The more closely we examine it, the more will it be found that it is not an exceptional case, but the normal method of salvation. The one who but recently was a railer, is brought to repentance and saved by faith in Christ alone. Surely, we can say it is true of us also.

There is no cry of forsaken anguish here, although the darkness is mentioned and the rending of the veil. Luke does not dwell upon the depths of the atoning work, but turns to its blessed *results*. We hear again the "loud voice" of our Lord, as He now commends His spirit into the Father's hands, a statement peculiar to Luke, and the word for His death is the same as that in Mark, "He expired."

Appropriate to Luke, the centurion bears his witness that our Lord was a righteous Man; while the women and acquaintance are seen as they are in the other synoptists.

**John** (chap. 19: 17-37). Several marked peculiarities are noticeable in the fourth Gospel, appropriate to the theme of the Evangelist. In general, we may say that they suggest the divine dignity of our Lord, recalling His words: "No man taketh it (My life) from Me ... I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." Thus, He is seen bearing His own cross. This in no way contradicts the fact that

they compelled Simon the Cyrenian to bear it after Him. From the Gospel of Mark we would judge that at the beginning of the journey to Golgotha our Lord was bearing His own cross; and on the way, meeting Simon coming out of the country, they took the cross from our Lord and put it upon him.

John selects those features which emphasize his theme. We must not think that the change of the cross from our Lord to Simon intimated an inability on His part to bear the burden further. We refuse the thought; although it may be urged, as not inconsistent with the fact that in the agony of the Garden an angel appeared unto Him, strengthening Him. We instinctively shrink from an analysis of these holy subjects, yet would reverently consider every detail which the Spirit of God has given. There is always blessing in this. That our Lord was weary with His journey, that He slept, that He hungered and thirsted, and in every way, apart from sin, felt the pressure of the wilderness, we are plainly told. That in the Garden this pressure was immeasurably intensified, as seen in His sweat of as it were great drops of blood, indicating the extreme of physical tension, in which God was pleased to minister to Him through an angel, as after the temptation in the wilderness—all this is perfectly true; but let us guard against any thought of. 'infirmity or of inability to carry out



to the full the work which He had set Himself to do.

There were other reasons beside that of weakness which would have led Him to yield up the cross to another, reasons at which we have already looked. That after still further anguish He was able at the close to cry with a loud voice, shows that His death was not due to exhaustion, but was the willing giving up in undiminished perfection the life He had taken in order that He might lay it down.

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righteousness : this is to possess "the best robe," the "wedding garment," to have meetness "for the inheritance of the saints in light." It was given in connection with the lot, which among the Jews was always an appeal to God ; and as it has been suggested, this appeal to the lot indicates that it is sovereign grace alone which awards this robe.

That there be no misconception, we add a word to guard against the teaching, quite venerable indeed, but unscriptural, which would divide the believer's justification into two parts: that secured by the passive obedience or sufferings of our Lord, and that which is the result of His own personal keeping of the law as our Substitute. No substitution in life, and no keeping of the law by the Lord could be imputed to us. The robe does not thus suggest the righteousness of Christ in the sense of His earthly walk **in exchange** for ours, but the perfection of Christ Himself, in which the believer now stands before God.

In connection with the vigil of the women from Galilee, spoken of in the other Gospels (Matt. 27: 55, 56; Mk. 15: 40, 41; Lk. 23: 49), John alone gives the touching incident of His mother at the cross. It is worthy of note that this Gospel, which gives no account of the birth and early life of our Lord, makes more mention of His mother during our Lord's public ministry than

any other of the Evangelists. At the marriage in Cana of Galilee, she speaks to Him and is answered, not harshly, but faithfully by the Lord. He must show her, there, that the relationship according to the flesh cannot intrude into those divine relationships which to Him must be supreme. Later, she accompanies Him to Capernaum; and here we see the sword piercing her own heart as she stands by the cross. We see no shadow of resentment in her heart when our Lord spoke so faithfully to her in Cana, for at once she says to the servants: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Here, at the cross, there is no danger of her misunderstanding her place. How transcendent is the thought! Upon the cross is the eternal Son of God, the perfect Man, the King of the Jews, accomplishing that work of redemption which the divine counsels had decreed from all eternity; He it is upon whom the whole universe was dependent, yet as Man enduring all possible sufferings. At such a time we see Him giving deliberate attention to a minute detail. Nothing will make Him forget the love and respect which He ever had for His mother. Rome may blasphemously degrade everything by putting the creature upon the throne of God, claiming a homage and worship for the tender mother of our Lord which would have filled her with horror. Rome fails to see the exquisite beauty of what we have here; for

truth perverted, is robbed of all its attractiveness and value.

“The disciple whom Jesus loved” is entrusted with the care of our Lord’s mother, not merely as guardian or servant, but in all the intimacy and affection of son and mother. Let us remember that the expression, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” does not suggest partiality, which was utterly foreign to our blessed Lord. John held no monopoly of this term, which was for all the disciples; but he seems to have entered more fully into the truth that the expression conveys. It was not the disciple who loved Jesus, but who is quite content to know that he is loved by his Lord. Happy indeed are we if we know this also! It enables us to enter into, and be entrusted with that which is dearest to Him.

Typically, it seems that Mary answers to Israel, the nation “of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came” and who is ever dear to the Lord; of whom indeed He says: “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” During the present period, Israel is doubly bereft, a widow, and the Son in whom all her hopes centered, taken from her. A remnant according to the election of grace has ever remained, who by their faith show they are the true Israel of God. We need not say how fully such have been cared for in the new dispensation of grace in which we live.



So also, in a very real way, the Church is the guardian of Israel's hopes as to the future. The Jews themselves at the present time have practically given up all hope, at least in any spiritual way; but the Church, if in the state suggested by those words, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," is still the guardian of the promises made to the fathers which teach that "All Israel shall be saved."

One thing more which, after the manner of our Evangelist, has a character all its own. Twice in this Gospel of the Son of God, our Lord's bodily needs are spoken of; twice He asks that His thirst may be quenched. There is a blessed connection between the two requests. We do not read indeed that He received the draft of water from the woman of Samaria, but how His soul was refreshed by one brought out of distance and shame into the joy of the gift of God. Thus He could say: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." It is this thirst, we may be sure, that filled His holy soul more intensely than bodily craving for water upon the cross. He does not ask simply to have His thirst relieved, but that every word of Scripture, the immutable purposes of God as recorded by the Holy Spirit, should be fulfilled to the very last jot. Thus it is that, all other things having been accomplished, this scripture too must be fulfilled, In the deliberateness of divine omniscience and power, our Lord accomplishes in meekness and

lowliness every word written. It is after this that those blessed words are uttered: "It is finished"-referring surely to more than the draft of vinegar which He had received.

There is a fulness in the word of God which we are slow to apprehend. We may ask ourselves the question: What was "finished" there? First, the prediction of Scripture directly referred to; and without doubt, every other prediction which had been previously mentioned, or even if not mentioned here, was now completed. So were all the types, whether of the Lord's individual life, of His obedience, or of sacrificial ordinances, all were now fulfilled, This last word of our Lort sets the seal upon everything that had been written of Him, in the Law, the Prophets, or the Psalms. We can write over every type and shadow-of Abel's sacrifice, the offering up of Isaac, the life of Joseph, of David, and the multitude of others-these blessed words: "It is finished." That of which they spoke has now been accomplished to the utmost.

So, too, the law, with all its holy requirements, with its inflexible judgment of sin, has been fulfilled. We can look upon those ten commandments, by each one of which we have been condemned as having come short of the glory of God, and see written across them in letters of blood: "It is finished." Their penalty has been met and our salvation secured.

In brief, the whole work of redemption by which God's righteousness was glorified, His love displayed, the sinner's need met and everlasting glory secured, was here accomplished, and "It is finished" is the resting place for the eternal God, the new creation, and every trembling sinner who will accept this finished work.

The closing act of all, His actual death, is unquestionably included in these words; uttering them He bows His head, or in the lovely language of the original, "inclines His head," like the setting of the sun, and delivers up His sinless spirit into the hands of His Father, whose infinite greatness in holiness and love we may be sure thrills with divine delight in His Beloved such as no creature can ever know.

The petty, shallow legalism of His murderers, as they seek to remove the bodies lest their pretended sanctity should be shocked by a violation of the Sabbath, would jar upon us in the record of it here were it not that our blessed God causes the folly as well as the wrath of man to praise Him. It only gives occasion for the fulfilment of two other scriptures which must take place after His death. The brutal soldiery have no scruples about mutilating the bodies of their victims and crushing the remains of life out of them. The Jews indeed would have this done with all three victims; and the soldiers carry it out with the two thieves, but find it

needless when they come to the Lord. He is dead already; for no man can take His life from Him. He had power to lay it down of Himself, as He had also power to take it again. No mutilation is allowed to disfigure the body of the Holy One ; but a soldier's spear pierces through His heart. In mere wanton cruelty it may be, or to insure the certainty of death, but whatever his motive he was but accomplishing the word of God. It had been written : " They shall look upon Me whom they pierced; " the piercing therefore must take place. But, truly, it was *our* sin which pierced the Lord-which made it necessary. This piercing tells us both of the rejection of their Messiah by His own, and of the work by which that very enmity shall be abolished.

Of the passover it was said: "Ye shall break no bone thereof;" the lamb was to be kept entire. So, too, with the true passover Lamb, a bone should not be broken. It is the whole Christ who has given Himself up for us upon whom we feed, and shall for all eternity.

## 6. The Burial

We seek not to dissect the precious truths which are linked with our Lord's crucifixion, death and burial, but to distinguish certain elements in His atoning work. For instance, His sufferings at the hand of man are evidently the preliminary ones, while the darkness and the forsaking of

God speak of the bearing of actual wrath and judgment. These having been borne, the Lord then delivers Himself up unto death, a necessary element of atonement, surely; but, may we not say, it is the governmental side of it: death being the bodily or physical penalty of sin, while judgment is the spiritual side, and for man, eternal. \*

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\* This raises a question which is sometimes asked. If the judgment of sin is eternal, how could a brief period of wrath-bearing by our Lord be an exact substitute for it? The infinite dignity of the Person gives a value to His sufferings which more than equals an eternity of suffering by the creature, and yet equal justice would not call this an exact substitute. Were it so, it might be claimed that even lesser sufferings would have been sufficient when we remember the immeasurable glory of the One suffering. This theory of atonement has been given; but it is not substituted penalty, but the actual infliction of wrath that is taught in Scripture. Is not the true answer to the question, this: that the moral character of sin and the sinner remaining unchanged, its punishment is of necessity eternal? "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22: 11). Our Lord speaks of the guilt of an eternal sin (Mark 3: 29), as the words should be rendered.

Little do men realize the horror of eternal impenitence—that fixed moral state in which the soul is powerless to judge of the evil or even desire freedom from it. This is evidently the character of Satan, whose moral hatred of God and all that is good is eternally fixed, involving therefore the necessity for his eternal judgment; which is also true of all the finally impenitent.

With our blessed Lord, "in whom was no sin," there was absolutely nothing but the outward infliction of wrath. God withdraws Himself from Him, pouring out upon Him the in-

All is over now. The jeer, the smiting with the rod, the buffeting, the spitting, the inflictions of suffering by man, the last dreg of the cup of divine wrath and judgment; life itself has been given up, and the precious body in which the jewel of divine glory, and the spirit and affections of perfect Manhood were enshrined, hangs lifeless upon the cross. His enemies have done their worst, and He, blessed forever be His name, has done His best for God's eternal glory in our blessing. Therefore, His burial is not in the hands of enemies but of those who loved and worshiped Him. Indeed, His death seems to have been the occasion for Joseph to throw off his timidity and to come boldly craving the privilege and honor of caring for His body. Nicodemus, too, no longer follows afar off, but takes

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dignation and wrath which sin deserves. It finds Him, and loaves Him, with a heart as absolutely true to God and all that is holy and good as when He was basking in the sunlight of the glories of the transfiguration. Indeed, His place and circumstances had nothing whatever to do with His state, which was unchangeably the same—a heart filled with delight in the will of God, no matter what that will might be. Therefore, the infliction of the penalty was absolute; but, abiding perfect through it all, no divine necessity existed for the continuance of the penalty. "Once for all" it had been put upon Him, and that settled forever all the claims of divine justice.

Having finished the work which had been given Him to do, the resurrection is God's answer to our Lord's moral state. "He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," and this as the representative of His people whose sins He had put away.

his place openly as a disciple. Loving hands lift Him down from that dreadful gibbet, where no bone of His was allowed to be broken, and whose piercing was more as the fulfilment of Scripture than the wanton act of brutality.

As has been suggested, the care about our Lord's burial is the beginning of God's response : "He shall straightway glorify Him." Indeed, the narrative of the burial may well be connected with that of the resurrection.\* The ashes of the sacrifice which had been burnt upon the altar were gathered up and carried outside the camp and deposited in a clean place.

But we turn to the narrative as given in each of the Evangelists.

**Matthew** (chap. 27: 57-66). The evening comes on. "Man's day" is over as to our blessed Lord, as it will soon be over for us (1 Cor. 4: 3, margin). The details here are suggestive: "There came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple" (ver. 57).

Our Lord was not in the company of many rich during His ministry, but rather felt their aloofness. He, was the "Friend of publicans and sinners." The poor had the gospel preached to them; and not many wise, mighty or noble are called; but there is a certain fitness in a rich

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\* This is done in the Numerical Bible, The Gospels, page 268, etc.

man, a true disciple, coming forward here. A poor man would not have had a new sepulchre of his own ; and is there not a suggestion of millennial times when riches and honor shall be poured out at the feet of our Lord ?

As given in our ordinary version, the grave and the death of our Lord are not separated in Isa. 53: 9, and we are obliged to disentangle the two. The literal Hebrew is: " He (one) shall appoint His grave with the wicked, but (He shall be) with a rich man in His death. " In delivering the Lord Jesus to be crucified as a malefactor, Pilate was appointing His grave with the wicked; crucified between two thieves, it was natural that His body also should receive the same treatment as theirs-probably burned in the valley of Hinnom. No such place could be for Him ; no desecration of the body of God's holy One can be permitted; and the appointment of Pilate is set aside. Indeed, he himself reverses it by delivering over the body to the rich man, Joseph.

Joseph, " He will add," reminds us of the first Joseph, a type of our Lord in humiliation and in glory. He is from Arimathea, apparently the Greek form of Ramathaim, "double heights," of earthly and heavenly exaltation ?-which with the added Zophim, was the abode of Elkanah and Hannah, who also were closely connected with the sorrows and joys of the hope of Israel;



Hannah in her song celebrating the coming of God's King.

What must have been the thoughts of Pilate when he granted Joseph's request ? Here was one of the great men of the nation on the side of the One whose innocent blood Pilate had caused to be shed.

The body is wrapped in that which was emblematic of our Lord's perfect humanity, a clean linen cloth; white linen representing purity and righteousness, as "the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints. " The body is laid in a new tomb-not in the earth in apparent fulfilment of these words, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"-but in the enduring rock which does not disintegrate, a fitting receptacle for His body which saw no corruption and which could not be holden of death. The stone closes the door, shutting the world outside, and, in the thoughts even of His own, closing the door to all the bright hopes which they had entertained: "We trusted that it had been He" they said "which should have redeemed Israel. "

Joseph departs, not in indifference, we may be sure, but having accomplished his precious task. The women, however, cannot tear themselves away from the spot. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary keep the vigil of love.

If enmity has done its last work, unbelief and an uneasy conscience still urge on the chief

priests and Pharisees. Unconsciously to themselves, they are to furnish fresh proof of the reality of our Lord's resurrection. Remembering His words that He should rise on the third day, they would have the tomb guarded, so that His disciples could not steal Him away. Pilate gives command that this shall be done; and so, in spite of themselves, His enemies are to be made witnesses of His resurrection, and thus refute any possible charge that His body had been taken away.

**Mark** (chap. 15 : 42-47). Mark adds few details to Matthew. Joseph is spoken of as an "honorable counsellor;" that is, a member of the Sanhedrin, who was waiting for the kingdom of God. He went in "boldly" to Pilate, who wonders that the Lord is dead, and first asks the centurion, as would be natural for a Roman, if such is the case.

The fine linen is "bought," which reminds us that Joseph was a rich man. "The other Mary," spoken of in Matthew, is here "the mother of joses," who with Mary Magdalene beheld the place where the body was laid.

**Luke** (chap. 23: 50-56). Luke adds a few other details as to Joseph, quite fitting to his Gospel. He was "a good man and a just;" one who, as a counsellor, had not consented to their decision and act. His city, Arimathæa, is "a city of the Jews;" that is, in Judæa. With Mark, Luke tells us that he waited for the kingdom of God.

The "new tomb" in Matthew is described more fully as one "wherein never man before was laid." Mark does not speak of this feature-the sin offering was burnt without the gate.

In Luke the presence of the women that had come with Him from Galilee is spoken of more fully. They beheld the sepulchre and the manner in which His body was laid, and then returned to prepare spices and ointments, resting on the Sabbath according to the commandment. Thus, even in His death, our blessed Lord was magnifying the law. He indeed had reached the Sabbath of God and so, typically, had His people. Appropriately thus, they rested on the holy day.

John (chap. 19:38-42). Joseph is not here spoken of as a member of the Council. His previous discipleship, of so timid a character that it had not been publicly made known, is mentioned. Often, the most timid become the boldest at critical times. Nicodemus, too, comes out boldly into the light. What a contrast with his first coming to Jesus by night, or even that pleading for fair dealing which we have in chap. 7:50-52! Both these men were members of the Sanhedrin. Thus, we find a remnant-though probably not present-even in the tribunal which had condemned our Lord.

Nicodemus brings a mixture of myrrh and aloes, fragrant spices used in connection with

death, a large quantity of these, about one hundred pound weight. This is in fitting accord with this Gospel. No expenditure of precious spices could fully set forth the fragrance of the death of the Son of God.

The linen clothes tell us of a life of perfect righteousness in which the fragrance had ever gone up to God and therefore could not be wanting in His death. John speaks of a garden being in the place where the Lord was, and in this garden the new tomb which both Matthew and Luke are careful to tell us had been undefiled by the presence of death. God would ever separate the death of His Son from all others, and He who saw no corruption was to rest in a tomb in consonance with this. It is fitting that it should be in a garden. Death entered in a garden, from which our first parents were cast out; and when the consequences of sin had been put away the garden appears again. There is another garden, the Paradise of God; this one lies between the forfeited first and the promised one to come. What fruits for all eternity, we may say, have grown in this garden where the tomb was ! There was sown the Corn of wheat which has produced such a harvest. We can think of this garden as a suggestion of the fruitfulness resulting from our Lord's death even in this present world. As the cave of Machpelah was surrounded by a field with trees growing in

it, an emblem of resurrection, so the garden about the tomb of our Lord speaks of life and the anticipation of His resurrection. There they laid Him, a preparation indeed, a preparation for the eternal Sabbath of God, in infinite contrast with the legal "preparation of the Jews."

### 3. THE RESURRECTION

THE resurrection is at the very foundation of the Christian faith as the apostle declares: "If Christ be not raised . . . ye are yet in your sins." In the stirring days of Pentecost the great truth dwelt upon in the apostles' testimony was not so much the nature of our Lord's atoning death, as the great fact of His resurrection: "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection."

Doctrinally, we may look at it in relation to God, in relation to Christ, in relation to His people and to the world.

In relation to God, His every attribute has been so perfectly glorified by the atoning death of our blessed Lord, that the resurrection is declared to be "by the glory of the Father," as though that glory, which the Son had vindicated and manifested so perfectly, waited for the very first moment at the sepulchre on the first day of the week to call out from death the perfect obedient One.

As to Christ, His resurrection was His complete vindication. On the cross, He had hung in the darkness. Man had hated and scorned Him; God had forsaken Him; the resurrection proclaims Him completely vindicated, *justified* in the highest sense of the word. His place at

the right hand of the Majesty on high is that given Him by divine righteousness as the measure of His own acceptance.

And that acceptance, blessed be God, is also the measure of the believer's, for Christ was not only raised from the dead by the glory of the Father and glorified by the Father, but "He was raised again for our justification. "

Solemn indeed the thought that His resurrection is also the pledge of future judgment upon the world which crucified Him. The Spirit of God convicts of righteousness "because I go to the Father." Christ's righteousness has been proclaimed by His ascent to the Father, and that same ascent is the conviction of the world's guilt. The righteousness in which God delights is that which the world has rejected. We need not wonder, then, at the solemn fact that God "hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead. "

These few thoughts, with many others, will serve to show the immense importance of the great fact of the resurrection. It is that which we must never forget. "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel." It is this history which we now wish to look at as narrated by

each of the four Evangelists, noting what is peculiar to each and the appropriateness of that peculiarity.

**Matthew** (chap. 28). As the women were the witnesses of the final acts connected with His burial, so were they to be of His resurrection. How significant are the words "in the end of the Sabbath," as reminding us of the end of the old dispensation, the dawning indeed of a new first day in which probably even the old manner of marking the days from sunset to sunset is changed, so that now the day begins with the morning.

There had been an earthquake at His death. There is another at His resurrection. Mount Sinai trembled at the presence of the Lord, and the Lord of Sinai is here manifested in a more marvelous way, the way of grace.

The presence of the angel, appropriate to the governmental Gospel of Matthew, is noted here. The stone is rolled back from the door; the keepers become as dead men in his majestic presence, while he reassures the trembling women. *They* were seeking Jesus—not watching as enemies. To them, the glorious truth: "He is not here ; He is risen " is proclaimed ; "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." The empty tomb thus confirms the angel's words, and they are sent forth to tell His disciples and to name the trysting place in Galilee. Over-



whelmed with joy, they go out to bring the disciples word and are met by the blessed Lord who is always better than His promises and who meets them before they come to Galilee with His words of "Hail." What a moment! Who can realize the joy that filled the heart of our Lord in those simple, triumphant words, "All hail!" No wonder that the women held Him by the feet and worshiped Him unrebuked here, for the whole scene has to do with the kingdom, and therefore our Lord's ascension is not mentioned in this Gospel.

Our Lord repeats the angel's direction to tell His "brethren"-new and precious title, for the first time given, and for all His own. These, He is not ashamed to call His brethren.

The lie of the Jews, in their extremity, with deliberate plot to deny the resurrection is told here. The council which had condemned the Lord to death does not scruple to bribe the Roman guard to say His disciples came and stole Him away. It was a death offence for a soldier to sleep upon guard, but the governor, who had unjustly delivered Jesus to their will, would not scruple to a little act like sparing the guilty soldiers, having already put himself under the power of the chief priests by his unrighteous act. This falsehood therefore is reported amongst the Jews, even to our own times.

Then the meeting in Galilee is mentioned. It

had been the principal scene of our Lord's ministry, where He also seems to have had the greatest hearing, There are three great mountain scenes mentioned in the Gospels: the sermon on the mount, the transfiguration on the mount, and the resurrection-meeting on the mount ; to which we may add His ascension from a mount. The mountain suggests moral elevation and separation. The first mountain speaks of the elevation of His teaching; the second, of the glory of His person; the third, of the fact of His resurrection.

They worship Him, but *some seem* still to doubt. This may not apply to the eleven disciples, whom our Lord had met before, as Luke tells us ; while in John we learn that even Thomas' doubts were set at rest. In the epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle speaks of the Lord being seen by five hundred brethren at once; so while only the eleven are mentioned in Matthew, as having gone to the mountain as the Lord appointed them, it is more than likely that these five hundred brethren came together at the same time; of these some may have been doubters. (See 1 Cor. 15:6.)

In Galilee, the great commission is given. It stands, we may say, between the assurance of our Lord's omnipotence and of His special omnipresence. We say "special" because it is not merely His presence as God everywhere, but "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of

the age"—a special presence, to defend, sustain, uphold, empower His disciples. Therefore they are to go and teach all nations; that is, make disciples of all nations, of course through the preaching of the gospel, but a discipleship which seems, in the very terms in which it is described, to be along the lines of that kingdom of heaven whose mysteries our Lord had previously unfolded. \* It is this which explains why baptism has so prominent a place here. The two keys of the kingdom, baptizing—the external or physical, and teaching, the internal or mental key. Disciples are thus made by the preaching and the teaching of the truth, and baptized into the kingdom in the name of the triune God who has been fully revealed in the person of His Son.

**Mark** (chap. 16). The narrative in Mark, while it resembles that in Matthew, does not follow it as closely as we have been noticing heretofore.

The women come in the morning with spices to embalm the Lord's body. They speak of the impossibility of their rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, finding, as we so often do, that it is useless to anticipate difficulties. The stone was already rolled away, a thing which *they* could not have done. They enter into the

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\* The **exact** rendering of this passage is: "Go ye therefore and **disciple** all the nations, baptizing them **unto** the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe **all** things whatsoever I have enjoined to **you**."

sepulchre, and the angel is seen as a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long, white garment. A young man had fled when our Lord was arrested ; the most courageous of earth could not stand firm then. Here, a witness from heaven, clothed in purity, tells of our Lord's victory. They are to tell the glad tidings to the disciples, and in touching grace Peter is mentioned by name ; the meeting place in Galilee is also spoken of. The women's fear is spoken of, rather than their joy. They do not speak to any about what they had seen.

The narrative would close here with apparent abruptness, if indeed we are to accept the view of a large number of authorities who claim that the oldest manuscripts do not have the remainder of chap. 16. This is not the place to enter into the question of manuscript authority in detail; we will only *say* that there is no sufficient reason to warrant our refusal of what follows. It could easily have been omitted in some of the earlier manuscripts because of the apparent difference between it and what had gone before; but when we see that these remaining verses evidently give us a summary of *various appearances* of our Lord, and not a continued narrative of what took place after the resurrection, the difficulty is removed.

Verses 9-20 therefore give us a summary of various appearances of our Lord to different per-

sons after His resurrection: First, to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons (vers. 9-11). How beautiful it is that the one who had been so absolutely under the power of Satan should be the first to witness our Lord's triumph over him. She comes to tell the others and they do not believe her. This narrative coincides with that in the Gospel of John.

Next, verses <sup>12</sup> and 13 mention what seems to be identical with the journey to Emmaus more fully given by Luke. There may be some difficulty about verse 13: "**They** went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them;" while we know from Luke that when they returned from Emmaus, they found the eleven gathered together, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon," and while thus speaking together, the Lord Himself appears among them. We will look at this, however, in a further connection.

The next appearing was to the eleven as they sat at meat (ver. 14), when He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart. This may possibly be in Galilee, It is confessedly difficult to harmonize this with the narratives in the other Gospels; for there, faith is emphasized; here unbelief. A possible solution may be that in Mark, in each of these appearances, unbelief is prominent in the narrative and may have gone side by side with the faith. Both, we know, are

in our own hearts, and perhaps each had a place in the hearts of the disciples who could believe and yet not altogether believe; could rejoice and yet not be fully persuaded.

The great commission is given (vers. 15-18), with certain characteristic features appropriate to Mark. It is the gospel which is preached in all the world, "to every creature." Salvation, our own membership in the kingdom, is to be the result of faith. We need hardly say that baptism as linked with believing is not meant to be put on an equality with faith, but rather as the full confession of that faith. The salvation is proclaimed in the act as it is secured by the faith.

Then, the signs which follow the miraculous power are peculiar to Mark. The apostle Paul illustrated these in his shipwreck journey to Rome.

The last two verses of the Gospel (vers. 19, 20) record our Lord's ascension, not in detail, but the great general truth that He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God. The disciples go forth as sent by Him, and the blessed Master, still with a heart of service unchanged, works with them, wherever they may be.

Luke (chap. 24). Luke and John give the fullest details of the resurrection history. The personal element predominates in Luke from the human side, and in John from the divine, con-

trading thus with the official in the first two Gospels. It is delightful to note the similarity between the first chapters of Luke and the last. In both, the narrative flows so simply and naturally, dwelling with loving detail upon points passed over or but slightly noticed in other Gospels. The human interest is paramount here. We rise from the perusal of the Gospel of Luke with the conviction that here we have the record of a Man, whatever else He may have been. A human heart of tender interest in the every day life, difficulties, trials, needs and sorrows of men is manifest throughout the entire history. In resurrection, this is unchanged. We still see "the Man Christ Jesus," the same as before the cross, whatever change may have taken place in His circumstances and in His own connection with His disciples and the world; though having now a resurrection body, yet we feel there is the unchanged, tender, loving, gracious, holy heart of the One whom they had learned to know and love while He was yet with them.

The account of the women at the sepulchre (vers. I-II) is a slight enlargement of that in Matthew and Mark, with a few additions. Instead of the angel in his majesty, an appropriately attendant, as in Matthew, or as a young man in a long, white robe, as in Mark, we have two men, suggesting both the general theme of the Gospel of the *Son of Man*, and sufficient wit-

ness of His resurrection. They are not, as the one in Mark, sitting, but they stood by them in shining garments. Their question is appropriate to our Gospel: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen," and then reminding them of His words when He was in Galilee. This part is peculiar to Luke and very instructive. On returning to the eleven and the rest of the disciples, they are met with the same incredulity which is noted in Mark.

Peter's visit to the sepulchre (ver. 12), of which we have a fuller account in the Gospel of John, is given here and shows how the beloved apostle had returned in his soul from his shameful denial. It also illustrates how an Evangelist may record one feature in a narrative to the exclusion of others without in the least contradicting them. We would not suppose, for instance, that John had been with Peter at the sepulchre from this narrative, but as we examine it, we find nothing contradictory to that. When once this truth is fully grasped, we will have a key which will explain the vast majority of the difficulties in the various narratives.

We come next to that which is the special beauty of Luke, referred to in Mark, however, as we have seen. It is the narrative of the journey to Emmaus (vers. 13-35). Emmaus was a considerable distance from Jerusalem, and the journey of the two disciples thither (the name of one



alone is given, Cleopas) suggests a turning away from Jerusalem as though nothing further could be expected there. The Lord's crucifixion and burial had been as a burial of all their hopes; yet it was not from lack of interest, but rather lack of faith, for they still were absorbed with all that had taken place and evidently showed their sorrow in their very faces. These two may well stand for the attitude of all the disciples after our Lord's resurrection, showing an utter failure to grasp its tremendous import. Indeed, while the fact of the resurrection was soon incontrovertibly established in their souls, Pentecost alone brought out its true meaning for them; but until the Holy Spirit led them in heart into the larger truth (even then not with full intelligence at the first) their thoughts gravitated back to the Jewish national hopes and earthly expectations. But the cross had ended all these, and the resurrection itself could not restore them in the form in which they had been held before.

The attitude of these two disciples on their way to Emmaus, suggests a personal application to ourselves where there is failure to apprehend in its reality what the resurrection of our Lord means. This may be either through ignorance of what is involved in it, or forgetfulness through coldness and indifference. In either case, the effect is the same: distance and wandering will

result. The heart of these disciples was occupied with their loss; and though their backs were to Jerusalem, their hearts were still there, or rather at that tomb-occupied with all that had taken place and in sorrow over what seemed to them the end of their brightest expectations.

Our Lord had observed this condition, and observes it still wherever it exists. When the heart is thus affected, even though it be in sorrow only at the loss of what it held dear, He will come in and minister to its need.

He appears to them, however, as it says in Mark "in another form," or, as here, "their eyes were holden that they should not know Him." In His divine power our Lord can at any time manifest Himself in various ways and forms, for Omnipotence can do all things; but an evident difference seems to exist here. Not but that He could appear to them identically as He had been before His death; but the suggestion is that in resurrection He was not on the same plane that He was before, but on a higher one in which then and now faith alone can apprehend Him. Our poor, earthbound thoughts are slow to grasp the transcendent and magnificent reality of resurrection. How it introduces into a sphere of existence whose breadth and activities immeasurably exceed the circumscribed conditions in which we now live! Thus, the Lord could stand by Paul again and again, strengthening and en-

couraging him ; and is not His own promise, as given in Matthew, “ Lo, I am with you alway,” an assurance that even if our eyes are holden that we should not recognize Him, He is personally with His people, our blessed, risen Lord?

This apparent distance, however, but gives the greater freedom for access to the disciples in the most effectual way. They had a lesson to learn which, reverently be it said, was even more necessary than any that His visible manifestation could impart. Many deeply interesting thoughts press here, which we must leave for individual study. But how exceedingly natural it all is! The Lord does not make use of His divine knowledge of what is in their hearts, but seeks to draw it out, even as God at the beginning would ask our father Adam: “Where art thou?” though surely knowing where he was.

Conscience and heart must be awakened and called into exercise; so our Lord asks in the simplest way the nature of their conversation because of their sorrow. When they in apparent surprise ask if He is but a stranger in Jerusalem and unacquainted with the stirring and solemn events that had been taking place, He does not even then cease His questioning. He must have, from their own lips, their account of these things. This they give, showing at once their faith and how their whole souls were taken up with the Lord. It must have refreshed His blessed heart

to have them express it thus; in spite of their ignorance and disappointment, in spite of the feebleness of their faith, love to Him was there: "We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel " tells not of a simply dead hope, but a sleeping one. They referred, too, to what the women had said and the fact that it was the third day. Evidently, their hearts have been deeply stirred by this, and there was a longing which had not been met. They could not grasp the meaning of what had taken place.

Having now opened their hearts to Him, our Lord can speak freely to them, ministering just what was needed. This was a testimony from the word of God itself, apart from all confirmatory events which might come under their own eye, apart indeed from His own personal manifestation of Himself to them-that the resurrection was a necessity from the word of God. They are reproached for their foolishness and slowness of heart-the two still go together-a slowness manifested in not believing all that had been written in the word of God. He brings them back therefore to that Word. His general thesis is, " Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? "

This is indeed the theme of all Old Testament Scripture-the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. So, patiently, beginning at the beginning-shall we say at Abel and the

Garden of Eden?-in Moses and all the Prophets, He expounds unto them that which will illustrate and confirm His words to them. All this at once shows us, first, what is in the Lord's heart for His people, a desire they should have an absolute conviction of the truth of His word apart from their personal feelings or experiences; and it shows us that the Old Testament Scriptures declare the *resurrection* as well as the sufferings of our Lord.

Perhaps in our present knowledge of the fact of His resurrection, we have somewhat overlooked this side of Old Testament type and not given as full a place as belongs to it. The ark resting upon Ararat, suggests the resurrection. Isaac is received from the dead in a figure. Joseph is exalted to the throne. The passover lamb is followed by the opening of the Red Sea. The living bird is let loose with the blood upon it of the one that had been sacrificed; and other types show us that the resurrection occupies a place as distinct and prominent in its way as the Cross itself. Therefore, "the things concerning Himself" include His resurrection as well as His perfect life and atoning sufferings.

Such ministry has its effect upon their hearts by making them long for more, and though they do not even yet recognize the One who has opened to them the Scriptures, their hearts burn and they constrain Him to come in and abide

with them. Wherever this effect is present, we may be sure the Lord will manifest Himself. " If a man love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. " This is the reason why our Lord manifests Himself unto us and not unto the world. The keeping of His word, while it includes the question of obedience and subjection to it, is not its limit. It implies also a love for and occupation with it which make us hold it fast, and prize whatever opens it to our understanding.

The way is now prepared for what follows. Where the heart is open and subject to the truth set forth in God's word, there is a recognition of Christ-He is manifested to the heart. Apart from the Word it would be sporadic and temporary. It is this which stamps the fables of Rome with their untruthfulness. Visions and revelations, professedly received, are not only unsupported by, but contradictory to the word of God, and therefore have no value where real faith is in exercise. If this is true of the false miracles of Rome in the fullest sense, it is true also of the real miracles recorded in the Scriptures. They have no value apart from faith. This is abundantly proven in our Lord's life, and its confirmation is here before us.

The act of breaking bread at their simple evening meal is exquisitely human and simple;

it could have been seen, no doubt, in many a lowly home—a few gathered around a table with their humble food before them, turning for a moment to thank God for His mercies. This simple meal is transformed here; the Breaker of bread is One who recalls to them in this act a former scene. In an instant, their minds are carried back to that upper room after the pass-over supper; their eyes are opened and they know Him.

In the personal application of all this, may we not say that wherever there is that preparedness of heart by faith in and subjection to the word of God, in many a simple act, not necessarily in the “breaking of bread,” but in numberless little ways, the Lord will recall His past grace to us, and the heart may not only burn, but there is a flash of recognition of Himself, and the soul is restored to its former enjoyments.

*The* effect of all this is immediate and remarkable. Fatigue, distance, night, are all ignored. Back they must go with the joyful, masterful news to the rest of the disciples. They are witnesses, not merely orthodox believers in Scripture, but those who themselves have had a view of the Lord. Such a view unseals the lips. They must, they cannot but speak. We know that even yet they must wait for the promise of the Father, but the fact itself of the resurrection is now known to them as a reality, the faith of

which could never be shaken out of their souls. They go back to Jerusalem with their news, to find like news meeting them--" the Lord is risen indeed and has appeared to Simon." And so they can mingle their joyful experiences together.

But this is not enough. Our Lord is not satisfied with manifesting Himself to a few. He would confirm all in this great joy. Therefore, He Himself comes into their midst,

Verses 36-49. This is evidently the first of the appearances which is recorded in the Gospel of John. "Peace be unto you" identifies it. What a comment their terror is, and how it shows that those who but a moment before were declaring that the Lord was risen indeed are overwhelmed by His presence ! Thus, again and again God would remind us that unbelief and faith find a lodgment in the same heart. We know it only too well.

Our Lord reassures them in the most natural manner. They think He is a spirit; thoughts arise in their hearts. Let them therefore handle Him, as later He offered to Thomas His hands and His side. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." That it is Jesus Himself is yet too wonderful and too good to be true. A little more confirmation is needed; and this He anticipates and provides for by asking for and partaking of some of their ordinary food which might be at hand. Thus, their last doubts are



removed and they can now learn the meaning of all this wondrous fact.

Again, He speaks of the confirmation of all that was written in the Old Testament, in all the divisions of the sacred volume-the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms or sacred writings; they all spoke of Him and gave witness of His death and resurrection. He opens their understanding, not merely enabling them to receive, but doubtless giving them many a blessed illustration of what the Scriptures taught. Thus, He was anticipating that blessed work of the Holy Spirit which continues throughout the entire present dispensation. We have the enlargement of these few verses in the inspired writings of the New Testament-the constant ministry of the Holy Spirit using them to unfold the meaning of the Old Testament. Blessed be God, He is still going on with this.

The great themes are the sufferings of Christ, His resurrection, and their blessed results in the preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sins, world-wide, beginning with Jerusalem where He had been crucified. They are witnesses of all these things; and as the power to enable them to testify intelligently, as well as for all their service in unfolding and declaring the grace of God and His counsels as to Christ, He gives them the promise of the Holy Spirit whose coming they were to await at Jerusalem. They then

would be endued with the power of which He speaks. All this, thank God, is familiar to us in good measure; yet how delightful it is to dwell upon it, and find ourselves led on, beyond our more immediate theme perhaps, to note the various steps which divine grace and love have taken to meet our every need. Thus, fittingly, Luke anticipates the narrative of the book of Acts, of which also he is the author.

The ascension follows now (vers. 50-53). He leads them outside Jerusalem as far as Bethany, "the house of humiliation." Here He bestows upon them His parting blessing, in the act of which He is separated from them and rises into a scene where He is lost to sight, but not to faith. The joy of it all so fills their hearts that it can only express itself in worship.

John (chaps. 20, 21). After the manner that we have already mentioned, John singles out Mary Magdalene (vers. 1-18) from the company of the women. What takes place here evidently antedates in good measure the narrative in the other Gospels where a number of the women are seen at the sepulchre. Mary, at least, is so absorbed that she loses sight of the others. It is she who first tells of the stone being rolled away; and Peter, in company with John, runs to the sepulchre and finds it empty.

There is indeed, in verse two, an allusion to the other women who were Mary's companions:

“*We* know not where they have laid Him,” which shows they were probably with her. John and Peter come to the sepulchre, John outstripping him, as love ever will. He first sees the empty tomb. Peter, after his manner, is bolder and goes into the sepulchre and sees all lying there with the evidence that no struggle had taken place. The linen clothes are lying by themselves and the napkin in its place, suggesting that all had been left as naturally as one would leave the couch in which he had slept during the night. It was not as though the clothing had been taken off from Him, but as though He had gone out of them. If we may use an illustration in such connection (though we shrink to add the slightest human thought), these clothes, with the napkin lying by itself, showing the outline of our Lord’s form as He lay there, remind us of the shell from which the butterfly has withdrawn, leaving a form which it no longer occupies.

All speaks here of divine power and majesty, the putting forth of that which is so resistless that no opposition whatever is met. John, with the instinct of love, knows what it all means. He saw and believed. But they knew not yet the Scripture, and therefore even this wondrous knowledge did not have its full place in their hearts and lives. The disciples return to their own home, possibly to await further develop-

ments, but evidently, as has been said, not fully under the power of what had taken place.

To Mary, all this does not seem to appeal. One thought only fills her heart. Her Lord is not there. It is ever thus with love. Nothing will satisfy it but having its object. It has been said that the other Mary, the sister of Lazarus, had entered so fully into the death and resurrection of our Lord that she did not even join with the others in their fruitless grief at the grave. We do not deny this, but in Mary Magdalene at least we see the intensity of a love which, though it be unintelligent, is true and cannot be diverted from its longing. Not even the vision of angels which she now sees at the place of the head and the feet can satisfy her. Their question, "Why weepest thou?" tells the sorrow of her heart.

She then turns from them to meet, after the manner of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, we may say, an unknown Stranger whom she supposes to be the gardener, and in answer to whose question: "Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" she says, in the self-forgetfulness of love, that wherever he has put "Him," if he will but tell her, she will care for Him. Her love indeed is beautiful, but love alone cannot rise beyond death. Her whole heart, however, is absorbed in its object, and therefore the Lord no longer veils Himself from a love like this. The Lord's word, "Mary," expresses His

full knowledge of her. "Rabboni" is her outburst of joy. She knows Him and would fain hold Him fast as though restored again to her; but our Lord has to lead her into the truth which her heart little dreams of-the truth which is the theme of John. He is to ascend to His Father, and would bring her and all His "brethren" into a relationship which they could never have enjoyed had He remained upon earth: it is a relationship of which He had spoken to them, and for which the gift of the Spirit was needed to lead them in the full knowledge of it-even the Spirit of adoption. Meanwhile He tells it to Mary, and makes her the messenger of the glad tidings to the rest.

We have next the meeting with the disciples in the evening of the first day (vers. 19-23). He enters through the closed doors-for doors which shut out the world and formalism are no barrier to His entrance-and reveals Himself to them in the greeting: "Peace be unto you," which acquired a new meaning from His lips as He showed them, in His hands and His side, the ground upon which that peace rested. Again, He pronounces "Peace" to them, and sends them forth with the anticipative breathing of the Holy Spirit in whose power they would be His messengers and representatives of His authority. As has been pointed out, we have here a suggestion of the Church or a heavenly body of saints.

The next appearing suggests an earthly company (vers. 24-29). We may look at Thomas individually and as a type of this earthly company. In this latter sense, he stands for the Jews who do not come into blessing until they look on Him whom they pierced. Then indeed, with Thomas, faith will say: "My Lord and my God!" This, of course, looks forward to the time succeeding the present dispensation. We must not, however, overlook the spiritual lessons to be gathered from Thomas. While true in heart to the Lord, he doubts, and demands proof of the most material, rigid kind. The Lord, who knows his heart, knows also how to silence all his unbelief; and Thomas himself would then be the last to ask for the proofs he demanded. What we need is not so much "evidences," but a state of heart which judges what is not according to God, and which has but the one object, to know Christ. Such have no doubts, and do not lose the precious opportunities when the Lord manifests Himself unto us as He does not to the world.

The two closing verses of this chapter (vers. 30 and 31) are a kind of conclusion to the Gospel narrative. The Evangelist has given but a part of what filled our Lord's life. He has written with a special object. The theme of his Gospel, as we have seen, is: "That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God,

and that believing, ye might have *life* through His name. ”

Chapter 21 is not a postscript, for its continuity with all that has gone before is evident. It is supplementary, however, in the sense that both historically and dispensationally the scene is changed. All takes place at the Sea of Galilee, called after the manner of the Evangelist by its Gentile name, the Sea of Tiberias. Dispensationally, it points to the gathering in of Gentiles, the recovery of the Jewish remnant having been suggested in Thomas.

There is much of deep personal interest here. As in all the narratives of the resurrection history, the disciples, while filled with joy at the resurrection of the Lord, have failed to enter into the glorious spiritual truths which it involved; indeed, it is evident they must wait until the Lord specially fits them, by the Spirit coming upon them, for the new place into which His resurrection had brought them.

There may be a significance in their having gone to Galilee, as if to resume their ordinary calling. This, at Peter's suggestion, is undertaken, and at this point the Lord reveals Himself to them. He who had called Peter and the rest from their nets and boats to make them fishers of men had not changed His purpose. We do not say the disciples distinctly failed in this act, but if they had any thought of continu-

ing to be merely fishers, our Lord would check all this. The spiritual lesson is the important one. Details, in themselves entirely natural and proper, have a certain spiritual suggestiveness which we have sought to point out without intimating that there was a distinct lapse in the disciples' hearts.

The scene with Peter at the shore is a complete illustration, we may say, of the washing of the disciples' feet, typically given in the 13th chapter. Individually, Peter's restoration had begun almost as soon as his sin had been committed; but it is here more fully and publicly completed. The details here are suggestive. The whole scene might well remind Peter of the past, -the fire of coals recalling that other fire where he had sat and warmed himself with Christ's enemies; the threefold question: "Lovest thou Me?" touching very closely his proud boast of loyalty and faithfulness. "More than these," we need hardly say, refers to the other disciples, and not to the fish, as some have thought. It was gently reminding Peter of his boast, "Though all shall be offended, yet will not I."

As has often been pointed out, our Lord and Peter use two different words for "love." The Lord's is the stronger, more spiritual, word, nearly always used of the love of God. Peter's answer is the word more used in human intercourse and friendship. It does not suggest a



weaker love, we may say, but a different plane, Peter would not qualify the intensity of his love, but would shrink from giving it the dignity implied in the other word. Our Lord at last, in the closing question, comes down to Peter's own word, as though to probe to the very bottom that once self-confident but now self-distrusting heart. Throughout, Peter casts himself upon the knowledge of the Lord rather than his own protestation. "Thou knowest that I love Thee." Precious is the grace which does not even name the sin, save in this holy implication, and yet which so effectually probes to the very bottom that it leaves its holy savor where once had been the roots of pride; at the same time, with no bitterness of humiliation connected with the searching of divine grace.

This is ever the way of our Lord ; and instead of setting one aside from service, the poor wandering sheep now brought back is entrusted with the care of the Lord's lambs and sheep. Two different words are also used here. It is, "*Feed* My lambs " and "*Shepherd* My sheep. " Lambs need not so much correction and control as the nourishment which will insure their growth. This, too, is needed by the sheep as well, and therefore the last word is " feed " as well as " shepherd " My sheep.

Thus, Peter is, we may say, restored to his place of prominence among the apostles, and his

position at Pentecost and subsequently illustrates how complete his restoration had been.

Our Lord, however, goes on to predict Peter's death in much the way in which he had once thought himself ready to prove his devotion. But that devotion must rest, as all else, upon grace ; and when it does, the original desire and purpose of the heart will be fulfilled. So he is to follow his Lord and put off his tabernacle in due time in a way which would glorify God ; it shows that a fall from self-confidence is a fall into divine love, which makes possible of accomplishment the noblest aspirations of the heart.

As has been pointed out elsewhere, this close of Peter's life, together with what follows as to John, suggests that Peter's ministry as being for the circumcision ceases to occupy the chief place ; while John suggests that which abides to the close, a ministry closely connected with the heavenly, the out-of-the-world place, into which our Lord has brought us. We find therefore that Peter is most prominent in the early part of the Acts; and the apostle Paul, who succeeds to the prominent place, reminds us in Galatians how the apostleship of the circumcision, was committed to Peter, while that of the uncircumcision with all that went with it, of the ministry of the gospel of the glory and of the Church which is associated with that gospel, was committed to him.

Peter's ministry abides of course, and of priceless value, having in view the passage of a pilgrim through a wilderness and the walk which is appropriate to this pilgrim character.

John's ministry, directly occupied as it is with the person of the Son of God, the Eternal Life which was with the Father and manifested to us, has a character bounded by no dispensation, and leads on into eternity. He it is who has been used of God to give us this wondrous Gospel of the Son of God, in which, though veiling Himself, the divine glory in the face of Jesus Christ shines forth,-the glory of "Him who filleth all in all."

Well may John add that the narrative of such an One cannot be exhausted. The world itself, he supposes, could not contain all that should be written. Heaven and eternity are the sphere in which all will be unfolded to the delight and wonder of our hearts.

#### 4. THE GENERAL THEME IN HARMONY WITH THIS PRESENTATION OF CHRIST

WE have now sought to gather from the four Gospels the characteristic manner in **which** our Lord is presented in each: in His life, His death and His resurrection. It remains for us now to gather up the results of this, and to form, as far as we can, an idea of the special theme of each Evangelist.

Christ is the centre, as we have been seeing, but all the truth given in connection with Him in each Evangelist will be found to have a character in harmony with the aspect in which He is presented to us.

In **Matthew**, our Lord is seen in His life as the King of the Jews, the One in whom Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled and who "came unto His own." The entire Gospel is cast in a Jewish mold. The teaching, miracles, opposition, all take color from the manifest theme of the Evangelist. His death is in accord with this, as is also His resurrection. It is the Gospel of the kingdom throughout; and even when the King has been rejected and the gospel goes out to the Gentiles it is still the kingdom, though now in the mystery form. This thought, therefore, of the kingdom, predominates in Matthew. That Matthew was a Jew and wrote his Gospel

with special reference to the Jews is manifest from his theme.

In **Mark** we notice a close similarity with **Matthew**, closer than between any of the other Gospels. Our Lord is presented as the Prophet of God and the Servant of man's need, in His life, His death and resurrection. The prophet is also an Old Testament figure, equally with the king, and closely connected with him, and this will account for the similarity between these two Evangelists, although each has that which is distinctive.

There is a fulness and activity of service in **Mark**, both in healing and teaching, which is most appropriate to the One who humbled Himself and took a servant's place. We will later glance at some of the verbal peculiarities of this Evangelist which indicate the untiring energy and implicit obedience of our blessed Lord. The condensation of the narrative (the briefest of all the four Evangelists) points in the same direction, so that we can have little doubt as to the general theme—the labors and testimony of the true Servant of God and Prophet of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That this record of the perfect Servant should have been entrusted to one who so conspicuously failed in service, but who later was profitable for the ministry, is only an illustration of how grace delights to restore and use—"Take **Mark** and

bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. 4:11).

It has been thought that the conciseness, brevity and other characteristics of this Gospel indicate that it was originally intended for the Romans who would be more occupied with results accomplished than with the account of fulfilled prophecy. We cannot speak with certainty of this, and leave it as a matter of very minor importance.

In **Luke**, the Lord is seen in His wider title as Son of Man, and in connection therefore, not only with Israel where His ministry was exercised and His atoning sacrifice was offered, but with the entire human family. There is an outlook therefore to the Gentiles, and if we remember that Luke was the companion of the apostle Paul and the narrator of his ministry among the Gentiles in the book of Acts, we need not be surprised to find certain features in his Gospel which remind us to a certain extent of the Pauline character of ministry in the Epistles.

There is an intensely human interest in the entire Gospel of Luke; and a most gracious and tender thought for those at a distance, especially the sinful and the wandering, shines out in it, which gives a charm all its own to this precious narrative of our Lord's life, death and resurrection. The general theme of the Gospel may therefore be given as the ministry of the

Son of Man among men, reaching their need, touching their hearts and bringing them to the knowledge of God and Himself. Luke is a Gentile, probably a Greek and a man of culture, as indicated by his style. It has been suggested that he wrote for the Greeks. What we have said as to Mark applies here also.

John. If Luke is in a certain sense an introduction to the epistles of Paul, the Gospel of John is in a more marked way introductory to his own epistles. His own individuality-an individuality which consists in presenting Christ alone before the eye-is stamped upon all his writings, though in a less marked degree upon the Revelation because of its special character. Our Lord is seen throughout this Gospel as the eternal Son of God, made flesh, manifesting, as the Only-begotten of the Father, the character, love, holiness and righteousness of Him whom it is eternal life to know.

The theme of the Evangelist is twofold: "that Eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. " In the Gospel, He presents it in the person of our Lord and the manner in which it is communicated by Him, with the opposition it meets in the world, the solid basis upon which it rests, and the sphere of its eternal display. In the Epistles, it is the unfolding of that life in the believer left here for a season to walk as He walked.

John, although a Jew, writes entirely from the Christian standpoint, referring to Jewish customs as foreign to him. He is distinctly the Evangelist for the Church. It is significant that he never speaks of himself by name, but as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."



## CHAPTER IV

### Parallel Passages

**W**E purpose in the present chapter to take up the subject of the parallel passages in the Gospels and to apply the conclusions at which we have arrived respecting the theme of each Evangelist. In this way, we will see, both whether a further examination bears out our conclusion as to that theme, and how much it assists us in illustrating each narrative and accounting for the characteristic differences which we find.

Of course, time and space would not allow our examining even partially a tithe of these parallel passages, which indeed would involve a detailed study practically of the entire four Gospels. It must suffice us to take up two or three narratives which will be illustrative of the whole, and leave further study along these lines to the individual student, for which he can find abundant material.

#### Omissions

The narrative of our Lord's birth and events connected with the period prior to His entrance upon His public ministry is confined, with an exception immediately to be noted, to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. John indeed gives

We are indebted also to John for the characteristic conversation with Philip. He anticipates the question of the disciples, which the three Synoptists record, and tests the faith of Philip by asking a question Himself. The Synoptists all speak of the even-tide being upon them, which goes fittingly with it being a desert place. Again John is silent, and for the reason already given.

There is little difference in the account of the preparations for the feast. No doubt, a minuter study of the details would show that each variation not only indicates the independences of each narrative, but is appropriate to its immediate theme. All tell us of the order and rest of the great multitude, who, sitting upon the grass, were about to partake of the bounty of the One who, unknown to themselves, had fed them from the beginning, and who silently would witness that He who clothes the grass of the field provides for the needs of all His creatures.

All speak of the giving of thanks, but here again the Synoptists tell us our Lord looked up to heaven. In John, there was no need for that, for He was "the Son of Man who is in heaven."

All four make the disciples the channels of our Lord's bounty. How true it is that whatever view we have of Him, we find His people associated with Him in grace. Even in John,

He says: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

All speak of the gathering up the fragments, the fourth Gospel adding our Lord's words: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost; " for the largeness of divine bounty is never to be confounded with the waste so common to man. It suggests that even in the miracles, while there is no parsimony, there is an absence of needless excess.

The twelve baskets may suggest the governmental character of the scene which is common to all four Evangelists. It is the Lord feeding His beloved people Israel, fulfilling the prophecy: "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread" (Ps. 132: 15). Matthew, the Gospel of the kingdom, adds that not only were five thousand men fed, but the women and children were not forgotten. The King does not overlook the least of His subjects. The miracle which follows, the walking upon the water, is omitted in Luke. The reason may be because, dealing as it does with the circumstances through which His disciples are called to pass, more particularly in a dispensational way, it was not so appropriate to his theme. Matthew alone records the episode of Peter's walking upon the water. It seems to fit in with the special theme of the Gospel of the kingdom, describing, we might almost say, the kingdom

in the mystery form, when the Church, as typified by Peter, leaves the boat of Judaism and attempts to walk upon the waves. The threatened engulfing may suggest the enemy's work in which he seeks to mix up the false with the true, as we have it now in Christendom.

Thus we have a further confirmation of the theme of Matthew's Gospel. Entering the ship, they recognize Him as the Son of God, while Mark, though recording their amazement, reminds us that our Lord's work was not yet done. They considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened.

John does not speak of their worshiping Him. There is little of that in his Gospel. While everything He did would call forth the adoration of faith, it would not be so fitting to speak constantly of His right to be worshiped in the Gospel which sets forth His divine glory.

We do not here enter into details of our Lord's searching discourse in the synagogue in Capernaum, based upon the miracle of feeding the five thousand. It is peculiar to John and entirely after his manner. The Lord makes use of the occurrence to impart the most profound truths and to show that He is the true Food who alone gives life. All other life must fail. He that eateth of the bread which He gives shall live forever. The unbelief which would stumble at this transcendent truth is manifested,

while for faith, He goes on to show that He is not only the Giver, but the Maintainer of life, a life which must spring from His sacrificial death. Thus, the connection with the passover is clearly seen.

2. *The Transfiguration*. Matt. 17: 1-8; Mark g: 2-8 : Luke g : 28-36.

All three Synoptists start at the same point. Our Lord was speaking of His coming sufferings at the hands of men, of His death and His resurrection and of His coming in glory. In this connection, He declares that some of those who were standing with Him should not taste of death until they should see "the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (Matthew) ; "the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark); "the kingdom of God" (Luke). A week after, the transfiguration takes place, and Peter in his epistle shows how the scene upon the Holy Mount set forth "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," when they "were eye-witnesses of His majesty; for He received from God the Father honor and *glory*, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,' and this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with Him in the Holy Mount" (2 Pet. 1: 16-18).

We might note, in passing, the accuracy of the inspired narrators and yet their independence

one of the other. Matthew and Mark speak of it as "six days after," doubtless omitting the day on which our Lord had spoken and the actual day of the transfiguration ; while Luke includes both and says, "about an eight days after." All speak of the three companions of our Lord who were eye-witnesses of His glory in the Mount.

Luke, as is frequent in his Gospel, shows that it was as our Lord was in prayer that the transfiguration took place. How beautifully appropriate that the Son of Man in the attitude of dependence should thus be glorified!

Matthew describes the glory of our Lord's countenance, as well as (in common with the other two) His raiment. It is fitting that the narrator of the kingdom Gospel should show us the beams of the Sun of Righteousness who is to arise upon Israel with healing in His wings.

Luke tells us the subject of conversation with Moses and Elias, as to the decease which our Lord should accomplish at Jerusalem ; and he alone speaks of the slumber which had fallen upon the disciples. The shadow of the cross is seen thus at the very summit of our Lord's earthly career. No thought of the kingdom, no activity of service could blot from His mind the suffering and rejection which awaited Him. The notice of these is more in place in Luke than in the Gospels which speak more particularly of His final and personal place upon the earth.

We have here three different words, in the three Evangelists, ascribed to Peter when he says: "*Lord*, it is good for us to be here." In Matthew, it is "*Kurios*," Lord, the word frequently used in translating "Jehovah" of the Old Testament and suggesting the personal dignity of the Lord. In Mark, it is "Rabbi," in keeping with his theme, where we see our Lord as the Prophet. In Luke it is "*Epistata*," a less frequent word than that used in Matthew, and not necessarily implying what is at least suggested in the former Gospel. It is a more human word, appropriate to the Gospel of the Son of Man.

The question may be asked, How could Peter use all three words? If we remember that he doubtless addressed our Lord in the Syriac or Aramæan language, the difficulty is removed, for either of these three words could translate the original and would include some feature of it; or, he could very easily have used two words in addressing the Lord, one of which would be "Rabbi."

Mark adds, after his vivid manner, that Peter knew not what to say, for they were all afraid. Matthew alone tells us that the cloud which overshadowed them was bright, suggesting perhaps that Shekinah of glory ("Over all, the glory shall be for a covering") which shall be displayed in the kingdom.

Luke connects the fear of which Mark had spoken with their entering into the cloud, while all three are identical in recording God's words: "This is My beloved Son;" Matthew alone adds "in whom I am well pleased;" in all there is the call for them to "hear Him." At the close, Matthew gives some glimpses of the kingdom glory: "They fell on their face and were sore afraid," but Jesus touches them and speaks to them with reassuring words. All speak of "Jesus only" being left before them.

In the conversation that follows about Elias, recorded alone in Matthew and Mark, there is evident appropriateness to the theme of these two Evangelists. All three, however, record the miracle upon the demoniac. Here, Mark is fullest, for he dwells upon each detail that sets forth the nature of our Lord's tireless activities. Matthew is briefest; the King in patience working the miracle but looking forward, we might say, to the time when unbelief would no longer make such works necessary. When, however, we come to the reasons for His disciples' unbelief, Matthew dwells more fully upon it.

3. *The Syrophenician Woman.* Matt. 15; Mk. 7.

What has been said under the previous instances will indicate the manner in which we can take up and examine all parallel passages, The more minutely and carefully it is done, the better. We have *given* but samples. Space



would not permit our going into further minute details. We add a few further samples, noting only the salient features.

This narrative follows immediately after the discussion with the Pharisees about defilement, a subject appropriate to both Matthew and Mark, but which, together with the narrative of the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter, is wanting in Luke. The entire chapter is, we might say, governmental in its form and therefore less appropriate to the Evangelist whose theme is wider. For Matthew and Mark, however, the connection between the conversation and the act of mercy is most beautiful and significant. Grace goes outside Judaism to find its subjects, while the nation is absorbed in its petty religious rites which they practise to the exclusion of the commandments of God, utterly ignoring the corrupt state of their own hearts. Thus our Lord manifests what is in the heart of man, and in going forth to an outcast Gentile shows what is in the heart of God.

Matthew notices that the woman addresses our Lord by His title "Son of David," a title which belongs to the kingdom and which could not rightly be used by those outside. So He answers her, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." All this, we need hardly say, belongs to Matthew. In what follows, he and Mark are very similar, except that

our Lord notices what is so conspicuous by its absence amongst the leaders of the people, the *faith* which lays hold of Him in spite of the obstacles which He Himself suggests.

4. *The miracle of the seven loaves, and the sign from heaven.* Matt. 15: 32 to 16: 12; Mk. 8: 1-21.

These also are peculiar to Matthew and Mark, and for reasons much the same as those already given. Matthew particularly dwells upon the sign of the prophet Jonah, connecting it with their ability to read natural indications of what weather may be expected and yet failing to see how judgment threatens them.

5. *The Olivet Discourse.* Matt. 24 and 25 ; Mk. 13; Lk. 21.

There is no mention of this discourse by John. His Gospel we may say is beyond dispensations, in a certain sense, and its entire theme is above and outside the events appropriately foretold in the Synoptists. What takes the place, to a certain extent, of this prophetic discourse, is our Lord's address to His disciples in the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters, and we need not say how contrastive the two addresses are, nor need we add they are without the slightest contradiction.

All three Synoptists connect this prophetic discourse of our Lord with the temple whose beauties had been pointed out to Him. Predicting that the time would come when one stone should not be left upon another, He continues

the subject in the retirement of the Mount of Olives, where, sitting with His disciples, as Mark points out, "over against the temple," its imposing grandeur before His eye, He pronounces the doom upon it and, we might say, upon the entire Jewish nation.

The Gospel of Luke gives the address in its briefest form, with certain elements peculiar to itself and especially appropriate to His more general theme. The first destruction of Jerusalem is more dwelt upon than its final overthrow, which in Matthew and Mark seems to be more closely linked with that first destruction. Matthew particularly looks on to the end and dwells in detail upon the presence of false prophets who shall deceive many, while Mark and Luke speak more particularly of the opposition from without and the assurance that they should be delivered when brought before kings and rulers for His name's sake.

The closing period of the Great Tribulation, the latter half of Daniel's "week," is almost if not entirely absent from Luke; while Matthew gives a fuller account than Mark, dwelling specially upon the suddenness of the Lord's appearing. The comparison with the days of Noah is peculiar to Matthew, though it is well to remember that in Luke our Lord, in another connection, gives this comparison as well as that of Sodom and Gomorrah. (See Lk. 17: 20-37.) We

may remark upon this in passing, that, as has already been mentioned, Luke does not follow a close chronological order, but rather one that is illustrative of his theme. It must also be remembered that, doubtless, our Lord often said the same things in different connections and at different times. One Evangelist might record the one, and another give that spoken upon a different occasion.

Mark dwells at greatest length upon the necessity for watching, while Matthew enlarges upon the solemn contrast between the faithful and unfaithful servant, a comparison which is wanting in the other Gospels.

The parable of the ten virgins and of the talents is peculiar to Matthew alone and especially appropriate to his general theme. The kingdom is about to be set up and the Bridegroom to appear. While including the present dispensation, the setting is cast in the predominant mold of the Gospel of the kingdom.

We notice again, that in different connections, a somewhat similar parable is recorded by Luke, that of the pounds. As our Lord points out, this was in view of their thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He therefore shows that a period must intervene during which faithfulness in the use of entrusted responsibilities would meet its sure reward at the coming of the kingdom.

Matthew is alone in describing the judgment of the nations, and gives the fullest outline of this great prophetic discourse. Thus, in the dispensational Gospel, we have the Lord's coming and appearing in relation to Israel, to the responsibilities of the present dispensation and to the gathering together of the Gentiles after the rapture of the Church.

With these few illustrative passages, we leave this part of our subject, with the deepened conviction in all our minds, we trust, that a careful comparison of the various Gospel narratives would bring out much of a most profitable and suggestive character. It remains for us, in this connection, to point out those portions of each of the Synoptists which they record alone.

Matthew 1: 18-25 is alone in the annunciation of our Lord's birth to Joseph, giving, as he also does (vers. 1-17), the genealogy of our Lord from Abraham down to Joseph, the legal heir to the throne of David.

To Luke, on the contrary, we are indebted, in his first two chapters, for the annunciation of the birth of John to Zacharias ; of our Lord to Mary ; the visit of Mary to Elizabeth and the birth of John, together with the precious details of the birth of our Lord at Bethlehem, with the annunciation of His birth to the shepherds, and His circumcision and presentation in the temple.

Matthew alone records the flight into Egypt, while both he and Luke narrate the beginning of the life in Nazareth. Without going into detail, or repeating what we have noticed elsewhere, we see that the human element predominates in Luke, and the dispensational or kingly in Matthew. We notice in Matthew's Gospel, in several places, that in the account of a miracle, he shows that it was wrought upon two subjects, while from the other Evangelists we would have suspected but one: as in the healing of the demoniac of Gadara, recorded by all three Synoptists, Matthew alone tells us there were two (chap. 8: 29-34). The same is seen in the opening of the eyes of Bartimæus, where two beggars are healed in Matthew (chap. 20: 29-34); and the same feature occurs in the healing of the two blind men (Matt. 9: 27-31).

Evidently, the purpose of the first Evangelist is not to single out some special feature in the healing so much as to show the power of our Lord. The fact that two were healed emphasizes this, while in Mark and Luke the details connected with the healing of one of the individuals are brought more prominently before us.

The solemn address to the disciples in Matthew, chapter 10, is found practically there only, though Mark and Luke also tell of their being sent forth. Their mission was "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and looks on beyond the present in-

terval of grace to the resumption of that ministry which closes only at the Lord's return.

Peter's noble confession of the Lord at Cæsarea Philippi is recorded in all three Evangelists, but Matthew in addition shows how "the Christ, the Son of the living God "-confessed here by Peter, is the foundation upon which the Church will be built, a building which was not begun until Pentecost. This is appropriate to the dispensational Gospel.

So, too, is the governmental section (chap. 18: x5-35) peculiar to Matthew alone. Here it is not exactly the Church, but the Kingdom and responsibilities connected with it. The attitude of one to a brother who has committed a trespass is pointed out. Failing in the endeavor to win him privately, the one is permitted to go further, taking one or two others; failing still, the Church was to be notified; and if this does not succeed, one can only leave the case in the hands of God. It does not go further, except to point out that whatever is bound according to God on earth is bound in heaven, and this would include those necessary acts of discipline which the Church may be called upon to perform.

Following this, and we may say as a guide in carrying out the directions just given, we are warned against the unforgiving spirit which would render nugatory any mere formal attempt to follow the directions thus given. If we have

not the spirit of forgiveness in our hearts, we cannot expect God's blessing with any action of ours, no matter how correct in form it may seem to be.

We leave a comparison of the parables to the chapter which specially treats of them.

The solitary instance recorded by Mark alone (chap. 8: 22-26) gives us confirmatory illustration of his manner and object. It is the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida. The brief narrative is most vivid and illustrative of the tireless activity of the faithful Servant, with attention to detail of a most instructive character. The two stages in the healing are peculiar to this account and furnish a suggestive thought as to the character of the work of grace. It may not always be instantly manifest in its full results.

Coming to the Gospel of Luke, as we have already noticed in the narrative of the early life of our Lord, we have many scenes peculiar to this Evangelist, as the scene at Nazareth (chap. 4: 16-30). It is a fitting introduction indeed to the entire Gospel, where, as we have seen, our Lord's grace overleaps dispensational and national distinctions. His appearing in the synagogue at Nazareth and recalling God's past ways of grace, when in the days of Elijah a Gentile widow was fed in the time of famine, and of Elisha when a Syrian and an enemy of Israel obtained the grace which many lepers in Israel failed to get,



was more than their prejudice could stand and they then and there practically cast Him out and would have destroyed Him, had God permitted. Thus, we may say, our Lord is seen on the outside morally from the beginning, although of course His patient love ministered wherever He found an entrance among His own people.

Matthew, chapter 13: 54-58, and Mark, chapter 6: 1-6, record an apparently later visit to Nazareth, where our Lord was rejected. This may be profitably compared with what we have said of the occurrence given in Luke. The special peculiarities are marked.

We have already remarked on the lovely scene in the Pharisee's house with the woman that was a sinner (chap. 7: 36-50), illustrating that religious formalism which remains barren and unforgiven while the sins of the penitent are washed away.

The raising of the widow's son at Nain in the first part of this chapter (vers. 11-17) is also peculiar to Luke, in which the Lord's tender sympathy and compassion are so marked.

Chapter 9: 51 introduces a section in this Gospel which goes on, we may say, almost to the healing of Bartimæus (chap. 18: 35) in which Luke stands almost alone—a rich portion indeed, in which the special theme of our Evangelist stands out strikingly in wonderful narratives of

grace. This portion includes the parable of the Good Samaritan, encouragements to prayer, solemn warnings as to eternity, calls to repentance, the gospel's great feast; then the matchless parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son, the solemn issues of eternity, the healing of the ten lepers, the Pharisee and the publican, and other features. We do no more than mention these here, In the outline of the Evangelist we will endeavor to point out their special characteristics. The call of Zaccheus is also peculiar to this Evangelist, illustrating again the gospel which he loves to present in so many varied ways.

This completes our general examination of the characteristic differences of the three Synoptists as compared with each other.

#### Recurrence of the same word or phrase

Our previous heads will suffice to give a general introduction to the comparison of the Gospels by a study of their parallel passages. What we have to say under the present head is brief, not because there is not abundance of material, but the detailed work had best be done by the student in the closer study of each Evangelist.

We have certain expressions and words peculiar to certain Gospels which indicate the general theme. Thus, the expression "kingdom of Heaven" is found exclusively in the Gospel

of Matthew, where it is of frequent occurrence, as a reference to a concordance will show. It expresses, we might say, the thought which underlies the entire Gospel. It is the kingdom, not of earth, and therefore not of man. It is not even the kingdom of David according to the flesh, but that which John the Baptist announces as at hand when he, as the forerunner of the King, declared the first principle essential to its establishment, that of repentance, and announces the heaven-appointed Ruler of the kingdom.

We look for a moment at this expression, As we have said, it is the kingdom of heaven or of the heavens in contrast to the earth. Throughout Scripture, whether in the introduction of light, the separation of the waters, or the elevation of the earth, the heavens have always the preeminence. Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest of earthly rulers, and whose dominion was widest, became as a beast because he failed to recognize this elementary principle. He must, therefore, be driven out from his place of authority, typical indeed of all human power, until he learns that the heavens do rule. It is this spiritual rule of the heavens which the Gospel of Matthew inculcates, and which this phrase indicates as its characteristic theme.

When we come to the Gospel of Luke we find an equally appropriate expression parallel with this. It is now, "the kingdom of God" which,

while in some connections is apparently synonymous with the parallel phrase in Matthew, in others evidently indicates a more general and moral aspect. Thus, in the invitation: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me," Luke says, "for of such is the kingdom of God." Of course, the kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of God, and yet the latter expression suggests that which is according to His *nature* rather than the seat of His power and the sphere of His reign. As we have already had occasion to notice, the apostle Paul uses this same expression, "the kingdom of God," with the same thought, excluding any thought of mere administration such as is given to us in Matthew.

Returning to the first Evangelist, we must point out, as will appear later, that the kingdom of heaven is looked at in various aspects: being first introduced, its principles announced, and its works performed. When the Jews rejected it, the Lord in those prophetic parables which look forward to the time of His absence upon earth, describes the kingdom in a mystery form, which will come before us later. The remainder of the Gospel dwells upon various thoughts of the kingdom until we find it finally established after the judgments in the millennial kingdom of our Lord.

Coming to Mark, as has been said, while he largely parallels Matthew in his narrative, his

theme is not so dispensational. There is, however, at least one word which is so frequent in its occurrence that we cannot fail to notice it. It is the word translated "straightway" or "immediately," and suggests the readiness, promptness and capacity for service which marked our blessed Lord in His path here.

We leave this most interesting feature of word study as applied to the Synoptists, and turn for a moment to note that, particularly in the Gospel of John, we have characteristic phrases and expressions. Here, "eternal life" stands out as expressed in the life of our Lord and communicated by Him. It is received by faith, and therefore "believe" and "faith" are of frequent occurrence. Our Lord's one great object here was to reveal "the Father," therefore we find this blessed word constantly upon His lips, together with the phrase "Him that sent Me," reminding us of how He was sent forth from the bosom of the Father. "The world," "love," "light" are other characteristic words which we will only mention, and which all unite to show the one predominating theme of this precious portion of the word of God.

## CHAPTER V

### The Relation of the Gospels to Each Other

**I**N our introductory chapter, we sought to point out the position of the four Gospels in relation to the rest of the word of God: first, the Old Testament with its different groups of the Law, the Prophets, and Psalms; and next, the New with its apostolic history, the Epistles and the Revelation. Having now examined, to a certain extent, the contents and character of the Gospels, it remains for us to endeavor to learn, as far as we may, something of their relation to each other.

The fact that there are four Gospels, all upon one theme, would suggest at once that these four not merely present Christ and the truth in four different aspects, but that they have a relation one to another, not merely of a complementary or supplementary character, but after the manner of the entire word of God, an organic relationship of the several parts each to each.

We have already seen that the four Gospels fall naturally into two main divisions, in which the Synoptists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, from their contents are taken together, because they resemble each other far more closely than any of them does the fourth Gospel. We have, there-

fore, two main divisions of the Gospels: first, the Synoptists; second, John.\*

The number "four" is the first prime number capable of true division, dividing into factors  $2 \times 2$ , which also, by addition, form the same number. Readiness of cleavage is not suggestive of strength, and the cleavage in the middle suggests rather imperfection, as though the entire mass were not absolute unity, but rather composed of halves.

When we come to apply the significance of the number "four" as divided into its factors  $2 \times 2$  we find just such a cleavage, which in itself suggests inherent weakness. "Four" is the number of the creature, of the earth, and, as has been frequently pointed out, of the testing which goes with the earthly position of the creature and the failure which, invariably accompanies that test. The material creation has this divided character. -the earth beneath and heavens above. The earth itself again divides into land and water. Organic creation divides into animal and vegetable. Man himself is material and spiritual. These divisions, while they do not necessarily speak of creature imperfection, suggest that lack of all-pervasive unity, the absence of which char-

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\* The writer would acknowledge his indebtedness for moat of what is found in this chapter, to the exoeedingly helpful and illuminating treatment of the subject in the Introduction to the Four Gospels in the Numerical Bible, by F. W. Grant.

acterizes the creation, and which calls for a bond to hold it fast in One outside itself. This division therefore, of the creature into halves, implies this inherent weakness which, when fully tested, apart from the Creator's controlling power, brings out its failure.

It is therefore most suggestive that the four narratives of the perfect, unfailing Life should not yield to such a cleavage; but its divisions, if such they may be called, are  $3 + 1$ , rather than  $2 \times 2$ . Here indeed we have two numbers, each with special significance: the "three" suggesting a trinity of divine fulness, and the "one" emphasizing the divine all-sufficiency and unity; the combined thought presented in both giving us in the incarnation of the Son of God the fullest presentation we could have.

In this division the Synoptists come first and the Gospel of John second.

"Two," in the divine Circle, is the number of the Son. With reference to His relation to man, it suggests salvation through the Son. The Gospel of John, while presenting as we have already seen the essential deity of the Son of God, unfolds in a most blessed way the perfection of that salvation which as eternal life He has given to His people. The Synoptists present our Lord less subjectively than John (who presents Him to us as the bestower of eternal life now possessed by the believer) but rather as we see Him,



-external to ourselves. The two numbers here,  $(3 + 1)$ , therefore would be:

The Synoptists-Christ objectively presented.  
John-the Son of God, the giver of eternal life.

### **The three Synoptists**

In the Synoptists, therefore, we may expect to find our Lord presented objectively to our view; and although the main teaching of these three is not so profound and does not present our Lord so fully in His divine personality as the fourth Gospel, they have this characteristic which we have noted.

Our next question is, What relation do these three Synoptists bear to each other? Is there any significance in the order of their presentation ?

Without appearing to be dogmatic, let us, in the simplest way, applying the theme of each, see in how far it suggests such an order.

**Matthew** occupies a special place in relation to the Old Testament, differing from either of the other Synoptists, which in itself suggests its having the first place in the order here. This connection with the Old Testament prophecies, as indicated in the numerous quotations from them and the declaration of the fulfilment of these predictions, shows this. Further, the genealogy from Abraham and David is after the manner of the Old Testament, and suggests this continuity.

In addition to this, the theme of Matthew, presenting Christ as King and the announcement of the kingdom of heaven in its constitution, works and fruit, indicates that priority.

In **Mark** we see our Lord as the Prophet of God and Servant of man's need. Divested, as the narrative is, of an introduction such as we have in either of the other Synoptists, or indeed in John, the prominence of service is manifested. Its similarity to the Gospel of Matthew associates it in the mind directly with that Gospel. We naturally think of it as a parallel narrative, and its theme bears out this thought. Thus, all points to Mark as keeping the second place in the Synoptists. If Matthew shows us the King, Mark gives us the Prophet, the Servant of God and of man; and "two," as we have seen, signifies testimony and service.

**Luke.** No other place is left for the Gospel of Luke except the third; but we are not compelled by this alone. The theme and contents of the book confirm this numerical place. In the presentation of Christ as the Son of Man, the bringer of the gospel and the manifester of grace to sinners, we have a wideness and fulness going beyond the other two Synoptists. The Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is also, we think, more prominent here than in Matthew or Mark. His place in the ineffable mystery of the incarnation, the enduement of John the Baptist, the

prominence given to the Spirit in connection with prayer (Luke 11) and the Promise of the Father spoken of after the resurrection, stamp this Gospel with the character of the third person of the Trinity, outpouring divine fulness of grace into the lips of our Lord, poured upon sinners, and poured back upon Himself in worship as by the woman in the 7th of Luke. We conclude, therefore, that the order in which we find the three Synoptists in our Bibles is their true one. Summarizing, we would give thus:

Matthew-Christ as King, with all authority, presenting His kingdom, whether in principle, or to find it rejected, or to proclaim it in its mystery form, or to declare its final consummation.

Mark-Christ as God's Prophet, bearing witness to His will, and in tireless activity serving Him in ministering to the need of man.

Luke-Christ the Son of Man, in the power of the Holy Spirit, manifesting and ministering God's grace.

We add to this brief summary the aspect of our Lord's death, which we find in each of the Synoptists. This will occupy us in greater detail later on, as we have already devoted considerable space to the comparison of the narrative of that death in each of the Evangelists.

In Matthew, appropriately to his theme as the governmental Gospel, we see our Lord's atoning

death as a governmental satisfaction for sin. This is what is presented in the trespass-offering.

In Mark, the Prophet who denounces sin, and the Servant who ministers to the sinner, is justified in this apparently contradictory attitude by the amazing fact that His death was the sin-offering, which was the most absolute prophetic declaration of man's guilt and the most perfect ministry to the need which that guilt manifested.

Luke, with its gracious unfolding of the heart of God in the gospel and the calling of sinners into His presence and making them at home there, fittingly gives us the peace-offering aspect of the atoning death of our Lord, in which God and man unite to enjoy the fulness of that which divine grace has accomplished in His sacrifice.

### The Gospel of John

From the fact that it stands alone, the Gospel of John need not long detain us in this brief characterization. As we have before said, it being so unique, to point out its characteristics would almost necessitate an examination of the entire Gospel. Indeed, we have already sought to justify its place as second with reference to the Synoptists.

In itself, as to unity, it emphasizes the number "one"-the Godhead of our Lord, His suprem-

acy, the paramount authority of the will of God. In relation to the Synoptists, it speaks of the nearness in which our Lord has come to us and the salvation which He has made possible—the fellowship into which He has brought us. These all stand out in bold relief on every page of our Evangelist.

In the third chapter the sovereignty of God in new birth (number “one”) is linked with the Cross by which everlasting life is given to the believer (number “two”).

In chapter 4 the sovereignty of grace which *seeks* the sinner is no more manifest than the communication of the water of life given to the thirsty soul.

As we shall find when we come to analyze the Gospel, the bulk of the entire book is in its second division, the eternal life as communicated to the believer.

Summing up these thoughts, we have, as characterizing this Gospel, Christ the Son of God communicating life and salvation.

#### Their Order and United Testimony

\* The foregoing brief examination will suffice to point out the relation which the four Gospels

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\* The remainder of this chapter will also be found in “How to Study the Bible” p. 117, et al.

bear to each other-a significant relation. The recognition of this, and further study here suggested, will serve to confirm our knowledge of the contents of each individual Gospel and its ordered place in relation to the others. The rays of light which beam from each, all blend together to give us God's thought of Him who is "the image of the invisible God," who is Light, and who is Love.

Before leaving this part of our subject, it may not be out of place to offer a few practical suggestions as to the method of study to be adopted in seeking a fuller knowledge of the contents and mutual order of the four Evangelists. Of course, there are numbers of books which give these, but it will be found that what the student gathers for himself is often of greater and more lasting profit than the most admirably predigested analysis.

Our suggestion is very simple. In an ordinary blank-book, let four columns be drawn on the opened page, two columns to a page, headed with the names of the four Gospels. In the column under "Matthew" enter each section of his narrative, making these so minute that they cover only one topic. Thus, the temptation would be divided into three parts. For convenience, consecutive numbers could be given to these sections, which would reach perhaps to more than a hundred in the entire Gospel. Each

section would have its number, title, and chapter. Thus:

1. Title of book, chap. 1:1.
2. Genealogy from Abraham to Joseph (3 parts, chap. 1: 2-17).
3. Testimony to Joseph, vers. x8-25.
4. Visit of wise men, chap. 2: 1-12.
5. The flight into Egypt, vers. 13-15.
6. The slaughter of the babes at Bethlehem, vers. 16-18.
7. The return from Egypt to Nazareth, vers. 19-23.

Thus, let the entire Gospel be dissected with no special reference to the relation of each of the parts to the other, nor to their relative prominence, care only being taken, as we have said, to make the divisions sufficiently small for comparison with the other Evangelists.

Next, in the column of " Mark " let the same course be pursued, each entry numbered with no reference to Matthew. In like manner the columns of Luke and John are to be filled. There will thus be before the eye, in four parallel columns, the contents of each of the four Gospels dissected and catalogued in consecutive order. This will form a basis for comparison.

Let the entry in each Gospel be compared with those in the others, and in red ink let their corresponding numbers be put over thus :

We take *The Preaching of John* (No. 8 in Matthew) as an illustration.

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1.	1.	1.	1.
	(In red) Mt. (8); Lk. (18); Jno. (2); (4); (6).		
2.	2. The Preaching of John	2.	2.
3, etc.	3, etc.	3, etc.	3, etc.
(In red) Mt. (2); Lk. (1a); Jno. (2); (4); (6).		(In red) Mt. (8); Mk. (2); Jno. (2); (4); (6).	(In red) Mt. (8); Mk. (2); Lk. (18).
8. The Preaching of John		13. The Preaching of John	4. The Preaching of John

When this work is completed the student will have the material before him, not only for the study of each Gospel separately, but for purposes of comparison with the others, in which at a glance he can tell what is peculiar to each and what is common to two or more Evangelists. This is probably as far as most students will care to go. If any desire to construct a "harmony," the above catalogue of subjects will be of help in arranging the parallel passages in their order.

Let another book be prepared with four columns similar to the first, and let "Matthew" be entered in the first column exactly as it was before, only with *an* interval of, say, three lines



between each entry. Next, let the parallel passages in Mark be entered directly opposite those in Matthew, using the spaces left vacant for the insertion of those portions peculiar to the second Evangelist.

In like manner, Luke and John are to be entered. Let the original numbers of the sections of each Gospel be also inserted. The result will be that at a glance we will be able to see the contents of the four Gospels arranged with reference to the order given in Matthew. This will form a basis for comparison, and much careful study will be required to see whether that order is always to be followed. As a matter of fact, the Gospel of John furnishes certain great prominent occurrences, the interval between which must be filled in more or less definitely with the events recorded in the other Gospels.

As has been said elsewhere, a certain order of subjects, which we have called "a moral order," is observable in Luke. Only the most patient and careful study will put each narrative in its chronological place. While Matthew is as consecutive as any in the form of his narrative, exceptions will be noted.

In concluding our subject, we would reiterate our conviction that God has intended special instruction in the four narratives, and that our efforts at "harmonizing" the four must not obscure what is manifestly His purpose.

## CHAPTER VI

### Analysis of Each Gospel

**I**N taking up the analysis of each Evangelist, we are reminded that already, in our frequent surveys in previous chapters, we have gone over a large part of the ground ordinarily covered in an analytical outline. There must necessarily be a certain amount of repetition, which is not out of place, for truths so precious will admit of restatement, and we cannot grow too familiar with the contents of each of the Gospels. On the other hand, the minuteness of examination, especially in Chapter III, will relieve us from going into similar details here. There, we discussed the object of each Gospel as seen:

First, in its presentation of the life of Christ, in each of the Evangelists; second, the nature of His death ; and third, His resurrection. We therefore now confine ourselves to giving an outline of the main divisions and subdivisions of each book. We will first state the general theme and follow this with the analysis.\*

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\* The divisions and sub-divisions of the four Gospels given in this chapter are taken almost entirely from the notes on each Gospel in the Numerical Bible. The same remark would apply to the discussion of the numerical structure and order of the books in Chapters IV and V.

The writer has been privileged to know intimately the be-

## MATTHEW

**General Theme**—Christ as King, foretold, anointed, announcing His kingdom, showing its works, refused by His subjects, declaring the form of His kingdom during His absence as committed to the hands of men, until He displays it in its final glory at His second coming: this glory resting upon His meeting every requirement of divine justice as to the sin and trespass of His subjects.

**Division I.** Chaps. 1 and 2. The genealogy and birth of the King.

**Division II.** Chaps. 3-7. The King announced, anointed, and declaring His Constitution.

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loved author of this most helpful work and to enter somewhat at least into his thoughts regarding the numerical structure of Scripture. He feels, therefore, perfectly free to use the results of the prayerful labor of another, thankfully acknowledging his indebtedness. If these divisions are, as is manifestly the case, the true ones, there could be no alteration or improvement upon them.

In noting the various divisions, the present writer has given other designations than those in the Numerical Bible. It is trusted that these will furnish a wider basis for examination, and be confirmatory of the correctness of the divisions.

Division V. Chaps. 20: 29 to 23. The triumphal entry of the King seen as rejected by the leaders and He rejecting them.

Division VI. Chaps. 24, 25. The coming of the King in final glory announced in reference to Israel, the Church and the world.

Division VII. Chaps. 26 to 28. The King crowned with thorns, and by His death and resurrection making good all His purposes of blessing for His kingdom and the world.

These are the main divisions which we will now take up in order and give a brief summary of the contents of each, with the sub-divisions and sections into which they group themselves.

Division I. (Chaps. 1 & 2.)    *The genealogy and birth of the King.*

We have in this first division, the introductory history of our Lord as King. It is divided into two main sub-divisions, chaps. 1 and 2. The general theme is the King as promised, and as come, with the prophecies fulfilled in connection with His birth.

*Subdivision I. Chap. 1.* The King's descent, and divine predictions.

Our Lord is identified as the King foretold in the promises to Abraham and to David, together with the special prophecies which foretold His birth. The chapter divides into two parts:

## Vers. 1-17. The Genealogy.

Our Lord is described as the Son of David and the Son of Abraham. The order is suggestive as showing the preeminence of the Davidic thought, the Kingship, with the wider relationship suggested in His descent from Abraham, the father of all them that believe, and the one to whom the promise was given: "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The genealogy is traced downward, indicating that close connection which we have already noticed with the Old Testament, and the unchanging purpose of God.

The genealogy is divided into three parts, each having a characteristic feature peculiar to itself. From Abraham to David, *promise* is the prominent thought. From David, through Solomon, to the captivity, is a record of *decline*; and from the captivity to the birth of our Lord is a period of *darkness*, ending, however, as a resurrection in the birth of our Lord.

The genealogy suggests many points for special study. Omissions are significant. The fourteen generations of each of the divisions is remarked by the Evangelist, indicating, in its factors 2x7, the witness to the complete insufficiency of man to be the promised King.

The presence of the names of four women in this genealogy has been commented upon as manifesting the grace of our Lord in associating

Himself with the special needs of man. The first, Tamar, brings out the sin of man; the second, Rahab, the *faith* that lays hold upon the grace of God; the third, Ruth, that grace manifested in *setting aside the claims of the law*; and the fourth, the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba) the grace which, through chastisement, can even bring *blessing out of failure* in God's people.

Vers. 18-25 : The birth of Jesus—"Immanuel."

How jealously God has cared for the minutest particulars connected with the advent of His beloved Son into the world !

*Subdivision II. Chap. 2.* The visit of the wise men, and related events.

Vers. 1-12. We have a foreshadow here of the gathering in of the Gentiles. The light of heaven, the star in the East, leads them to the Babe at Bethlehem.

Vers. 13-18: The flight into Egypt. Here, two other prophecies are fulfilled: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." The slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem fulfils a prophecy from Jeremiah.

Vers. 19-23: The return to Nazareth. Our Lord is here seen as the shoot of Jesse, a root out of a dry ground, as the word "Nazareth" suggests. Thus, in this first division, we have foreshadowed the rejection of Christ and His glory reaching out to the nations at large.

**Division II.** (Chaps. 3—7.) *The King announced, anointed, and declaring His Constitution.*

In this division, we have the herald, John the Baptist, calling to repentance and preparing the way for the King, who on His appearing is baptized and anointed with the Holy Spirit for His royal work; then subjected to the moral assaults of His enemy. Coming forth unscathed, He proclaims the great moral principles of His kingdom which He had already illustrated in His own person. We give the sub-divisions of this important portion:

*Subdivision I. Chaps. 3-4: II. The King anointed.*

Sec. 1. Vers. 1-6: The forerunner.

Sec. 2. Vers. 7-12: Judgment proclaimed.

Sec. 3. Vers. 13-17 : The King baptized and anointed.

Sec. 4. Ch. 4: 1-11: The temptation.

*Subdivision II. Chap. 4 : 12-25. The testimony of the King Himself.*

This brief sub-division gives us a summary of our Lord's earlier ministry in Galilee.

Sec. 1. Vers. 12-16: The light in the land of Zabulon and Nephthalim.

Sec. 2. Vers. 17-22 : The call of the disciples.

Sec. 3. Vers. 23-25: Preaching and working miracles.

*Subdivision III. Chaps. 5-7. The sermon on the mount-the moral character of the Kingdom.*

A volume might be written upon this one discourse. Only in the briefest way we indicate its main features. The general theme is evident. His kingdom is not outward, but a moral one in which a mere legal righteousness will not avail, and where mercy as well as truth are indispensable.

*Sec. 1, Ch. 5: 1-16:* The Beatitudes-true members of the Kingdom, the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

*Sec. 2. Vers. 17-48:* The law, the old covenant, compared with the spiritual principles of the Kingdom.

*Sec. 3. Ch. 6: 1-18:* True righteousness in alms, prayer and fasting.

*Sec. 4. Vers. 19-34:* Without carefulness in a world of care.

*Sec. 5. Ch. 7 : 1-14:* Consistency and dependence.

*Sec. 6. Vers. 15-20:* The tree known by its fruits.

*Sec. 7. Vers. 21-29:* The conclusion and application.

Division III. (Chaps. 8-12.) *The display of the Kingdom in its sufficiency for man and man's unfitness for the Kingdom.*

The general character of this third division is suggested by its title. In it, we have the works of the King manifesting His power and goodness, In these works He associates with Himself His disciples whom He sends forth with



His charge. An opposition is developed, out of which He calls a remnant, and the separation between this remnant of faith and the mass of the ungodly nation reaches a climax in which the leaders are rejected.

The subdivisions follow:

*Subdivision I. Chaps. 8-9: 26.* The activities of the King.

We have here grouped together a number of characteristic miracles manifesting the varied condition of the people and the suited grace to meet their need. These works may not all have taken place in immediate, consecutive order. Together, however, they display the power of the King and His tender grace. It is suggestive that the lofty moral principles were declared from the summit of the mount, while the actual condition of man is set forth (in the leper) at the foot. What we ought to be and what we are, are two different things. Grace meets us where and *as we are*, and brings us into conformity with the purpose of God.

Sec. I. Ch. 8:1-17: Abundant works.

There is, no doubt, a moral order in the three acts of healing we have here, together with a summary at the close. The leprosy (1-4) suggests the defilement of sin cleansed; the healing of the palsy (5-13), the helplessness induced by sin removed-mercy for the Gentiles; the fever of Peter's wife's mother (14, 15), recovering

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These are the main divisions which we will now take up in order and give a brief summary of the contents of each, with the sub-divisions and sections into which they group themselves.

Division I. (Chaps. 1 & 2.) *The genealogy and birth of the King.*

We have in this first division, the introductory history of our Lord as King. It is divided into two main sub-divisions, chaps. 1 and 2. The general theme is the King as promised, and as come, with the prophecies fulfilled in connection with His birth.

*Subdivision I. Chap. 1.* The King's descent, and divine predictions.

Our Lord is identified as the King foretold in the promises to Abraham and to David, together with the special prophecies which foretold His birth. The chapter divides into two parts:

## Vers. 1-17. The Genealogy.

Our Lord is described as the Son of David and the Son of Abraham. The order is suggestive as showing the preeminence of the Davidic thought, the Kingship, with the wider relationship suggested in His descent from Abraham, the father of all them that believe, and the one to whom the promise was given: "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The genealogy is traced downward, indicating that close connection which we have already noticed with the Old Testament, and the unchanging purpose of God.

The genealogy is divided into three parts, each having a characteristic feature peculiar to itself. From Abraham to David, *promise* is the prominent thought. From David, through Solomon, to the captivity, is a record of *decline*; and from the captivity to the birth of our Lord is a period of *darkness*, ending, however, as a resurrection in the birth of our Lord.

The genealogy suggests many points for special study. Omissions are significant. The fourteen generations of each of the divisions is remarked by the Evangelist, indicating, in its factors 2x7, the witness to the complete insufficiency of man to be the promised King.

The presence of the names of four women in this genealogy has been commented upon as manifesting the grace of our Lord in associating

Himself with the special needs of man. The first, Tamar, brings out the sin of man; the second, Rahab, the *faith* that lays hold upon the grace of God; the third, Ruth, that grace manifested in *setting aside the claims of the law*; and the fourth, the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba) the grace which, through chastisement, can even bring *blessing out of failure* in God's people.

Vers. 18-25 : The birth of Jesus—"Immanuel."

How jealously God has cared for the minutest particulars connected with the advent of His beloved Son into the world !

*Subdivision II. Chap. 2.* The visit of the wise men, and related events.

Vers. 1-12. We have a foreshadow here of the gathering in of the Gentiles. The light of heaven, the star in the East, leads them to the Babe at Bethlehem.

Vers. 13-18: The flight into Egypt. Here, two other prophecies are fulfilled: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." The slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem fulfils a prophecy from Jeremiah.

Vers. 19-23: The return to Nazareth. Our Lord is here seen as the shoot of Jesse, a root out of a dry ground, as the word "Nazareth" suggests. Thus, in this first division, we have foreshadowed the rejection of Christ and His glory reaching out to the nations at large.

**Division II.** (Chaps. 3—7.) *The King announced, anointed, and declaring His Constitution.*

In this division, we have the herald, John the Baptist, calling to repentance and preparing the way for the King, who on His appearing is baptized and anointed with the Holy Spirit for His royal work; then subjected to the moral assaults of His enemy. Coming forth unscathed, He proclaims the great moral principles of His kingdom which He had already illustrated in His own person. We give the sub-divisions of this important portion:

*Subdivision I. Chaps. 3-4: II. The King anointed.*

Sec. 1. Vers. 1-6: The forerunner.

Sec. 2. Vers. 7-12: Judgment proclaimed.

Sec. 3. Vers. 13-17 : The King baptized and anointed.

Sec. 4. Ch. 4: 1-11: The temptation.

*Subdivision II. Chap. 4 : 12-25. The testimony of the King Himself.*

This brief sub-division gives us a summary of our Lord's earlier ministry in Galilee.

Sec. 1. Vers. 12-16: The light in the land of Zabulon and Nephthalim.

Sec. 2. Vers. 17-22 : The call of the disciples.

Sec. 3. Vers. 23-25: Preaching and working miracles.

*Subdivision III. Chaps. 5-7. The sermon on the mount-the moral character of the Kingdom.*

A volume might be written upon this one discourse. Only in the briefest way we indicate its main features. The general theme is evident. His kingdom is not outward, but a moral one in which a mere legal righteousness will not avail, and where mercy as well as truth are indispensable.

*Sec. 1, Ch. 5: 1-16:* The Beatitudes-true members of the Kingdom, the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

*Sec. 2. Vers. 17-48:* The law, the old covenant, compared with the spiritual principles of the Kingdom.

*Sec. 3. Ch. 6: 1-18:* True righteousness in alms, prayer and fasting.

*Sec. 4. Vers. 19-34:* Without carefulness in a world of care.

*Sec. 5. Ch. 7 : 1-14:* Consistency and dependence.

*Sec. 6. Vers. 15-20:* The tree known by its fruits.

*Sec. 7. Vers. 21-29:* The conclusion and application.

Division III. (Chaps. 8-12.) *The display of the Kingdom in its sufficiency for man and man's unfitness for the Kingdom.*

The general character of this third division is suggested by its title. In it, we have the works of the King manifesting His power and goodness, In these works He associates with Himself His disciples whom He sends forth with



His charge. An opposition is developed, out of which He calls a remnant, and the separation between this remnant of faith and the mass of the ungodly nation reaches a climax in which the leaders are rejected.

The subdivisions follow:

*Subdivision I. Chaps. 8-9: 26.* The activities of the King.

We have here grouped together a number of characteristic miracles manifesting the varied condition of the people and the suited grace to meet their need. These works may not all have taken place in immediate, consecutive order. Together, however, they display the power of the King and His tender grace. It is suggestive that the lofty moral principles were declared from the summit of the mount, while the actual condition of man is set forth (in the leper) at the foot. What we ought to be and what we are, are two different things. Grace meets us where and *as we are*, and brings us into conformity with the purpose of God.

Sec. I. Ch. 8:1-17: Abundant works.

There is, no doubt, a moral order in the three acts of healing we have here, together with a summary at the close. The leprosy (1-4) suggests the defilement of sin cleansed; the healing of the palsy (5-13), the helplessness induced by sin removed-mercy for the Gentiles; the fever of Peter's wife's mother (14, 15), recovering

mercy for Israel; grace for every form of need (16, 17).

*Sec. 2.* Ch. 8:18—9:8: His path and the power to walk in it.

Our Lord here is seen departing to the other side of the lake, where He works a deliverance from the power of Satan, and returning again to His own city sets a captive free. The portions here are all suggestive: the path a testing one (18-22), and subject to storms (23-27); the enemy is powerless in His presence (28); the palsy removed (9:1-8) is a sign of the power connected with His forgiveness.

*Sec. 3.* Ch. 9:9-13: The call of publicans and and quickening of the dead.

The call of Matthew, himself a publican (9-13), signalizes the gathering of many others like himself, objects of scorn to the Pharisees, together at our Lord's table. These (14-17) are the children of the Bridechamber who have the new wine of divine grace in the new bottles which that grace has prepared. For the proper enjoyment of this, there must be a divine work of quickening and cleansing, typified in the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead and the healing of the woman with an issue (18-26).

*Subdivision ZZ. Chaps. 9:27—10.* The King's messengers sent forth and charged.

In this subdivision our Lord is seen still exercising His kingly prerogative of healing and

deliverance, associating His twelve disciples with Himself in this blessed work. The main part of the chapter is devoted to the solemn prophetic charge which reaches far beyond the ministry upon which they there entered, and applies to the closing period just before the Tribulation when the Lord's messengers shall again go forth.

*Sec. 1. Ch. g: 27-34: The Son of David.*

Two works here proclaim Him the true Messiah, the Son of David and King of Israel: the opening of the blind eyes (27-31) and the casting out of the dumb demon (32-34); both are symbolic of that work of grace which was effected in the remnant while our Lord was here and will be continued in the latter days. The enmity of the unbelieving mass is brought to a focus by this display of divine power, and they deliberately accuse Him of casting out demons in the power of Satan.

*Sec. 2. Ch. g: 35-10: His messengers.*

Our Lord's compassion goes out toward the multitude and He sends forth His disciples, empowering them to work miracles of healing and to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the house of Israel (9: 35-10: 15). This ministry of grace will meet with abundant opposition (16-23). He warns them of this and charges them that neither fear nor favor should cause them to swerve from the path of obedience to God and walking in His fear (24-33). The disciple must expect

not peace but a sword, and must be prepared to sacrifice the dearest earthly relationship where it conflicts with faithfulness to Himself (34-38). The end is ever to be kept in view, with its sure reward (39-42).

Subdivision *III. Chap. II.* The remnant manifested and called forth.

The effect of the proclamation of the truth and the manifestation of the King in His works of power is to separate from the unbelieving mass of the people a remnant which, feeble as its faith is, turns to the Lord and manifests itself among the babes to whom God makes His grace known.

Ser. I. Vers. 1-15: John's question and our Lord's testimony.

Shut up in prison, John seems to have suffered a temporary eclipse of faith. It is beautiful to see how loyal he is to the Lord, even under the darkness of doubt. If there are doubts, the One about whom He has questions is the only One who can solve them. Well is it for us when we bring our very doubts to the Lord Jesus. The Lord replies to this question of John (1-6) by recounting the works which He had wrought, and with the delicate reproof, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me," to recall John to the strength of faith. If our Lord would thus rebuke His servant in secret, He publicly bears witness to him (7-15) as the greatest of those

born of women. Significantly, as being not in immediate association with our Lord, he is not spoken of as in the Kingdom which was about to be set up. He was the greatest of the prophets, indeed the Elijah that was to come, but a place of greater privilege was that belonging to the Lord's disciples.

*Sec. 1. Vers. 16-24: The unbelief of the nation.*

Alas, the mass of the people had no apprehension of the grace which had been brought to their very doors. Like children playing in the market, neither the preaching of repentance nor the works of grace by our Lord could move their cold hearts. They would neither mourn nor dance, The end of such unbelief must be judgment; it shall be more tolerable for the godless cities of the plain, and for Tyre and Sidon with their abominable idolatries, than for highly favored Israel which rejects the Light that had shone unto it.

*Sec. 3. Vers. 25-30: The "babes" provided for.*

How precious do the words which follow here exemplify the grace of our Lord? No one can know the Father save as revealed by the Son, even as the Son also is known only to the Father; but wherever there are "babes" (those who have no high thoughts of themselves and are willing to receive the revelation) it is given to them. How then is one seen to be a babe? All who are weary and heavy laden, who feel the burden

of their sins, may be such and are welcome to come and find rest.

Subdivision *IV. Chap. 12.* The rejected King rejecting His apostate subjects.

The opposition culminates in this chapter. Our Lord had patiently borne with unbelief so long as it indicated only blindness or indifference, but when it assumes the satanic form of open-eyed hatred of Himself and His Father, He can but pronounce the doom upon those who deliberately put themselves under the power of Satan. This is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, against which He solemnly warns the guilty leaders.

*Sec. 2 Vers. 1-13:* The Sabbath and the Lord of the Sabbath.

It is interesting and profitable to trace throughout the Gospels the effect upon the Jews of our Lord's attitude toward the Sabbath Day. In it He wrought miracles wherever there was need, and ever claimed that the entire spirit of the day was missed by those who would turn it into a matter of self-righteous formalism, instead of a delight and a day of liberty. The Sabbath has always been thus used by legalism. Even in the present dispensation, the so-called Christian Sabbath has been laden with legal prohibitions and ordinances.

There are two prominent facts to be noted: the first, which we have already dwelt upon, that the true nature of the Sabbath is little ap-

prehended; and the second, that even if the requirements as to this observance were kept in accord with the law, both letter and spirit, it was used by the people as though they had never broken that law. God gave Israel His Sabbath as separating them from all other nations. An observance of this holy day was a tacit acknowledgment of their subjection to the law of God in every particular and the intimation that they had kept that law perfectly. It was this which our Lord would press upon the people. They had no right to decorate themselves with a fancied obedience to the letter of the Sabbath. They were condemned by their sin, and what became them was an acknowledgment of that, rather than the going through of certain ceremonial observances.

The two occurrences are: The disciples plucking and eating the ears of corn on the Sabbath Day (vers. 2-8) ; and, The healing of the man with the withered hand in the synagogue (vers. 9-13).

The first is the prerogative of mercy, for God never fails to meet the need of His people. David thus ignored the priestly ordinance as to the showbread to meet the hunger of himself and his men, for it was a time of confusion, in which part of the law having been ignored the remainder of it must be in abeyance. Not only this, but the priests did work on the Sabbath Day in order to offer sacrifices. They were

blameless in this, although according to the legal reasoning of the Jews they would have been guilty of a profanation. The Lord reminds them that He who gives the law is greater than the temple whose ritual they were so punctilious in observing, and that mercy and not sacrifice is what God delights in. The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

The man with the withered hand was like Israel, powerless to do aught aright. Of what value was the external keeping of the Sabbath when there was no power for God ? Surely, if it is right to pull a fallen sheep out of the pit, it is better to heal a fallen man—by implication, the fallen people, had they only been ready for it.

*Sec. 2. Vers. 14-21:* The counsel to destroy Him.

The Lord fully understands the relentless hatred which His treatment of the Sabbath would stir in the hearts of the Pharisees, and knows He must withdraw Himself from them. A change is noted at this point in His miracles, which are now wrought more in secret, and those who are healed are warned to say nothing about it. The shadow of the cross was falling across His path, and yet He goes forward in illustration of that word of the prophet: " Behold My Servant; " He should not fail nor be discouraged until He had brought forth judgment unto victory.

*Sec. 3. Vers. 22-32 :* The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.



We have already seen how the Pharisees had once before charged Him with casting out demons in the power of Satan. This is repeated more deliberately, and calls forth the final and awful warning we have here. Evidently, the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not, as has been supposed by many sensitive believers whose consciences have been tortured by the thought, that one has committed some known sin. Alas, who has been exempt from this ? The true nature of this awful sin is that when the light was shining in full blaze before their very eyes, both in words of divine truth and wisdom and works of almighty grace, they should deliberately ascribe this energy of the Spirit in our Lord to the Devil himself. What is left for those who call light darkness, who openly and wilfully confound the Holy Ghost with Satan ? The true nature, therefore, of the sin is manifest. It is never committed by those who turn to or have any desire for our Lord; and wherever the vilest sinner, the most dreadful blasphemer, turns to the Lord Jesus Christ, he will find-not this awful sin which never has forgiveness between him and the Saviour-but our Lord's blessed word ever true: "*Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.*"

*Sec. 4.* Vers. 33-50: The test fully applied.

The remainder of the chapter, while easily falling into minuter divisions, develops our

Lord's separative judgment upon His rejecters. The tree is known by its fruit (33-37). The sign of Jonah was a call to them to repentance, and if they refuse to believe on Him of whom Jonah was a type, the very men of Nineveh and the Queen of the South will rise up in judgment to condemn them. The evil spirit which they were fostering in their hearts—a spirit that led them into such dreadful blasphemy—would later on take complete possession of them, as we know he will in the last terrible days of the apostasy (43-45). The unclean spirit of idolatry had left them, but later on would return in sevenfold power. Meanwhile, our Lord recognizes as His kindred not those bound by ties of nature, but of grace (46-50).

Division IV. (Chaps. 13—20: 28). *The Kingdom of an absent King entrusted to the hands of men.*

The separation forced upon our Lord at the close of the former division is accentuated throughout the present one. There is no longer, we may say, a tentative presentation of Himself for their acceptance, but rather the recognition of a refusal which was reaching on toward its awful climax in the cross, the shadow of which falls upon the lonely path the rejected King must take. This rejection, of course, was known to Him from the beginning, and indeed the very principles of His kingdom were given

in view of the persecution and rejection which His followers would suffer. Thus, glory and power do not characterize the Kingdom, but rather meekness and suffering. All this is brought out in our present division, the first part of which gives us in the form of parables, the future history of His kingdom during the time of His rejection, together with the characteristics of that rejection as experienced by our Lord and the promise of the establishment of the Church, a glimpse of the Kingdom in its glory, and the responsibilities connected with its administration upon earth. We add a few words upon each of the subdivisions of this great portion of our Evangelist.

*Subdivision I. Chap. 13: 1-52.* The prophetic outline of the Kingdom in mystery form.

These seven parables of the Kingdom give us, as their number would indicate, a complete view of the Kingdom of heaven during the time of our Lord's absence. It began with the very period of seed sowing by our Lord, reaching on through the entire present interval of grace to its consummation in judgment. with a glimpse at the glory beyond.

The seven are divided into two parts, the first four being spoken to the multitude and give the external history of the Kingdom in our Lord's absence, and the last three, spoken to His disciples alone, deal with the more final and vital

aspects of the Kingdom. We note these two parts :

1st. Vers. 1-35: The world-history of the Kingdom spoken to the multitude.

The first of the four parables, that of the sower, divides itself into four parts, suggesting the earth-aspect of the effects of the sowing of the word of truth (1-23). It is only where the seed is received in good ground, that it bears abiding fruit. All the rest perishes by Satanic influence, the unbroken hardness of the flesh, or the course of the world.

The second parable, of the tares (24-30), is the history of Satan's counterfeit introduced into the Kingdom, and speaks more particularly of those forms of apostasy and the persons identified with them which mark the state of things at the close. These first two parables are connected together, both in form and subject, and give us, as has been said, rather the individual aspect of membership in the Kingdom.

The third parable, of the mustard seed (31, 32), shows the growth of the Kingdom from small beginnings to a great world power, not for righteousness, but affording shelter for various forms of evil.

The fourth parable, of the leaven (33), goes along with this, and shows the inward working of the leaven of false doctrine permeating and corrupting the entire mass of profession. The

principles heading up in these are already at work, and their full manifestation will be when the true people of God are removed and the corrupt professing Church, together with apostate Israel, is left alone, waiting for judgment.

This closes the first section of the parables of the Kingdom (34, 35).

2nd. Vers. 36-52: The end as seen in judgment and in glory.

The explanation of the parable of the tares comes in here (36-43). It looks forward to the time when the Lord will gather out of His Kingdom all things which offend and them that do iniquity, when that Kingdom shall be as the "barn" in which the precious grain is safely housed, the righteous then shining forth as the sun. The parable is cast in Jewish form, and the rapture of the heavenly saints does not seem to be included; they are caught up, not by the angels, but by the Lord Himself. There is no difficulty when we remember that the last form in which the Kingdom appears gives character to the entire period covered by the sowing of the tares. They are in both the present interval of the Church's history and the succeeding one of God's resumption of His ways with His earthly people.

The next parable, of the treasure hid in the field (44), points to the ground of our Lord's future dealing in blessing with Israel ; the field

(the world) is purchased for the sake of the treasure in it (Israel).

In the parable of the pearl (45,46), we have the purchase of the Church to be the display of our Lord's glory in the heavenlies, as we see in Revelation. We need hardly say that the merchantman is a type of our Lord, and the price paid in both parables, was "all that He had"—His own life, which He gave to purchase both His earthly and heavenly people. What a perversion of the truth is the other thought that the sinner gives up what he never had, in order to purchase Christ!

The closing parable, of the net cast into the sea (47-52), speaks of the final discriminative gathering from the nations, where that which is of God is safely cared for, while the rest shares in that judgment which is ever declared to mark the close of the dispensation prior to the setting up of our Lord's millennial kingdom upon earth.\*

Subdivision *II. Chaps. 13 : 53—14*. The King in His rejection.

This part gives us various thoughts of our Lord's ministry after the crises which we have already noted at the close of the third division.

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\* This brief summary of this most important series of parables is all that we can give here. In the chapter on the parables they will be again mentioned, but for anything like an exhaustive examination, the reader must turn to some of the books spoken of in the latter part of our volume.

The remainder of His Galilean ministry and earthly course is spent under the shadow of an impending outbreak. Already in heart rejected by the leaders of the people, He will go on ministering in grace so far as unbelief will not refuse Him. Therefore we find here striking manifestations of that grace.

*Sec. I.* Chs. 13: 53—14: 12: Refused at Nazareth and sharing in the rejection of John.

In Nazareth itself (53-58), even as in Judah, our Lord as the Son of David is refused. In the synagogue they stumble at the very grace in which He had taken His place among them as "the carpenter's son." The true Builder's Son He was, indeed—"He that built all things is God: " the Son of the great Architect, and Himself the Builder of His Church upon the Rock. Reading beneath the outward reproach implied here, we have a glimpse of the glory of Him whose very humiliation is the occasion for His manifesting that glory! Faith thus takes up the taunt of the world and accepts it as the statement of the most glorious fact. He is indeed the Carpenter's Son.

The end of John the Baptist's faithful ministry (ch. 14: 1-12) accords with that of all faithful witnesses in an ungodly world. He gets the prophet's reward at the hands of sinful men—hatred and death. Herod stands for the apostate nation. Not really an Israelite, but with

the prerogative of a ruler of Israel; his unholy alliance which he will not break, rebuked by the faithful prophet, became the occasion for the execution of God's faithful servant. He thus reminds us of the character of the ungodly nation in the last days, led on by Antichrist, when Christ's witnesses will be put to death.

Sec. 2. Vers. 13-21: The feeding of the five thousand.

Obliged to seek retirement in the face of such hatred, our Lord will let nothing check His ministering to the need of His people.

Sec. 3. Vers. 22-33: Walking upon the water.

In this miracle our Lord manifests Himself as superior to all circumstances, walking calmly through them all. Faith covets to follow Him, and Peter, suggesting the Church going forth unto Him, would fain walk as He walked, independent of the "boat" of Judaism. It gives us a glimpse of Peter's entire character, the desire to do, coupled with failure in accomplishment, and our Lord's succoring grace.

Sec. 4. Vers. 34-36: Mercy to the nations.

The dispensational picture is completed when the boat reaches the land, and healing goes forth to all who have need. Thus will it be when our Lord appears as the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings.

Subdivision *III. Chaps. 15—16: 12.* Formalism and faith contrasted.



This portion manifests the essential wickedness of the natural heart, no matter how religious it may be. Indeed its very punctiliousness in the matter of religious observances but displays its essential enmity to God. But in contrast to this, we have the heart of God meeting need wherever faith counts upon Him.

Sec. 1. Ch. 15 : 1-20: Traditionalism and defilement.

How mean are all the petty ways of selfish religiousness. Even human love is stifled by it, and the very commandment of God trampled beneath the feet of those who pretend to eschew defilement. Alas, the heart of man, until renewed, has nothing in it but that which can defile.

Sec. 2. Vers. 21-28: Crumbs for the dogs.

The lovely contrast in the case of the Syro-phenician woman is familiar. Wherever there is need which does not assume a place which is not its own (a *Gentile* could not appeal to the Son of David) there is blessing to the extent of the need.

Sec. 3. Vers. 29-38: The feeding of the four thousand.

There is a largeness of blessing here, not only in feeding the multitude, but healing the lame, blind, dumb, maimed and all who are cast at His feet. The multitude glorified the God of Israel. Alas, they have not faith to stand against their

leaders and identify themselves with Him who was thus glorifying God.

Sec. 4. Chs. 15:39—16:4: The signs of the times,

These leaders pretend to desire a sign, but fail to notice that which witnesses of the coming judgment, the red and lowering sky caused by the dark cloud of unbelief which obscured the shining of the Sun of righteousness.

Sec. 5. Vers. 5-12 : Beware of leaven.

The Lord takes occasion to warn His disciples (slow indeed they are to apprehend His meaning) against the contaminating influence of the religious leaders. Leaven, as we have already had occasion to see, is a figure of an energy of evil working to corrupt. This will be found the consistent meaning of leaven throughout Scripture. Here it refers to doctrine, and in Galatians 5:9 also, where legal principles are spoken of as leaven, a little of which will mar and corrupt all the doctrine with which it is associated. The same expression in 1 Cor. 5:6 refers to the allowance of *moral* evil. Indifference to truth and sin will corrupt a whole company or fellowship of the people of God. In the light of scriptures like these, as well as the constant use of the term in the Old Testament, how could we think of leaven as a good influence? Not only is the simile unscriptural, but the doctrine which is built upon it is the very reverse of true. So far

from good gradually permeating and changing evil, Scripture declares "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. "

*Subdivision IV. Chaps. 16: 13—17: 21.* The revelation of Christ for faith, in the heart and to the eye.

The scenes which follow are outside of or on the limits of the land, suggestive of the rejection which we have seen is characteristic of this whole period. Here, where His earthly people are turning their backs upon Him, faith shines out most brightly. His true Person is apprehended and therefore God can reveal the glories which shall attend His final manifestation.

Sec. I. Vers. 16: 13—19: The foundation upon which the Church is built.

Our Lord craves an answer from His own as to who He is. The world may give Him a high place as John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias or one of the prophets, but this will not do for faith. Peter's noble confession, speaking for us all: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" is what God teaches concerning His Son, and alone can satisfy His heart. Here we have the living Rock upon which His Church is built; not a stone, Peter, as Rome would vainly claim; nor Peter's confession of the great truth, but rather Him who Himself is the Truth, the Rock of Ages. Against Him no assault of the enemy

can prevail; death itself bars its gates in vain against His triumphant resurrection power, a power not only for Himself, but for His Church. We have here an evident prophetic reference to that which embodies the work of God in this day of our Lord's absence. It is the Church which is Christ's body formed by the Holy Spirit and composed of every believer in the present period of grace, from Pentecost to the coming of our Lord. This building of the Church was yet future. It did not begin until after our Lord was glorified, a type of which we have in the transfiguration.

Sec. 2. Vers. 20-28: The cross.

Peter little realized the full meaning of his confession and the solemn necessities connected with it, or he would never have rebuked our Lord for predicting His rejection and death. The way to the glory for Him, if He would not be alone, must be by the cross, and those who share in that glory must know something of the same path of rejection.

Sec. 3. Ch. 17 : 1-8: The transfiguration.

Here, we have an anticipation of the glory of which we have already spoken; Moses and Elias, the Law and the Prophets, bearing witness to the glory of the Son of God. They may also suggest the two classes of saints who shall be associated with Him in heavenly glory: Moses, those asleep in Jesus; and Elias, the translated

ones. But Christ alone must fill the vision. **The** glory which shines upon His associates is His glory. This, God declares in, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

*Sec. 4.* Vers. 9-13: Another prediction of His cross.

The Scribes ignored the sufferings of Christ and therefore could not understand the glory that should follow. Elias had already come, but was rejected and so also must Christ suffer.

*Sec. 5.* Vers. 14-21: The healing of the lunatic.

We have here another dispensational glimpse of how, after His exaltation, when our Lord descends to His earthly people, He will cast out the demon of unbelief from them. The principle applies in all times.

*Subdivision V. Chaps. 17: 22-20: 28.* Governmental responsibilities.

This portion is confined largely to our Lord's intercourse with His disciples, rather than with those outside. Several features may be noted.

*Sec. 1.* Vers. 22-27: His rejection again foretold.

Although one of the children, and indeed the Son, our Lord in grace submits to pay tribute. How sad the thought, His own people considered Him a stranger!

*Sec. a.* Ch. 18: 1-14: The spirit of a little child.

All greatness is moral, and a true lowliness

lies at its foundation. He who was higher than the highest was meek and lowly in heart, The spirit of a little child marks all who bear His yoke and learn of Him.

Sec. 3. Vers. 15—20: Responsibilities in the assembly.

This spirit of lowliness is not to displace that faithfulness which will maintain the honor of the Lord. Faith and meekness can rebuke sin. This is illustrated in this portion, where the effort to win an erring brother is described. We may remark in passing, how opposite from the legal spirit in which some would apply this scripture are the directions here. The object is to *win*, not to condemn. Every means is exhausted, even to leaving the case in the hands of the assembly.

Sec. 4. Vers. 21-35 : True forgiveness.

How solemn is the connection here ! May we not ask ourselves if much that passes for zeal in discipline may not really be mingled with an unforgiving spirit ?

Sec. 5. Ch. 19:1-15: Holiness in natural relationships.

The Lord shows the sanctity of the marriage relationship, a subject which may well be pondered in this day of looseness. In connection with this, the invitation for the little children to be brought to Him has an added sweetness. Natural relationships are of God, and have His blessing.

Sec. 6. Chs. rg: 16-20: 16: The necessity for reality.

Mere nature, however, no matter how attractive, will not suffice in the things of God. This is brought out in the narrative of the rich man. Of what avail was all his keeping of the letter of the law when in his heart he had enthroned his wealth in the place which God alone must occupy. Our Lord warns, therefore, against this. Peter, after his manner, protests that they have given up all, following Him. Our Lord accepts this, but in the succeeding parable shows that much which goes for devotion, when tested, will have to take a low place. "The last shall be first, and the first last."

Sec. 7. Ch. 20: 17-28: True greatness in the Kingdom.

Again our Lord predicts His rejection, death and resurrection. In sharp contrast to His humiliation in love for us, the selfishness of His poor disciples asserts itself in the request of the mother of Zebedee's children for a place of special honor in His Kingdom. Our Lord promises them only His cup and baptism. The spirit and ways of the Kingdom are again set before them-the glory is for the lowly and will be given not for those who crave it themselves, but for whom it is prepared.

Division V. (Chaps. 20: 29-23.) *The triumphal entry of the King, seen also as rejected by the leaders, and rejecting them.*

We enter now upon the closing scenes of our Lord's life. The rejection which had overshadowed the previous division still is present, but the time for His retirement is past; He now presents Himself in the boldness of divine right and the meekness of perfect obedience. His enemies must come out more openly than they have yet done; they must either fully reject and crucify Him or own Him as their King. Which shall it be? Our Lord labors under no misapprehension. He fully recognizes the true nature of the opposition which is arrayed against Him and meets it in every form in which it appears. Throughout the whole scene there is an unmistakable dignity, but it is a dignity of meekness and truth; not of outward power.

*Subdivision I. Chaps. 20: 29—21: 22.* The King presented.

The opposition must come from the enemy—not from the Lord who still continues to scatter blessings wherever He goes.

Sec. 1. Vers. 29-34: Opening blind eyes.

Blind *need* can discern the Son of David where open-eyed self-sufficiency sees and despises Him.

Sec. 2. Ch. 21: 1-11: The entry of the King into Jerusalem.

The typical character of this entry is manifest.



Indeed, it is a fulfilment of the prophet's words. That both the ass and its colt should be mentioned is a striking illustration of the perfection of the inspired Word in contrast with a barren attempt at exactness. Our Lord seems to have ridden both animals, one after the other. The ass stands for Israel by nature. Its colt suggests the remnant, the new-born nation. It is this last which alone can truly bear its King into the holy city, but the nation is merged into this and thus the two are mentioned together. The time is coming when Israel according to the flesh shall be represented, not by the apostate and ungodly mass, but by a nation born in a day, new-born by the grace of God, who shall proclaim with delight: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna to the Son of David."

sec. 3. Vers. 12-17: The purging of the temple.

The Refiner and Purifier of silver is seen, the Lord who shall suddenly come to His temple. How this moment would have introduced the entire millennial blessing for Israel had there been a heart to receive Him who thus would purge His house. It could not be, man being what he is. Israel, as well as ourselves and the entire human family, could alone have redemption offered to them on the ground of the sacrificial death of our Lord, but this only accentuates the guilt of the chief priests who reject

Him in face of His manifest moral glory. Our Lord declares the babes and sucklings will declare His praise if the leaders will not, and the very stones proclaim the shame of those who know not the Son of David.

Sec. 4. Vers. 18-22: The figtree withered.

We have here another symbolic act. The fig-tree stands for the Jewish nation-a *figtree*, not a vine, because only a fragment of the nation, two tribes, was restored from Babylon. This failed to bear fruit, and the time was coming when, refusing the blessing, it must receive the curse. In spite of its bravery of profession in the abundance of leaves, the fruit, which in the figtree precedes the leaves, was utterly wanting. In this very judgment of nature, faith finds occasion to count upon God-it trusts Him who withers our nature's strength and thus removes the mountains which would oppose our true progress.

Subdivision II. *chap. 21: 23-46.* The King rejected.

The conflict of the leaders with our Lord goes on, ever manifesting their implacable hatred and showing our Lord's full knowledge of all that was coming.

Sec. 2. Vers. 23-27: His authority.

They profess to want to know by what authority our Lord is acting. In no arbitrary way, He asks them a question which must precede His

answer. Do they recognize John's baptism; have they bowed in repentance to God? If not, they are incapable of knowing by what authority He acts.

Sec. 2. Vers. 28-32: The two sons.

Our Lord will press further upon their conscience. They were like the son who promised to obey his father and did not, while the publicans and the despised ones who did not conceal their former disobedience, now in penitence are putting to shame the formalism of the Pharisees.

Sec. 3. Vers. 33-46: The Heir is slain.

In the parable of the vineyard and the husbandmen, our Lord shows that the leaders' opposition would only culminate when they had deliberately rejected and cast out and slain the true Heir. This is most solemn; while it shows the love which would in advance bring home their premeditated sin upon them, if even yet they might be brought to repentance and turn to Him.

Subdivision *III. Chap. 22:1-14*. The marriage of the King's Son.

This parable of the Kingdom shows how the purposes of God are to be fulfilled, in spite of the wicked rejection of our Lord by His earthly people, He still will make a marriage for His Son. He will have a companion associated with Him in the blessing and glory into which He will enter. The bride is not directly spoken of

here, We may think of her as the earthly companion of our Lord, the new nation of which we have already spoken.

Sec. 1. Vers. 1-4: The call.

To this wedding feast, God will send out invitations. Indeed, one had already gone forth during the ministry of John the Baptist and of our Lord upon earth.

Sec. 2. Vers. 5-7: Rejection.

This had been made light of and ignored, and the result would be the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews.

Sec. 3. Vers. 8-10: The Gentiles gathered in,

Here we have the ingathering which has been going on throughout the present dispensation. The former narrative is still earthly, as we saw in the case of the parable of the tares, and therefore the final gathering is not the Church on high, **but** the company of professed believers in the brief period after the rapture of the Church. However, the dispensational lines are not closely drawn, but the great and solemn facts are laid upon the conscience.

Sec. 4. Vers. 11, 12 : Without a wedding garment.

The King comes in to see His guests. Of course, this could not be in heaven where the Church is gathered, for there will be no false professors there ; but, as we said, it is a solemn truth rather than dispensational exactness that

is pressed upon our heart. However, all is clear when we bear in mind what is said above. The King comes in, not to seek for enemies but to see His friends. The enemies, however, must be detected. They are known by their refusal to accept the provision of the wedding garment.

Sec. 5. Vers. 13, 14: The doom.

The end of enemies can only be judgment against which they cannot protest. Their lips are sealed.

Subdivision *IV. Chap. 22: 15-46*. Enemies silenced.

The leaders still seek to ensnare our Lord, but in the questions they ask they are themselves taken.

Sec. 1. Vers. 15-22: Tribute to Cæsar.

This was a constant source of irritation to the Jews, whose pride could not brook the thought of subjection to a foreign authority. Like their boasted Sabbath keeping, however, it was all a sham; the stern fact was that they were a tributary people, using Cæsar's money, and therefore should render tribute to him, and acknowledge as well their responsibilities to God, which they utterly ignored.

Sec. 2. Vers. 23-33: The resurrection.

The Sadducees, the skeptics of their day, propound a hypothetical case, grotesque enough in itself, but revealing also an utter ignorance of the Scriptures and the power of God. Our Lord's

answer brings out weighty truth while rebuking their ignorance of God and His word.

*Sec. 3. Vers, 34-40:* The greatest commandment.

The Pharisees-at the opposite extreme from the Sadducees-next ask what is the most important feature of the law, to be answered by that perfect summary which gives God His supreme place and links men together in love.

*Sec. 4. Vers. 41-46 :* "What think ye of Christ? "

His enemies had asked Him three questions—a political, a doctrinal and a legal. Having answered each of these, *He* asks them one-the question of all questions. We can but marvel at the wondrous simplicity and heart-searching depth of this interrogatory, with its intimations of a fulness in His Person revealed only to those who know God-David's Son and David's Lord. If they know Him not, what need for further questions on their part? Thus they are silenced.

*Subdivision V. Chap. 23.* The arraignment of His rejecters.

In order rightly to understand this grandly solemn chapter, we must remember the circumstances. The Lord, rejected, hated, the net being drawn ever more closely about Him, well knowing that the cross is near, turns upon His enemies, not in anger, nor weakness, but in all the regal dignity and conscious authority which go with absolute, divine, moral righteousness.

The conditions are reversed. The leaders are the culprits, and He whom they would take is their Judge ; and yet we shall fail to get the full meaning of what He says unless we remember the infinite compassion, deep yearning love for the very ones whose doom He must declare.

Sec. 1. Vers. 1-12: False rulers.

The leaders occupied Moses' seat. So long as they enforced the law of Moses they were to be obeyed, but they were destitute of the very first principle of a true lawgiver, which is to be himself subject to the laws. These, on the contrary, exalt themselves at the expense of a burdened people. How opposite to the lowliness which our Lord enjoins upon His disciples and which He so perfectly exemplified.

Sec. 2. Vers. 13-33: The seven-fold woe.

Nothing could exceed the solemnity of this denunciation. The number of woes reminding us of those pronounced in Isaiah 5 and 6, suggests the completeness and finality of the judgment they had brought upon themselves. In general, they declare the blindness, hypocrisy and implacable hatred of those who posed as the religious patterns and leaders of the people. Nothing could be more dreadful. The seven woes follow:

*First:* For shutting up the Kingdom (ver. 13).

*Second:* For false proselyting (ver. 15).\*

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\* Ver. 14 which occurs in Mark and Luke is omitted here

*Third:* For unholy trickery about sacred things (vers. 16-22).

*Fourth:* For punctiliousness about trifles, while regardless of the greatest matters (vers. 23, 24).

*Fifth:* For inward uncleanness with outward scrupulosity (vers. 25, 26).

*Sixth:* Whited sepulchres full of dead men's bones (vers. 27, 28).

*Seventh:* For professed honors paid to martyred prophets while they are plotting further martyrdom of the Greatest of all, thus filling up the iniquity of their fathers and identifying themselves with the shedding of all righteous blood from Abel down. How could they, with such willing-hearted corruption, escape the judgment of hell? Divine love asks the question (vers. 2 g-36).

Sec. 3. Vers. 37-39: The sorrow of the King and Judge.

How inexpressibly sweet and sad is this closing element which gives character to the entire sentence pronounced! What must be the hopelessness of that condition when divine power, righteousness and love can only unite in mourning over the obduracy of the human heart! "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

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by the editors on the authority of most of the ancient manuscripts.



Division VI. (Chaps. 24 and 25.) *The coming of the King in final glory, announced in reference to Israel, the Church and the world.*

To give anything like an adequate analysis of this great discourse, would be to traverse the entire field of prophetic truth, of which it furnishes the great salient features. This would require a volume, where we have but space for a few pages. We must therefore be concise and omit much that is not absolutely necessary for an understanding of the outlines of this Gospel.

As we have seen, Matthew is distinctively the great governmental Gospel. We have the King, His kingdom and the administration, not only of that kingdom but of everything upon earth with reference to it. We need not be surprised, therefore, that the vision reaches far beyond the limits of Israel. In one sense-but under what different conditions!-this discourse upon the Mount of Olives reminds us of Moses' view of the land from the summit of Mt. Pisgah. The lawgiver must feel the sentence of the law which he himself had pronounced, and is shut out from the goodly land which he can only behold from afar. A Greater than the lawgiver is also surveying the whole field of what is to be His future inheritance in Israel, the Church and the world. Neither is He now going to enter into it, but through no failure of His own. Love and divine compassion are leading Him to take

the consequences of the trespass of His people and to suffer without the gate in their stead. Thus He will open the way for their entrance in blessing into the inheritance and establish the foundation upon which His kingdom shall rest undisturbed for all time and eternity.

As has been already remarked, the discourse grows out of the disciples' implied thought that the temple and all connected with it were permanent. Our Lord declares all must be overthrown. Neither His kingdom nor His temple can rest upon any foundation but that which He must lay through His Cross. Therefore, He must pronounce the end in judgment upon all else. This judgment will take place in connection with His second coming, which brings in the end of the age.

There are three main subdivisions of this discourse, devoted to the three great departments of responsibility respectively, in Israel, the Church and the Gentile world.

Sub&vision *I.* *Chap. 24: 1-44.* Israel in relation to the Lord's second coming.

There can be no clear apprehension of prophetic truth unless the distinction between Israel and the Church, and indeed, the world, is clearly seen (1 Cor. 10: 32).

This first portion of the discourse therefore is confined to the Lord's coming with reference to His earthly people Israel. To apply what He

here says to the present dispensation and the Church, would introduce all manner of confusion. Of course, the disciples to whom He was speaking became afterwards part of the Church. He addresses them, however, as representative Jews who might be present at the time of His second coming. The connection also between the first destruction of Jerusalem, which was so soon to take place, and the final overthrow of the apostate nation at the end, shows the unity of the moral condition which will characterize the people at both these periods. We see in chapter 10 something of the same, where the sending out of the disciples by our Lord was connected with His second coming. The present interval of grace is left out of view.

We cast a brief glance at the various sections of this portion:

*Sec. 1. Vers. 1-14:* The beginning of sorrows.

This portion is an answer, apparently, to the first part of the disciples' question as to the destruction of Jerusalem, and is general in its character. There are certain features appropriate to the entire period of our Lord's absence, looked at as we have seen in the parable of the tares. False Christs were to abound; there were to be wars and rumors of wars; nature itself in sympathy with the moral upheaval that is to take place; persecutions of the true disciples were to abound; while false prophets were to be

numerous and apostasy would creep in. The gospel of the Kingdom, however, would be preached to the end. This, as we have seen, is spoken of in chapter 10.

*Sec. 2. Vers. 15-28:* The abomination of desolation.

We are here in the last days, having overleaped the entire present period of the Church's history, and are in the last week of Daniel-the last half of that week. The false Christs and false prophets previously spoken of are here embodied in that one person whom they prefigured; this one is *the* Antichrist, *the* false prophet. It is he who sets up the image of the Beast (Rev. 13: 13-17; Dan, g: 27), which is the signal for the introduction of the Great Tribulation for all who will not acknowledge the authority of the Beast (the political, imperial power) as supported by apostate Judaism under the Antichrist.

When this takes place, the faithful are to flee. In Luke, there is apparently more special reference to the first destruction of Jerusalem under the Romans (see Luke 21: 20). Our Lord goes on to describe the fearful tribulations of those days-for Jews and not for Christians. The shortening of these days of tribulation (vers. 19-22) refers to the fact that the Great Tribulation does not commence at the beginning of Daniel's week, but in the middle, and lasts but three and a half years. His people are particularly warned

against the false Christs (23-26). Then, when evil is at its height, the Son of Man will appear as the lightning in the heaven; there shall be no mistaking His appearing (27,28).

*Sec. 3.* Vers. 29-44: The appearing of the Son of Man.

This is that great appearing of our Lord with clouds when "every eye shall see Him ; and they also that pierced Him, and all the kindreds of the land shall wail because of Him" (29-31).

He next warns His disciples of the certainty and nearness of this coming. Morally, it was already near, though the entire present interval of grace has elapsed; all things have been in abeyance. At the end, the remnant will recognize the signs of the times when the fig-tree puts forth her leaves (32-35). While the nearness and the certainty of this appearing will be well known to the remnant, no date can be fixed. This serves to rebuke in a general way all foolish efforts to set a date for the Lord's coming by those who are ignorant of the elementary distinction between the rapture of the Church at the close of this present period and the appearing to which this entire prophecy refers. It would also guard the elect in that day from attempting to set an exact date for that which is known only to the Father. It will suffice for them to know that all things will go on as in the days of Noah, when suddenly the Son of Man will come. Then, some

will be taken away in judgment and others left for blessing (36-41). The moral lesson of it all is, to be ready and to watch (42-44).

*Subdivision II. Chap. 24 : 45-25 : 30.* The Lord's coming with reference to the Church.

It is significant that throughout that part of the discourse referring to Israel, our Lord speaks of Himself as "the Son of Man," while in that which now comes He is called "Lord." Verses 42-44 have both expressions and are of that general character of moral warning which would be appropriate to both.

sec. 1. Vers. 45-51: The responsibilities of the servant.

The Lord here speaks of those who have been entrusted with responsibilities in connection with His kingdom during His absence. They are either faithful stewards or unfaithful, and as such will receive their recompense. We would suggest that while this portion of the discourse has reference to the present Church period, it will probably be found that what is said of the interpretation of the parable of the tares would also apply here; that is, that while the present period is included, the form of what is said is earthly and may reach on to the period of the Tribulation. This would explain how the judgment falls upon the unfaithful servants in an unexpected moment. We could not apply this to the Church.

*Sec. 2. Ch. 25: 1-13: The Coming of the Bridegroom.*

This is a parable of the Kingdom of Heaven, and what has already been said as to it will apply here. The Bridegroom would be Christ, and the wedding, not the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven where the Church is the bride, but the earthly kingdom which He sets up here. Those who are waiting for the Bridegroom, however, would be primarily Christians, during the present dispensation, though as we have already said, it may go beyond into the next period. That is, our Lord is here impressing the lesson of readiness for those who are waiting for His coming. We need say but little as to the two classes. Those without oil figure mere profession-those destitute of the Holy Spirit, whose lamps of testimony are found to be going out at the critical time.

*Sec. 3. Vers. 14-30: The parable of the talents.*

This third portion of the address which covers the present Church period speaks of the gifts which have been entrusted to the Lord's servants during His absence. What has already been said as to the virgins is applicable here. It is kingdom truth, rather than the Church; it includes the present period, though does not end with it. The moral lessons are so clear that we need not dwell further upon them.

*Subdivision III. Chap. 25: 31-46. The ap-*

pearing of the Son of Man in relation to the Gentiles.

Perhaps no portion of Scripture has been more misunderstood than this solemn scene. Those who do not understand dispensational truth confound this great assize of the living nations with the judgment of the dead in Rev. 20. We need but remember that a thousand years' interval separates the two; *this* judgment taking place before the Millennium, and that of the dead at the *close* of that period of earthly blessing. Here, it is the living; there, the dead; here, the nations in special relation to those who have preached His kingdom; there, all the wicked dead from the time of Cain.

Three classes are mentioned in this scene. The nations are divided into sheep and goats, and another class, briefly referred to as "these My brethren," is distinguished from both. These last are the remnant; those who, as has often been said, are identified with our Lord's first disciples sent out on their ministry and engaged in the same service, carrying the gospel of the Kingdom to all the nations of the world. The manner of their treatment indicates the moral condition of those nations, and settles their standing as sheep or as goats. The judgment here is final in the sense that it goes on to the end. As we know, the Antichrist and the Beast of Revelation have their place in the



same lake of fire where these openly defiant nations also find their doom.

Division VII. (Chaps. 26-28.) *The King crowned with thorns and by His death and resurrection making good all His purposes of Messing for His kingdom and the world.*

In our examination of the nature of our Lord's death and the events connected with it as recorded in each Evangelist, we have gone so fully into this portion of our subject that we will confine ourselves almost exclusively to giving the analysis. See Chapter III, Parts 2 and 3.

*Subdivision I. Chap. 26: 1-56. Preliminary.*

In this portion we have the account of what takes place up to and including our Lord's betrayal and arrest.

Sec. 1. Vers. 1-16: The forethought of enemies and of friends.

In sorrowful contrast, we have here (1-5) the plot of the rulers to put our Lord to death, and (6-13) the pouring the fragrant ointment upon Him by the woman. Judas repudiates her act and identifies himself with our Lord's murderers.

SEC. 2. Vers. 17-35: The Passover and the Lord's Supper.

Kingly dignity has marked our Lord throughout; now He goes towards this dark part of His pathway with the same kingly dignity and in the beauty of meekness that has marked His

whole course. It is He who provides for the keeping of the Passover (17-19), and at the last of these celebrations foretells His betrayal and points out the traitor (20-25). Here, too, is the establishment of a new feast (26-29) which we may call rather the first than the last Supper, the light and joy of which has been with us ever since.

Next follows the warning to Peter and the disciples with the fore-warning of His rejection (30-35).

**Sec. 3. Vers. 36-46:** The agony in the-Garden.

We love to linger here and behold the King whose glory never shone out more perfectly than when prostrate upon His face He receives the cup from His Father's hand.

**Sec. 4. Vers. 47-56:** The Betrayal.

Judas with his false kiss (47-50) and Peter with his ineffectual sword (51-54), though utterly dissimilar, are both contrasted with the meekness of Him who, when all His disciples flee, yields Himself up into the hands of His enemies (55, 56).

Subdivision II. *Chaps. 26 : 57-27.* The rejection and crucifixion of the King.

The details of the two trials, the religious (!) and the civil, are given here, and the cross which follows.

sec. I. Ch. 26: 57-75 : The trial before the high priest.

If they condemn Him, it must be in the face

of the full light. False witnesses will not avail. So the high priest by his very adjuration renders himself and the council inexcusably guilty not only of the rejection of their King, but of the condemnation of the righteous-the Son of God (57-68). The blessed Lord is mocked and shamefully entreated, but bears witness in all the conscious dignity of His Person and position. The dreadful contrast with poor Peter's cowardice (69-75) may fill us with shame as we remember how the same heart dwells in us.

Sec. 2. Ch. 27 : 1-26: The trial before Pilate.

The chief priests have been guilty of the unspeakable blasphemy of condemning the Son of God to death. The Romans had deprived them of the power to inflict this penalty however, and thus are compelled to fulfil those Scriptures which foretold the manner of our Lord's death. He is therefore brought before the Roman Governor. We first see the end of Judas (3-5) and the diabolical perversity of mere religiousness in the juggling of the Jews with the traitor's money (6-10).

A travesty of trial is gone through before Pilate in which One only stands out in absolute contrast to all the wickedness that is taking place about Him (11-23). Pilate gives sentence that the will of the leaders shall be carried out, and while declaring the Lord's innocence, delivers Him up to be crucified (24-26).

## Sec. 3. Vers. 27-56: The crucifixion.

The Jews have now rejected their King and turned Him over to the Gentiles by whom He is crowned with thorns (symbol of the curse) and **arrayed in** mockery with a royal robe (27-31). He is then led forth in His own garments—symbolizing His own character, which God will not permit to be clouded in any way. The two thieves crucified with Him, the mockery of the rulers, the railing of the mob, all give the setting in which man has placed the Son of God. The King whose steps we have traced as He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed with the devil, they hung upon a cross! (32-44.)

We have now the nature of that atoning suffering which our Lord was enduring (45-54), compared with which all the previous mockery was as nothing. To be forsaken of God, to bear the penalty of sin, this is the true essence of His suffering which shows it to be not merely that of the body, but the atoning and all-sufficient sacrifice for the transgression of man. Death follows as the governmental penalty of sin.

Subdivision *III. Chap. 27: 55—28. The resurrection of the King.*

The first part of this narrative, though referring to our Lord's burial, really is linked with His resurrection, for no further desecration is permitted.

*Sec. 1. Vers. 55-61: The anointing.*

The kingly triumph, we may say, begins when the women and Joseph of Arimathæa take down His body, anoint it and lay it in the new grave.

*Sec. 2. Vers. 62-66: The sepulchre sealed.*

Another note of triumph is struck in the provision which the Pharisees themselves made to guard against a false report of our Lord's resurrection. They thus contribute to an overwhelming testimony to it. The one possible charge that His disciples stole Him away is provided against by the very ones who of all others wished to circulate such a falsehood. For "the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1: 25). Thus, wickedness overreaches itself and must bear witness to the truth.

*Sec. 3. Ch. 28: 1-10: The angel's witness.*

The circumstances here are in accord with the entire theme of the Gospel. The splendor of the angel's appearance, the earthquake and the assurances of our Lord's resurrection, all have the exultant tone of triumph. They are like the trumpeting heralds going before the King.

*sec. 4. Vers. 11-15: The testimony of the watch.*

The keepers who had been as dead men announce their own defeat, while the incurable malignity of the Jews would even pursue their King after He has entered into the glory with

the lie which they themselves had made impossible by their plan.

Sec. 5. Vers. 16-20: The last commission of the King.

Our Lord meets His disciples, as appointed, in Galilee, where He had done so many of His royal works. For faith, He is now the King in glory, and commissions His disciples to go forth to gather in subjects into that Kingdom which He is establishing. In our last view of the blessed King all power is committed into His hands; His ascension is not recorded, as the entire theme of our Evangelist is connected with the earth. He who empowers them and sends them forth is still with them to the end of that age which shall forever close the period of His earthly rejection and open up the glories of that Kingdom which shall have no end.

## MARK

**General Theme**-Christ the Son of God as Prophet, declaring the message of God to His people, and His Servant, accomplishing the will of God in ministering to their need. His course of untiring service in this connection more and more rejected, but going forward to the crowning act of service, made sin for man's sin, thereby accomplishing atonement, going up on high, still laboring with His servants in the gospel which they proclaim.

Division I. Chaps. 1—5. The beginning of His service-the more personal aspect.

Division II. Chaps. 6—10: 45. The rejection of the Servant and Prophet in which those who are connected with Him are associated.

Division III. Chaps. 10: 46-16. Prophetic testimony fully declared, and service reaching its climax in the cross, leading on to resurrection.

These three divisions suggest that threefold character of service-its activity, obstacles and culmination, which speak of the divine fulness of God humbled down to our need and now exalted again. We might give Phil. 2: 5-11 as the scriptural synopsis of this service.

We will take up each of these divisions and glance at the various parts into which they are subdivided:

Division 1. (Chaps. 1-5.) *The beginning of His service-the more personal aspect.*

This first division is filled with the record of a tireless service in teaching, healing, and declaring the will of God in prophetic ministry. The attention is centered upon the Lord and His work, with details as to the nature of the need and the character of the healing ministry. This first portion in all the Synoptists has a certain character, particularly in Matthew and Mark. The activities are not hampered by the opposition. This comes later on, and in our Gospel finds its proper place in the second division.

*Subdivision I. Chap. 1: 1-13.* The Son of God announced by the forerunner and entering upon His service.

The first verse is introductory and guards against any misapprehension as to the true dignity of the One who had humbled Himself. While the expression "Son of God" does not necessarily refer to the eternal relationship with the Father, as "the Only Begotten" in John, it cannot be separated from this, and therefore declares who the Person is who enters upon His prophetic office of service.

Sec. 1. Vers. 1-3: The way prepared.

It is fitting, therefore, that His title should be given, together with the reference to the prophet which pointed to the coming of a forerunner to prepare the way of the Lord Jehovah.



*Sec. 2. Vers. 4-8: The forerunner.*

We have here the testimony of John in the wilderness, with its striking results. Brevity and conciseness are marked. In a few lines, the clothing, food and preaching of John, all appropriate to his prophetic office, are described. Notice how all points to the coming of a Mightier than he, who would baptize with the Holy Ghost.

*Sec. 3. Vers. 9-11: The opened heavens.*

God here adds His voice, to the testimony of Scripture and of John the Baptist, to the dignity of Him who was taking His place in lowliness—"Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

*Sec. 4. Vers. 12, 13: The temptation.*

Mark gives here in two verses, the summary of that which Matthew and Luke give in full. The brevity is pregnant, while an added feature is given that our Lord was with the wild beasts. Notice, too, that the Spirit here drives the Lord, we might say, appropriate to His position as servant; while in Matthew, He is led. These are not contradictory, but each is appropriate to the Gospel in which it occurs.

Subdivision *II. Chaps. 1: 14-3*. The call to service and the perfect example of it.

Our Lord, after John was delivered up to prison, goes forth to continue and perfect his prophetic testimony.

Sec. 1. Vers. 14-20: The call of Simon and others.

At the outset, He calls into association with Himself those who are to learn from His perfect example what service is. "I will make you fishers of men."

Sec. 2. Vers. 21-39. The demon cast out, and many cures.

In the synagogue, as He taught in His prophetic service, a man with an unclean spirit is present, suggesting the power of the enemy in the very place where the word of God should have been supreme. He is cast out (21-28). Entering into Simon's house, a type, we may say, of Israel, He finds his mother-in-law prostrate with a fever, incapable of doing aught. He dismisses the fever and she ministers to them (29-31). The evening brings no cessation in this activity of service. Multitudes oppressed with various ills gather about the door to find healing and blessing. It is noted that He will not allow the demons to bear witness of Him, although they know Him well (32-34).

One most important thing for a servant to notice is that nothing is allowed to interfere with the spirit of dependence which marked our Lord. Rising up early, He goes forth to prayer, and to the statement later of Simon, that all men sought for Him, He simply replies that He must go to other places to perform the work which He had come to do (35-39).

sec. 3. Vers. 40-45: The cleansing of the leper.

Doubtless, each form of disease was typical of some special manifestation of sin, the demon possession suggesting the power of Satan, as fever did the false energy of an activity not of the Spirit. Here, the leprosy speaks of uncleanness and therefore unfitness for the presence of God. Such was the condition of Israel, as well as that of every sinner.

Notice how the Lord *touches* the leper, suggesting how He came to meet our sin and put it away. The command here to tell no one does not seem to be because of the opposition, but rather that His true service was in danger of being hampered by the multitudes treating Him as a mere healer. Miracles themselves were only acted parables, and our Lord came from heaven to do something more than cure the ills of the body.

Sec. 4. Ch. 2: 1-12: The paralytic cured.

If leprosy suggests the guilt and defilement of sin, paralysis or palsy speaks of the helplessness which accompanies it. "When we were yet without strength (paralytics), in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (lepers). Notice the teaching of our Lord as to forgiveness. It is sin and guilt which bring in helplessness; and when these are forgiven, the power to walk in God's way is assured. Notice also the first murmurings of op-

position here in the suggestion that our Lord was blaspheming.

*Sec. 5. Ch. 2: 13—3: 6: Disciples attracted. The opposition forming.*

The first part of this section leads on to the beginning of the next. Such activities of mercy, with teaching, will gather followers and draw the line so clearly that men must accept or reject. First, we have the call of Levi (Matthew) the publican (13-17). The Pharisees oppose our Lord sitting at meat with such persons. He justifies His ministry of healing, whether physical or moral, by **saying: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."**

Further contrast between formal Judaism and living association with Himself is next given (18-22). New wine must be put into new bottles. Fasting and formalism for religious purposes may do for Judaism, or even the disciples of John as not yet fully set free, but the children of the Bridechamber cannot fast while He is with them.

Next, we have the scene in the corn-fields (23-28) and the opposition of the Pharisees, with our Lord's justification of what the disciples were doing. David is given as an illustration, and, appropriately to Mark, the Sabbath is declared to be for man rather than man for the Sabbath.

The healing of the withered hand (3: 1-6) on

the Sabbath brings out still further the Jewish opposition. The reason we have given in Matthew. The evident hardening of heart on the part of the Pharisees is taking place, and we find them going out and taking counsel with the Herodians to destroy Him.

Subdivision *III. Chaps. 3 : 7—5.* The opposition made manifest and the activity of teaching and serving continued.

This closing part of the first division shows the determined attitude of the Pharisees which culminates in their awful blasphemy, and the Lord's unremitting service and faithful testimony in the face of it all. This fittingly closes the first or more personal part of His public service.

Sec. I. Ch. 3: 7—4: 34: The authority, holiness and sufficiency of God in the face of evil.

This portion is subdivided. We may merely note the character of each portion: multitudes attracted by His divine power (7-12) ; the call of the twelve disciples to be associated with Himself and to preach (13-19); the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (20-30); true relationship (31-35) ; the parables (chap. 4: 1-34). These last are not so numerous as in Matthew. We have, indeed, but three parables and one simile given, although we are told that with " many such parables He spoke the word unto them." First, the parable of the sower (1-20). Note that in the explana-

the little children to come unto Me," and take them up in His arms and bless them.

Sec. 3. Vers. 17-22: The rich man.

Here we have a condition or relationship not inherent in nature, but inherited or acquired. It is therefore not a thing to be submitted to and recognized as essential. Rather than have it intrude between the soul and God, it must be cast off. This could not be said of the two former relationships ordained of God.

Sec. 4. Vers. 23-27: Impossible with men, possible with God.

This application by our Lord of what had gone before needs no enlargement here. Let us ever remember its truth.

Sec. 5. Vers. 28-31: Rewards for faithfulness.

To Peter's protestation that they had left all and followed Him, our Lord states the sure recompense, reminding them however that God has a different order from man's.

Sec. 6. Vers. 32-45: Christ's cup and baptism and the glory to follow.

Again, our Lord foretells His crucifixion. He was going up to Jerusalem and there was something about Him-not necessarily in His face, but in the holy energy of His person-that impressed the disciples. They knew not what it meant. He speaks plainly to them, but still they do not understand: while He speaks of His shame, they speak of their glory. The request of

James and John is given in this connection. Sad fact that we can think of a place of honor in connection with His having no place but one of humiliation and suffering.

Division III. (Chaps. 10 : 46—16). *Prophetic testimony fully declared and service reaching its climax in the cross, leading on to resurrection.*

Brief, but most intense has been the life of the devoted Servant and Witness for God. It had been exercised in all the joy of love, unfettered by aught within, unhindered by aught without, and ministering wherever need was found. Its testimony, however, must produce enemies or friends; and so, gradually, the opposition was developed in the midst of which, though in greater or less separation, our Lord still went on witnessing for God and doing His work.

Now, all must soon be brought to a conclusion. As He approaches Jerusalem, things take on a new and definite character. Every step means a step nearer the cross.

*Subdivision I. Chaps. 10: 46-13. The witness of the perfect Servant.*

This portion begins, as in the other Gospels, with the cure of Bartimæus and extends through our Lord's prophetic discourse upon the Mount of Olives. During the brief time here allotted, He enters Jerusalem, presenting Himself, if they would but receive Him, as the appointed

One. Failing in this, He meets all the questions His enemies have to ask, disclosing their sin and hypocrisy and bearing witness of what was to take place after His rejection.

sec. I. Ch. 10: 46-11: 26: The entry into Jerusalem.

We have here three parts separately noted. As in the other two Synoptists, the healing of blind Bartimæus comes first. It is a typical act, in which our Lord would show His readiness to serve His people's need by opening their eyes. The individual application is simple (46-52).

We next see our Lord fulfilling prophecy as He enters Jerusalem upon the ass's colt (11: 1-11). It should be noticed that in Matthew both the colt and its mother are mentioned—appropriate to the dispensational character of that Gospel. Here the colt alone is mentioned; evidently the principal animal used. The faithful Prophet is not deceived by the plaudits of the people. He enters the city. Prophecy is fulfilled. He looks around upon the temple and retires to Bethany, the "house of humiliation,"

Next follows the cursing of the fig-tree (12-26), woven together with the purging of the temple. The two are indeed one, but two sides of the same act. He must cleanse His house, and to do this, fruitless profession must be withered up.

Sec. 2. Ch. 11: 27-12: The contradiction of sinners against Himself.



This portion, as many others, readily subdivides into smaller parts, which we will note. The general subject is that of our Lord's intercourse with the Pharisees and other opposers. The place and order are quite similar to those in the Gospel of Matthew, with certain omissions and an addition. The question Of authority comes first (27-33). Next (12 : 1-12), the parable of the husbandmen and the vineyard is given with that vividness of detail peculiar to our Evangelist.

Next (13-17), the question of tribute to Cæsar is met and (18-27) the unbelief of the Sadducees in the resurrection is answered. Following this (28-34), **the** greatest of the commandments is given, with the second, of like character. We notice in the response of the questioner and our Lord's gracious reply : "Thou art not far from the kingdom," how grace was lingering near, ready to welcome the first turning to God.

Then (35-37) the Lord, quoting the 110th psalm, meets His enemies with the question as to the real nature of the Son of David. As at the close of the question regarding the law, none dared to ask Him any further questions; so, after this word as to His Person, we read significantly: "The common people heard Him gladly." His enemies having been silenced, in faithfulness the Lord now warns against their sanctimonious pride (38-40) and contrasts their covetousness, which would devour widows' houses, with the

devotion of a poor widow who would cast all her living into the treasury (41-44). This last, Mark and Luke alone record.

Sec. 3. Ch. **13**: The Olivet discourse.

As we noticed in Matthew, the occasion of this discourse is the disciples' remark as to the grandeur and stability of the temple. Predicting that it was all to be overthrown, our Lord goes on to declare what events were associated with its overthrow and the rejection of the people. The discourse is far briefer and covers not so wide a range as in Matthew, though quite parallel so far as it goes. The first part (1-13) is devoted to the description of the times of the end when wars and rumors of wars, national upheavals and the quaking of nature will presage the coming storm of desolation. In the midst of all this, His faithful witnesses will be brought before synagogues and rulers, even those bound by natural ties not refraining from their persecution. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved"-a Scripture little understood, save by those who mark the dispensational order in the word of God. This refers, not to the present dispensation, but to the brief period of intense persecution of which these first sufferings are the prelude.

Next (14-23) **we** have the more intense persecutions, when the abomination causing desolation stands where it ought not. This is the

period of the Great Tribulation which we have noted in the analysis of Matthew. False Christs and false prophets will appear, asserting their claims; the very antichrist himself posing as God in His temple; but all had been provided against. The disciples were to flee from such persecution and hide themselves under the shadow of God's wings until these calamities were overpast. Doubtless many of the psalms relating to the remnant refer to this time.

The appearing of our Lord in power and glory (24-27) is then declared: Amid circumstances of splendor and profound convulsions of nature He will gather His elect. Our Lord concludes the discourse by the personal application (28-37). When the fig-tree puts forth its leaves it is the sign of approaching summer; thus when the throes which He foretells begin, those who stand in their place in the latter days will know that all is ready, even at the doors. "This generation shall in no wise pass away till all be fulfilled." The formal character of Judaism and all connected with it will be unchanged in the latter day. The present interval of grace is, as is usual in prophetic discourse, omitted from view.

We have here the remarkable expression as to the Son of Man not knowing the day and hour when these things will take place. This is peculiar to Mark, and in keeping with the lowly character of our blessed Lord as the servant and

messenger of God. He was concerned with but the fulfilment of His course and obedience to the will of God. In the relation of which Mark speaks, He knew neither the day nor the hour, in common with the angels. As God, however, surely He knew all things.

The one great lesson is watchfulness, a lesson which applies to us in the present time, as well as to the remnant in the last days.

Sub&vision *II. Chaps. 14 and 15. The Cross.*

We come now to the events immediately connected with the crucifixion. We have previously compared the narratives in detail. It simply remains for us to point out the divisions.

Sec. I. Ch. 14: 1-52: The plot, the Passover, Gethsemane and the betrayal.

We have first the plot against the life of the faithful Servant in which Judas conspires with the rulers to betray Him to death. Imbedded between this wickedness on either hand, we have the gem of the woman in Bethany anointing our Lord with the ointment, the fragrance of which act remains still with us (1-11).

Next we have the Passover-feast provided for, at which the traitor is pointed out. and the memorial Supper instituted, closing with a hymn, and they retire to the Mount of Olives, our Lord warning the disciples of their weakness, and Peter protesting that he would never deny Him (12-31).

Then comes Gethsemane, the agony, and the blessed expression peculiar to Mark, "Abba, Father." Though He were in the servant's place the consciousness of Sonship never leaves Him (32-42). The multitude under the leadership of Judas comes to His arrest. The kiss is given. In the exuberance of deceit, the wretched traitor kisses Him repeatedly, or affectionately, as the word suggests (45). The needless sword is drawn. Our Lord bears witness of His innocence, but yields Himself up in fulfilment of Scripture, and His disciples flee ; the young man who would follow is but exhibiting his shame, for the linen cloth cast about him is no part of his actual garment-speaking of it symbolically. He who follows in nature's strength, will but exhibit his own shame and lose his apparent righteousness (43-52).

*Sec. 2.* Chs. 14: 53—15: 15 : The trial before the council and before Pilate.

The trial, as in all four Evangelists, takes place first before the chief priests in the council (53-6.5). When the Lord is witnessing the good confession, Peter is denying Him (66-72). The trial before Pilate (15: 1-15) is given here more briefly. The Lord is silent in face of His accusers; demand is made for the murderer Barabbas to be given in His place ; Pilate has knowledge that envy was the cause of the priests' demand for the blood of Christ yet deliberately

hands Him over to be crucified that he might content the multitude.

Sec. 3. Vers. **16-47** : The crucifixion.

Brief but most solemn is the description of the scenes about the cross. In mockery the soldiers crown our Lord with thorns and array Him in royal purple (16-20). They impress Simon the Cyrenian to carry His cross in the procession to Calvary where our Lord, refusing the wine with myrrh, is crucified as the King of the Jews.

Associated with Him are the two thieves who mingle their railing with the taunts of the multitude and of the chief priests and the Scribes (21-32). Brief indeed is the description of the last depths of suffering-at the hand of God, in the hours of darkness ; and His cry re-echoes through the ages, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The result is immediately given (ver. 38), as our Lord, having uttered a loud cry, breathes His last. The veil of the temple is rent in twain (33-38).

Lastly (39-47), we have the testimony of the centurion, the attendance of the women and the loving ministry of Joseph of Arimathæa at the burial of our Lord in the tomb never contaminated by man.

Subdivision *III. Chap. 16*. The resurrection and ascension.

This part of our Evangelist is in keeping with what we have seen throughout. The narrative

of the resurrection itself is brief; it may be divided into two parts, the first of which reads continuously with what immediately precedes it. The remainder, however, is in different form, reminding us of the first few verses of the Gospel where we have an epitome of John's ministry and the temptation.

*Sec. 1. Vers. 1-8:* The women at the sepulchre. The scene at the sepulchre is vivid and suggestive. The angel, as a young man, witnesses to the resurrection of our Lord, but Himself they do not see. We note the tenderness of the special message they were to give to Peter (lest he should be swallowed up with the thought of his denial), the fact that the Lord was risen. They were to meet Him in Galilee as He had appointed. We have, however, no record of this meeting in Mark.

*Sec. 2. Ver. 9-18:* The summary of various appearances.

We have here, first, the appearing to Mary Magdalene and, as we have elsewhere noted, the fact that *unbelief* marked every stage in the declaration of the fact of the resurrection. Next, the visit to Emmaus is told in fewest words. Later, He comes to the twelve and upbraids them for their hardness of heart and then gives the commission, not as in the governmental Gospel of Matthew, to make disciples unto the Kingdom, but rather to preach the gospel to every crea-

ture. Faith, whose reality is not made but confessed by baptism, is the only condition of salvation. Signs, chiefly connected with the establishing of the new testimony upon earth, are to follow those that believe—signs much in keeping with those wrought by our Lord when He was here and for a similar purpose. When once truth has been presented, there is no further need for the signs. It bears its own witness. The miracle is but to call attention to the truth.

*Sec. 3. Vers. 19, 20: The ascension.*

The fact of the ascension is here recorded; not the details which we have in Luke. In briefest summary, the work of the disciples is told; a work which is but the continuation of what our Lord, the perfect Servant, had entered upon, He has opened the way, has shown what a true servant and witness for God is in the face of every form of opposition and enmity, has through His death opened the way into heaven itself where He has entered, not to ignore or to forget His toiling servants here, but to labor with them by the Holy Spirit in that blessed work of the gospel which is to go on until we too shall be called up into the rest which we shall share with Him.



## LUKE

**General Theme**—Christ as Man, embracing in Himself every true human attribute, spirit, soul and body; sinless and obedient ; born of a woman and yet the Son of the Highest; reaching down to every department of human life and meeting sinful man wherever he might be, making known to him the gospel of God's grace and bringing him into fellowship with Him—all this effected by His sacrificial death and declared by His resurrection and ascension.

Division I. Chaps. **1-4: 13**. The Man Christ Jesus.

Division II. Chaps. **4: 14-18: 34**. His ministry of the gospel of peace.

Division III. Chaps. **18: 35—24**. The sacrificial work by which God is made known to man and man is brought to God.

The similarity of these divisions to those of the Gospel of Mark cannot fail to be noticed. There, we had the Servant in His more individual activities, answering somewhat to the first division of Luke, where we have the obedient Man in His individuality.

Next, in the second division of Mark, we had the continuance of the untiring service of the Lord in face of the ever-increasing opposition of His enemies. Here the opposition is also mani-

fest: indeed, it comes out at the very start, but that which is prominent throughout the entire second division is the going out of the heart of God toward poor, lost man and bringing him to Himself.

The third division, of course, is the same in each Gospel, though each with its characteristics peculiar to the main theme of the Evangelist. We might say in a general way that in Mark, *service*, and in Luke, *salvation* are the prominent thoughts.

**Division 1. (Chaps. I-4: 13.) *The Man Christ Jesus.***

In this first division, we have the account of the events preceding and accompanying the birth of our Lord, going back indeed to the narrative of the promise and birth of the forerunner; the period of our Lord's childhood until His public manifestation ; the account of John's ministry and our Lord's baptism and sealing with the Spirit, together with His genealogy traced back to Adam, the whole closing with His temptation. All this has a distinct, personal characteristic, peculiar to our Lord Himself, rather than to the goings forth of activity which follow in the next division.

*Subdivision I. Chap. I. The Annunciation.*

This chapter gives us, beside the introduction, the events connected with the annunciation con-

cerning John the Baptist and the account of his birth. There is also that more wonderful announcement of the incarnation of the Son of God, the most transcendent fact in all the history of the universe.

*Sec. 1. Vers. 1-4: The introduction.*

The introductory verses of Luke are quite in contrast with those in Matthew and Mark. In the former, it was the natural Old Testament style, linking the first Evangelist with the prophets and historians of the past. In Mark, it was of the briefest character, declaring the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Here, it is explanatory of Luke's reasons for writing an ordered treatise upon these assured facts connected with the life of our Lord. It is addressed to the Gentile Theophilus, and a similar title to the Acts links the two books together. As has been elsewhere suggested, there is an air of literary finish and thoroughness about the style which is an expression of the character of the entire book. The Spirit of God, in describing the perfect Man, uses as an instrument one in closest touch with all that was broadly human.

*Sec. 2. Vers. 5-25: The coming of the forerunner announced.*

When we say that Luke is the narrative of the Manhood of our Lord, it must not be understood that there is any ignoring of the Jewish asso-

ciations in which He was pleased to be born. Indeed this could not be, when we remember that the position of the Jewish nation was unique in the world. God had embodied His purposes 'with a nation, however far that nation may have drifted from His purposes. This is a beautiful and distinguishing feature of all divine truth. While distinctive, there is a breadth to it which reaches out into other domains. We have not those hard and fast lines which mark the distinctions of human logic.

As in the living organism connective tissue is everywhere present, and as in the rainbow the varied hues shade into one another and blend together, so is it in God's revelation. Thus, the first two chapters are distinctively Jewish; indeed the entire narrative necessarily is thus colored, although the prominent thought is what we have indicated.

We find, therefore, here at the outset a distinctly Jewish scene. Zacharias is a priest in one of the courses (the eighth) ordained by King David (See 1 Chron. 24: 10). He is ministering as priest in the temple, offering the incense, a unique privilege greatly esteemed, we are told, and awarded by lot. All that is best in Judaism comes out here. The piety of Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth, the solemnity of the priestly service in which he was engaged, the attitude of the waiting people outside, all afford a glimpse

of the reality still left in the midst of what abounded in formalism and emptiness, as suggested by the phrase "in the days of Herod the king, "--times of lawless indulgence in sin with the outward show of ceremonial punctiliousness (s-7).

Similarly, in the narrative of Ruth, recording as it does events which took place during the troublous times of the judges, we find in the quiet retirement of Bethlehem the place where real faith abides.

Zacharias, "Jehovah has remembered "; Elisabeth, "My God has sworn." Their childlessness accentuates the impotence of nature, while their names would remind them of the faithfulness of God's promises. It is this, later on, that Zacharias notices in his song. How appropriate that he should be offering incense in the temple at the very time when God announces to him, through an angel, the beginnings of the fulfilment of His purposes when the true Priest would appear in the true sanctuary and offer up that which shall be an eternal fragrance in the presence of God, the excellence of His own person (vers. 8-11).

Of the words of the angel we need say but little, though all is full of richest meaning. The prayer of Zacharias had been heard. The fact that he had been praying suggests the attitude of the remnant of which he was an example, and

the expectant longing of their hearts for deliverance. The importance attaching to the birth of John is not because of what he was, but rather that he would go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah. In other words, as John later declares, he was but a voice crying in the wilderness and pointing men to the true Deliverer (12-17).

The unbelief of Zacharias reminds us of what we so constantly find throughout Scripture. God does not hide the weakness of the faith of His beloved people. This weakness explains the dumbness of the aged priest until the day when he sets his seal that God is true. How good it is to see also that God's promises are not dependent upon the strength of our faith (18-25).

Sec. 3. Vers. 26-56: The annunciation to Mary.

This most blessed and solemn scene has been degraded by Rome into an excuse for the idolatry of the mother of our Lord-most foreign, we may be sure, to any thought that was in her bosom. We dare not enter upon too minute a discussion of the amazing mystery of divine love spoken of here. All eternity gazes with adoring wonder at the miracle of all miracles-the incarnation of the eternal Son of God; and yet the circumstances in which that incarnation is announced are the fitting illustration of the lowliness to which He stooped.

The meek acquiescence of Mary suggests that acceptance of faith which marks her out for all time as blessed amongst women in her unique position, but as the example for every one who receives the testimony of God and bows to it. After the annunciation, which took place between Mary and the angel alone, we have (39-45) the expression of fellowship between the two holy women. A sense of grace ever produces a desire for fellowship. In the visit of Mary to Elizabeth, this fellowship is most sweetly and beautifully expressed. What a picture it gives us of joy, of sweet companionship, of adoring worship on the part of these two holy women! It is at once a glimpse at remnant piety, a piety which exists wherever true faith is found, and a suggestion of the theme of our Gospel, the fellowship of man with God.

Mary's song follows (46-56). We need not be surprised that the heart should go out in worship. Indeed, the whole of this first part of Luke is fragrant with the incense symbolized in Zacharias' offering. Mary worships; Elizabeth worships; Zacharias worships; the angels from heaven worship; the shepherds worship; Simeon worships; wherever the grace of God is apprehended, worship and praise break forth.

Mary's song has rightly been compared to that of Hannah. The theme is quite similar-God visits the lowly, lifting them on high, while the

proud and mighty are set aside. This is again Luke's theme. How fittingly appropriate, therefore, this sweet song of the mother of our Lord, expressing as it does, by the Spirit of God, a little prelude to those mightier harmonies which her Son and Lord was to evoke from the willing hearts of a lowly people brought into accord with the will of God by His grace.

Sec. 4. Vers. 57-66: The birth of John.

This grace, Luke's theme, gives its name to the forerunner. Instead of a backward glance which the name of his father would have suggested, "Jehovah hath remembered," it is the forward glance of what is now to be brought in - John, "Jehovah is gracious." Zacharias is dumb, as indeed all the Old Testament is dumb until faith sets its seal to this new revelation. When he writes, "His name is John," praise bursts forth. So too, to this day, the veil is upon Israel's heart while the Prophets are being read; but wherever a soul bows to the grace of God, praise bursts forth, the Old Testament merges into the New.

Sec. 5. Vers. 67-80: The song of Zacharias.

It is just this which the prophetic song of Zacharias sets forth. The oath which God had made (Elizabeth) and the remembrance of His covenant (Zacharias) find now expression in fruitfulness in the birth of one who is going to exhibit the faithfulness of God and be the har-



binger of the coming day. All is in most beautiful accord here.

*Subdivision II. Chap. 2.* The birth of Christ.

We have here the narrative, touching in its simplicity, almost pathetic in its suggestions of poverty and lowliness, and yet rising into the heavens themselves to express the glory of God and His delight in man as shown in the birth of the holy Son of God. The heart feels a desire to be associated with the worshipers here, and indeed as we enter into its blessedness we join in the homage paid to the lowly Babe.

Sec. 1. Vers. 1-7. The birth in Bethlehem as foretold.

The proud empire of Rome, mistress of the world, puts into motion its resistless machinery to carry out a simple prediction made ages before, that the Son of David should be born in the city of David, in Bethlehem of Judæa (Micah 5: 2). From the language here, it would seem that while the edict for the census was given at this time, so that Joseph in obedience to it went up to Bethlehem, the actual enrolment was not made until years later under Cyrenius, the Governor of Syria. Nothing is of first importance, except that which fulfils the purposes of God. Those purposes are connected with the lowly Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, rather than with the proud Emperor in his palace over the seas.

*Sec. 2. Vers. 8-20:* The angels and the shepherds.

From earliest times, the calling of the shepherd had been associated with faith. Doubtless the sacrificial thought is prominent here, and that tender care, reminding us of the true Shepherd of His sheep. Abel, Jacob and David were all shepherds and men of faith. These nameless shepherds here clearly belong to the same company, and to such heaven will make known its wondrous secret. The angels perform much the same office that the star did in Matthew. That was the light of heaven shining afar and bringing distant worshipers to the Babe in Bethlehem. This is the chorus of heaven making known to those near at hand the birth of the Son of David. The two lines cross each other without confusion. The praise of the angels gives the two-fold theme of this Gospel. It is "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth; " peace in which that glory expresses itself in good will to men, resulting in everlasting peace. It is fitting that this truth should be proclaimed in the shepherds' ears, for only by sacrifice could it be made good.

*Sec. 3. Vers. 21-39:* The presentation in the temple.

Here, everything prescribed in the law is fulfilled. We need hardly say that no defilement needed to be put away in connection with the birth of our blessed Lord; but just as in His

baptism and in His death, He stands as the representative of His people, we may say that at the very time of His presentation to God, the witness of the sacrifice of Himself is given in order that His people may be presented and cleansed in the presence of God (21-24).

Simeon represents the remnant, as also did the others of whom we have spoken. He had reached the time, before he should depart in peace, when the Lord's Christ should appear. His life therefore passes out of view in the sweet melody which his faith makes: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word ; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation" (25-32).

Turning to the parents, as the Spirit of God in grace associates Joseph with the mother, Simeon pronounces the blessing upon them, but foretells that cross which should reveal many hearts, and the sword which should pierce her own. Thus, at His very birth, the shadow of Calvary is seen, not in gloom however, but showing the changeless purpose of love which no difficulty can thwart and which even death cannot quench (33-35).

The widowed Anna joins in this praise. Most touching is it to see these aged ones, the parents of John, Simeon and Anna, the fires of nature all quenched, earthly hopes all vanished, breaking forth into joy; for the fountain of perpetual youth has sprung up in their hearts and is even now flowing forth.

Sec. 4. Vers. 40-52: The growth of the Child and His obedience.

This early part of our Lord's life closes with the account of the scene in the temple where the evident consciousness of His relationship to the Father is present with Him while coupled with perfect naturalness as a child that hungered for knowledge. We need to keep both thoughts in our minds, whether we are able fully to harmonize them or not, for in both together is the true conception of the person of Christ.

Subdivision *III*. Chaps. 3-4: 13. His baptism, genealogy and temptation.

We pass over the intervening years between the glimpse of how His private life was spent at Nazareth and His public manifestation to Israel. This was far from being a fruitless time, we may be sure. It would answer to the ten days prior to the keeping up of the lamb from the tenth day to the fourteenth, during which its unblemished character would be manifested. How the eye and heart of God feasted upon the perfection of that Life whose inward reality was known only to Himself! They were not fruitless years, therefore, but most precious in the sight of God, and the ground upon which He pronounced at the very beginning of His ministry His satisfaction in Him.

Sec. 1. Vers. 1-14: The ministry of John the Baptist.

Again we get a glimpse at the government of Rome, only to pass it by however, and that of Herod the false king, with the other rulers in the territory about Israel. Even the double high priesthood fails to gain more than a passing word, for God's messenger is found neither in the imperial government-house nor the palaces of the petty kings dependent upon Rome, not even in the religious centres, but a lowly, separate man in the wilderness, crying aloud and letting the people know their sins. This is the preaching of John the Baptist which stirs all Judah.

Sec. 2. Vers. 15-20: The coming of Christ announced.

But John does not confine his preaching to repentance. The people are to rest in no reformation, however real, but to look forward to One who was coming after, who should purge His floor of every worthless thing, gathering His wheat and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Luke shows the inevitable result of such preaching as this: John is shut up in prison because of his stern denunciation of sin.

Sec. 3. Vers. 21-38: The baptism of our Lord and the descent of the Spirit upon Him.

Briefly, but how vividly, Luke records the baptismal scene! We see the holy Jesus in prayer after His baptism, as though identifying Himself with His repentant people. Upon Him the heavens are opened and God's voice bears witness

that He is the beloved Son, the object of the Father's delight (21, 22). In immediate connection with this declaration from heaven as to who He is, we have the human genealogy of our Lord, giving us, doubtless, His descent through Mary, which is traced back to its source in Adam and up to God. Thus we have the twofold thought of the Son of Man, His human and yet divine Sonship: the one linking Him with humanity, while sinlessly separated from it in nature and life; the other a direct link with God, the Son of God by virtue of His Being, as essentially **divine** (23-38).

*Sec. 4.* Ch. 4: 1-13: The temptation.

Our Lord was not only born of the Holy Spirit, but especially anointed by Him for His public ministry, and thus led into the wilderness. How all contrasts with the first man whose position in the genealogy has just been noticed. He was in the garden, surrounded by everything that met his need and spoke of the goodness of God. Our Lord was in the *wilderness*, where everything spoke of moral desolation and where He suffered the privations attendant upon that position. Here He is assailed by the tempter.

We notice that the order here varies from that given in Matthew. The first temptation is the same in each, though more specific in Luke, and the answer is the same (1-4). The second and third attack change places in Luke. The

chronological order is probably given in Matthew. The spiritual order which Luke suggests indicates that our Lord was approached first from the side of His human need. Next to that is placed the temptation from the side of human ambition. Neither moved Him for a moment. He would not relieve His hunger, save in dependence upon God, nor would He have all the kingdoms of the world, save as given from that blessed hand (5-8). The concluding temptation (9-13) is the one to forestall God's purposes and to presume upon them. If He is the Chosen of God, let Him cast Himself down from the temple's pinnacle, so that God will be compelled to recognize Him at once by preserving His life. Our Lord rejects this, as the former ones, in simple obedience, and the enemy's temptation ends there.

This closes the first or more personal part of our Lord's life. How delightful it is, even in this brief way, to dwell upon its various features!

Division II. (Chaps. 4: 14—18: 34.) *His ministry of the gospel of peace.*

We come now to the main division of the book, in which is unfolded and developed the ministry of salvation and the presentation of Himself as the Saviour of men, reaching out from Judaism to the world wherever there may be found a heart to receive Him. Meanwhile, the opposition

among His own people is gradually manifested until it reaches the culmination stage, the account of which is given in the last division.

*Subdivision I. Chaps. 4 : 14—6 : 49.* Grace and truth by Jesus Christ.

This first subdivision presents the Lord in grace and declaring salvation for souls whoever and wherever they might be. He also calls His disciples about Him to continue with Him in the service of love, rejoicing to have also about Him publicans and sinners in spite of the opposition of pharisaism and self-righteousness. We note the prominence of prayer here as throughout the Gospel, a characteristic illustration of the absolute humanity of our blessed Lord. Prayer, the spirit of dependence, is the expression of the human relationship.

sec. 1. Vers. 14-30: In the synagogue at Nazareth.

The scene here is most instructive: the Prophets bearing witness to the grace of Him whose coming they foretold, a grace that needs but broken hearts to minister to. We have first the reading from the prophet (14-21), followed by the application (22-30). What our Lord presses is that it has ever been the sad fact that those in closest outward nearness have been the slowest to receive the blessings of God's mercy. The widow of Sarepta and Naaman, both Gentiles, bear witness to this.



As has been frequently noticed, our Lord is here declaring only the acceptable year of the Lord, therefore when He reaches that point in the reading of the prophet, He closes the book. "The day of vengeance of our God" waits, in His long-suffering, until the last sinner, Jew or Gentile, shall be gathered in. This mercy to the *Gentiles* fills the people with rage, and they would forthwith have cast Him down from the brow of the hill, had His hour come; but until that time, none could touch Him.

*Sec. 2.* Vers. 31-44: In the synagogue at Capernaum and connected events.

If He met with rejection in the synagogue at Nazareth where He had been brought up ("He came unto His own and His own received Him not"); at Capernaum He meets the power of Satan which must fall prostrate before Him (31-37). So, too, the fever of Simon's mother-in-law subsides (38, 39), and in the evening hour, He heals multitudes, casting out demons whom He will not allow to bear witness of Him. He cannot tarry to continue His work of healing, for He was more than a physician-He must pass on, working while it is day, in declaring the gospel of God (40-44).

*Sec. 3.* Ch. 5: 1-26: Peace, purity and power.

We have next three features which go together, giving us a view of the full effect of the gospel. In the first, in the miracle of gathering the fishes,

we have Simon brought under conviction, then reassured-typical of peace proclaimed to the sinner and entrusting him with the ministry of the gospel.

Next (12-16), the cleansing of the leper shows the putting away of the guilt and defilement of sin, while the healing of the paralytic (17-26) illustrates the power that goes with forgiveness of sin. Thus we have grouped together, peace with God, cleansing and liberty.

Sec. 4. Ch. 5: 27-6: 11 : A new creation.

We might say we have in this portion an illustration of the complete newness effected by salvation. We have seen the display of this in the previous section. We now see the vessel in which the display is made.

First, we have in the call of Levi and the feast at which are gathered publicans and sinners (27-32) the great principle of this Gospel, sinners gathered about the Lord.

Next (33-39) our Lord justifies His disciples' neglect of the matter of fasting by declaring the presence of the Bridegroom, which indicates a new order of things-the new bottles in which the new wine of grace alone can be put. The old bottles of formalism could never contain this. And yet how slow is man to desire this new working of the Spirit of God, declaring the old is better!

This is now illustrated in two scenes of con-

troversy with the Pharisees about the Sabbath (6: 1-11) : the first, about the disciples plucking the ears of corn for their hunger (1-s), where our Lord cites the rejected David ignoring the ceremonial law of the showbread, and then declares His supremacy over the Sabbath. As has already been pointed out, if Christ is rejected, the whole system based on man's righteousness-a righteousness which, in fact, did not exist-must lapse. The other incident is the healing of the man with the withered hand in the synagogue (6-11). Here the argument is, shall divine mercy and goodness rise above human legalism? There can be but one answer, although they, alas, in face of such grace as this, but plot our Lord's destruction.

Sec. 5. Vers. 12-49: The call of the disciples and the sermon on the mount.

Again, we notice how at each important stage in His service our Lord is found in prayer. Thus, before the choice of His disciples, one of whom was to be a traitor, He spends the night in prayer. Having chosen them, He comes down with them from the isolated peak to a more level plain, still on the mountain, where He addresses the vast multitudes who resort to Him to be healed.

Next, we have the sermon on the mount in a much abridged and altered form, which illustrates that in Luke we have a re-arrangement of subjects in order to bring out distinctively the

theme of the Evangelist. We have here first the beatitudes (20-26) in a different form, and addressed more particularly to His disciples, and balanced with the corresponding woes pronounced upon those who have received their portion in this life.

Following this (27-31), we have the attitude of love toward one's enemies, so characteristic of our Lord, and that which is to mark His disciples, who are His representatives. This love is to be in spite of all manner of evil treatment and not for the sake of present reward. Those who love their enemies and do good, hoping for nothing in return, manifest themselves as children of God (32-35). Details of this are given which require rather prayer and meditation than further explanation (36-38).

Next (39-45) is the pressing of consistency upon them. The blind cannot lead the blind. We cannot cast out motes when we have a beam in our own eye. There must be a good tree if there is to be good fruit. In all this, He is saying under another form that we are to imitate Him. This can only be done by being partakers of His nature. The whole address closes (46-49) with a solemn emphasis put upon the eternal issues that are at stake. The mere calling Him "Lord, Lord," will never avail. The house must be built upon the Rock or it will fall when the storm comes.

Subdivision *II*. Chaps. 7-8: 21. Samples of salvation.

The previous subdivision showed us our Lord in grace entering upon the active service of salvation-calling, blessing and instructing. The present portion carries on this blessed work, furnishing special illustrations of how salvation reaches the most unlikely objects and brings them into wondrous nearness of blessing.

Sec. I. Vers. 1-17: Power unhindered by distance or death.

The two miracles here recorded display the power of divine grace : for we must ever remember that every miracle wrought upon the body is a type of the operation of grace upon the soul, unhampered by distance and undeterred even by death.

The first of these, the healing of the centurion's servant (1-10), illustrates faith in the Gentile, always a favorite theme with our Evangelist. The second, the raising of the widow's son at Nain (11-17), is one of the three narratives of resurrection, two of which we find in Luke, this one being peculiar to him. The widowed mother may suggest Israel and her only hope of mercy lost, save as quickened by the power of Christ. The time is coming when there will be such a quickening for the remnant who are saying, "Our hopes are lost." What will their restoration be but life from the dead? Applying the lesson

individually, we have a suggestive picture of the awful irony of sin. Nain, "pleasant," is but a scene of death. What would this beautiful world be without the compassionate power of Him who is able to raise dead souls?

*Sec. 2. Vers. 18-35: John the Baptist.*

John's waning faith in the prison is doubtless revived by our Lord's message, giving the fruits of His ministry (18-23), while His testimony about John to the people shows the Lord's estimate of faith, even though it may waver. Farthest removed was John from the indifference of the masses who neither cared for the call to repentance preached by the forerunner nor the gracious gospel proclaimed by our Lord (24-35).

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How sweet, in this lovely scene, is that grace which can bring a sinner penitent to the feet of the Lord Jesus, finding heaven there in His presence, while, with the knowledge of forgiveness, the fragrant perfume is poured upon His feet!

*Sec. 4. Ch. 8: 1-21: The parable of the sower manifesting what professes to be of God.*

The parable occupies the central place here, but is preceded and followed by other significant portions. We have first **(1-3)** the character of those who have been attracted to Him, who delight to minister of their substance to Him. These, we may well say, are a continuation in character of what just precedes. Faith which

**has** received salvation leads now to serve Him who has saved.

Next follows the parable and the interpretation (4-15). The effect of the Word received is suggested in the simile of the candle (16-18). They were to take heed, not only *what* they hear, but *how* they hear it, that it may be productive in the life. Lastly, we have a kind of contrast to the first section. His mother and brethren desire to see Him (19-21). Here are the claims of nature; there are the attractions of grace. How different the two, and how clearly does our Lord mark the distinction.

*Subdivision III. Chaps. 8: 22-9 : 36.* Salvation ending in glory.

The same reaching out in grace to man goes on here, casting out demons, healing the sick and raising the dead, ministering to the hungry, and reaching the culmination on the Mount of Transfiguration, where God displays for a moment the climax of grace, both for our Lord and **those** who have tasted of that grace.

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At the outset of what we may call a new departure in service, the opposition of nature-answering perhaps to the world-is first encountered and quelled.

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Following the display of His power over na-

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*Sec. 3. Vers. 40-56: Defilement and death.*

What strikes us in the woman (43-48) is the faith which touches the border of His garment for cleansing from the defilement of the flesh. The raising of Jairus' daughter (49-56) is the second of the miracles of raising the dead that we have in Luke. When the child is raised, He commands her to be fed. We notice the order, salvation first and then nourishment.

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Here we have first the sending forth of the twelve (1-6). Next (7-g), Herod's perplexity as to what was being done. John he had beheaded ; who was this One ? Sooner or later he shall know. Lastly (10-11), in beautiful climax, we have the feeding of the five thousand. Thus salvation is not only proclaimed but illustrated in the satisfying of the needy poor.

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This brief portion introduces the beginning, we may say, of the progress toward Jerusalem where He was to be offered up. It is marked by victory over Satan, the manifestation of the lowliness of Christ and the testing for all who would follow with Him.

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It is most significant that in this Evangelist the Lord's purpose to go to Jerusalem is declared so

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If we desire to follow Him, it must be as counting the cost, and with no hope of earthly ease and no thought of turning back.

*Subdivision V. Chaps. 10—18: 34. Closing and complete testimonies to the gospel of God and the responsibility of man.*

This fifth subdivision, while having a unity which suggests its being thus looked at as a whole, also divides into five sections, the number in each case speaking of human responsibilities and God bringing man into association with Himself. Because of the largeness of the main portion, it is divided into more numerous sections.

*Sec. I. Chs. 10-11 : 13: Man's neighbor.*

Our Lord is exemplifying throughout this part the fact that He is man's neighbor, although the direct teaching is in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

*a. Ch. 10: 1-24: The seventy sent forth.*

This is peculiar to Luke and is a supplementary going forth in grace to win man if possible

to God. The commission is first given (1-16). Next (17-20), we have the return of the seventy and our Lord's anticipative victory over the power of Satan. Lastly (21-24), our Lord rejoices that His Father is revealing the precious secrets of His grace to babes.

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Mary's part at the feet of the Lord Jesus, in contrast with Martha's wearisome service, shows the relation between service and communion. Our Lord prizes subject sitting at His feet above all restless activity; while true service will flow from communion.

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Sec. 2. Chs. 11 : 14—12 : The opposition of self-righteousness and the issues of eternity.

The opposition we have noticed in Matthew is recorded here in Luke. In the face of all the ministry of grace which our Lord had wrought, the wilful unbelief of the Pharisees heads up in the blasphemy which shows them to be self-blinded. This gives occasion not only for the solemn warning as to their impending hopeless condition, but also for His denunciations of their hypocrisy, and the contrast between time and eternity.

a. Vers. 14-26: The strong man bound.

We thus characterize this portion, which may be subdivided into smaller ones as: the blasphemous accusation (14-20); Satan spoiled (21-23); the return of the unclean spirit, which will take place at the end of the age (24-26).

b. Vers. 27-36 : The generation characterized.

The Lord distinguishes here between outward privilege and inward reality. It may be divided

thus: true blessedness (27, 28); One greater than Jonah or Solomon (29-32); let not light become darkness (33-36).

*c.* Vers. 37-54: Woes upon the Pharisees and the Lawyers.

Our Lord does not shrink, when the issue is made, from boldly denouncing the hypocrisy and enmity of the religious leaders. We have first the sins of the Pharisees (37-44), and next the hypocrisy of the lawyers (45-54), who are one with those who slew the righteous men from the beginning.

*d.* Ch. 12:1-12: Beware of hypocrisy, and fear not.

This part evidently belongs to what has preceded. Our Lord's denunciations of sin continue with special reference to the blasphemous charges made by the Pharisees against Him. His disciples were not to fear man, even though he might kill the body; nor were they to be in doubt of God's love, for He who watched the sparrow's fall would not forget them.

*e.* Vers. 13-31 : The true estimate of life.

How mean sordid covetousness appears in the light Of death (13-23). Therefore, let us not be occupied with amassing wealth here, but remember Him who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies, and seek His Kingdom first of all (24-31).

*f.* Vers. 32-48: Remember the end.

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at the feet of Jesus, this points to its effect—it leads to prayer. Our Lord's example in this incites His disciples to ask to be taught to pray. In this summary of the prayer, briefer than in Matthew, we have an illustration of how Luke's order is moral, though doubtless our Lord may have often taught the same truths in similar words at different times, just as we have similar miracles repeated.

Sec. 2. Chs. 11 : 14—12 : The opposition of self-righteousness and the issues of eternity.

The opposition we have noticed in Matthew is recorded here in Luke. In the face of all the ministry of grace which our Lord had wrought, the wilful unbelief of the Pharisees heads up in the blasphemy which shows them to be self-blinded. This gives occasion not only for the solemn warning as to their impending hopeless condition, but also for His denunciations of their hypocrisy, and the contrast between time and eternity.

a. Vers. 14-26: The strong man bound.

We thus characterize this portion, which may be subdivided into smaller ones as: the blasphemous accusation (14-20); Satan spoiled (21-23); the return of the unclean spirit, which will take place at the end of the age (24-26).

b. Vers. 27-36 : The generation characterized.

The Lord distinguishes here between outward privilege and inward reality. It may be divided

thus: true blessedness (27, 28); One greater than Jonah or Solomon (29-32); let not light become darkness (33-36).

*c.* Vers. 37-54: Woes upon the Pharisees and the Lawyers.

Our Lord does not shrink, when the issue is made, from boldly denouncing the hypocrisy and enmity of the religious leaders. We have first the sins of the Pharisees (37-44), and next the hypocrisy of the lawyers (45-54), who are one with those who slew the righteous men from the beginning.

*d.* Ch. 12:1-12: Beware of hypocrisy, and fear not.

This part evidently belongs to what has preceded. Our Lord's denunciations of sin continue with special reference to the blasphemous charges made by the Pharisees against Him. His disciples were not to fear man, even though he might kill the body; nor were they to be in doubt of God's love, for He who watched the sparrow's fall would not forget them.

*e.* Vers. 13-31 : The true estimate of life.

How mean sordid covetousness appears in the light Of death (13-23). Therefore, let us not be occupied with amassing wealth here, but remember Him who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies, and seek His Kingdom first of all (24-31).

*f.* Vers. 32-48: Remember the end.

This portion looks forward to eternity and the coming of our Lord. In the light of that, we can afford to be givers rather than graspers (32-34). The loins are to be girt, and we are, in faithful stewardship (35-40), to wait for the coming of the Lord (41-44), for unfaithfulness here means sudden judgment (45, 46), a judgment in proportion to knowledge (47, 48).

g. Vers. 49-59: Closing warnings.

This closing portion of our Lord's solemn address is an application of what He had said throughout. He has come for judgment, but mercy must precede - a mercy effected only through His baptism unto death for us (49, 50). While it is the gospel of peace, it does not bring outward peace, but rather separation between those who receive and those who reject it (51-53). The signs of the end of all things were present even then, and how much more so now! We are morally in the last days (54-57). This section closes with the earnest exhortation to the leaders to agree with their adversary quickly. How solemn the thought that instead of being servants of God, they were His adversaries.

Sec. 3. Chs. 13-16 : The parables of grace and of judgment.

We have in this section largely those parables which set forth the patience of God and the development of the Kingdom during our Lord's absence, together with those precious parables

of salvation of which **the gem is that of the prodigal son**. The whole section closes with the final scene of the rich man and Lazarus.

a. Ch. 13: The futility of mere justice and the yearnings of divine love.

Leading up, as this portion does, to the great parables of grace of which we have spoken, we find at the outset, in a number of details, the futility of mere legalism or external correctness to produce fruit or secure salvation. All are alike under sin and therefore except they repent shall all perish. Our Lord draws this lesson from the remark of **those who** thought others were sinners, rather than themselves (1-5). In the parable of the fig-tree in the vineyard we see the long-suffering of God and the intercession of the vine-dresser. How patiently did the Lord seek to elicit fruit from poor barren Israel!

The miracle of the woman healed on the Sabbath finds a place here. Sabbath healing was always the occasion for a self-righteous outburst, which our Lord meets by justifying His grace in reaching a daughter of Abraham (10-17). This element of legalism has been brought over into the present dispensation. So our Lord compares the Kingdom of Heaven to the outward development of the mustard tree (18, 19), and the inward progress of evil to the pervasive influence of leaven (20, 21). He would remind them that the time was coming when all who now reject Him

and refuse to enter by mercy's door would knock in vain when it is too late (22-30). In response to the warning that Herod would kill Him (31-35), the Lord declares that even the cruelty and cunning of that "fox" cannot be compared with the guilt of highly favored Jerusalem, over which He pronounces a lament for her hardness of heart.

*b. Ch. 14: The gospel feast.*

This chapter seems to record what took place at the Pharisee's house where our Lord had been invited to eat bread on a Sabbath day. The dropsical man who is healed (1-6) suggests that dropsical condition of the Pharisees themselves, puffed up with a form of knowledge of the word of God and religious observances. They needed to be cured. Next (7-11), the Lord inculcates the opposite of this pride, a true humility which takes the lowest place and then is elevated. So, too, the invitation to God's feast is given not to the wealthy, but to the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind (12-14).

This leads to the parable of the great supper (15-24) where those who were first invited, the Jews, shut themselves out and thus opened the way for the gospel to go out to all the world. Lastly, we have a warning as to counting the cost. Salvation is no trifle, and one must be prepared to renounce that which is nearest and dearest to nature; not attempting to build a



tower or engage in a warfare for which he is not prepared. Let him rather seek those conditions of peace which suggest the blessed gospel that ever lingers close to the most solemn warnings (25-35).

c. Ch. 15: The lost, found.

Such teaching draws the publicans and sinners to hear Him; and to justify them, while rebuking the opposition of the Pharisees, our Lord pronounces this great trinity-parable, the finding of the lost. It is to be noticed that the entire chapter seems to be called a single parable, although there are three distinct ones which go to make it up. Each of these brings out the seeking of the lost by one of the persons of the Godhead.

First, we have the Shepherd seeking the lost sheep (1-7). Here, evidently, we have the Son leaving in the wilderness that (of which we do not hear again) which needed no repentance, to go after the one lost sheep which it is His joy to bring back to God.

Second, we have the seeking of the Holy Spirit for the lost piece of money which is to be an adornment to our Lord in glory (8-10). The Spirit's activities here are veiled in the instruments whom He uses, the sweeping, the dust, the seeking diligently, remind us of the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting of sin and awakening the sinner to his true condition. Joy too is the end of this.

Third, the very heart of the Father is told out in its precious love, and grace, and joy, in the parable of the prodigal son (11-32). We need add no words here, save to remember how our Lord has declared the Father's name to us.

“ Who can tell the depths of bliss  
Spoken by the Father's kiss? ”

The return of the prodigal casts into dark contrast the pride and unbelief of the elder brother who evidently stands for the Pharisees.

*d.* Ch. 16: 1-13: The unfaithful steward.

Here our Lord presses the importance of preparing for the future. Even a steward who looks after his future welfare is esteemed a wise (not a righteous) man. If the children of this world know how to prepare for their future, how careful should God's children be to use this world's goods in such a way that they will welcome them to the everlasting habitations. This surely is not meant to teach the gospel, which is presented in chapter 15, but to bring out the responsibility of stewardship, which is the theme of this portion.

*e.* Vers. 14-31: The veil lifted from the future.

The Pharisees deride such use of wealth. They will not waste good money by giving it to the poor and ministering to the needy in the hope of future recompense. The Lord therefore shows how the Law and the Prophets had borne witness against this very conduct. Since the preach-

ing of John, men were pressing into the Kingdom. These Pharisees who deify the law and go on in sin must remember there is a time coming when their portion will be where the rich man was, while the despised poor and needy are with Lazarus at home in nearness to Abraham. We need not say how clearly this solemn portion declares the eternity of future retribution for the ungodly.

Sec. 4. Chs. 17-18: 8: The character of the remnant and the coming of the Lord.

Several portions here bring out the varied aspects in which the remnant in the latter days will be seen, and, as is customary with our Evangelist, the gathering in of outsiders to form a part of that remnant; while the main part of this portion describes the character of His coming in His kingdom, with the attitude of the remnant until that time.

a. Vers. 1-4: Despise not the little ones,

The remnant at any time is always marked by lowliness. Solemn is the responsibility of those who would stumble one of the weakest of these. At the same time, let not the faithful and loving rebuke of sin be considered an occasion of stumbling.

6. Vers. 5-10: The growth of faith seen in serving without thought of a reward.

Most important is this. We are unprofitable servants, for we surely do not deserve credit for

doing merely what is our duty; and who has even measured up to that ?

c. Vers. 11-19: The ten lepers cleansed.

Out of the ten, but one, and he a Gentile, returns to give glory to God. How few enter into the true spirit of God's grace and become worshipers and followers of the Lord, while the most who have received outward benefit go on with an empty formalism.

d. Vers. 20-37: The manifestation of the Kingdom.

As we have already seen, our Lord has been pressing the final issues. He is looking forward to the end and His coming kingdom, which means judgment upon those who are not ready. He compares the days of Noah and the days of Lot to the time when He shall be revealed. Men will go on thinking of business and pleasure, utterly forgetful of the coming judgment until it falls.

e. Ch. 18: 1-8: The unjust judge.

In contrast with the carelessness of those going on in their own way until overtaken by judgment, we have the poor widow, suggestive of the remnant in their desolation, crying day and night—not to the unjust judge who would even for his own ease grant her request, but—to One who never fails to judge the fatherless and the widow. Here we have an incentive to prayer, for all time, of the strongest kind.

*Sec. 5.* Ch. 18: 9-34: Grace, not legalism, the only power for following Christ.

This great division of our Gospel draws to a close with the same precious theme of salvation prominent, emphasizing the truth that grace must be apprehended in simplicity, rather than a legal obedience which we never render, if we are in any measure to follow our Lord in His path of suffering.

a. Vers. 9-14: The Pharisee and the publican.

Pride has no need, while self-abasement means justification.

b. Vers. 15-17: The spirit of a little child.

This is only another view of the publican. Self-abasement means the simplicity of faith, and such indeed become as a little child.

c. Vers. 18-27: The rich ruler.

In contrast with the publican and the little children, we have here one who seems so ready to do, who professes to have kept the law, and who when tested in the simplest way as to whether God or self is supreme in the heart, sorrowfully turns his back upon the Lord.

d. Vers. 28-30: True discipleship always rewarded.

The Lord here shows that a forsaking of all, not in order to get salvation, but for His sake, will never fail of its reward.

e. Vers. 31-34: Going up to Jerusalem.

The true character of following Him is seen

here, It is the way of the cross, although not then understood; and indeed we are never to seek suffering for its own sake, but to follow the Lord, whatever suffering may be involved.

Division III. (Chaps. 18: 35-24). *The sacrificial work by which God is made known to man and man is brought to God.*

As they draw near to Jerusalem we enter upon the last stage of our Lord's life. May we at each view find something fresh to stir our hearts to gratitude and love. The scene is the same in all, but Luke, after his manner, gives us that which is appropriate to his great theme, the gospel of salvation going out to the most unlikely.

Subdivision I. Chaps. 18: 35—21: 36. The first stage.

This subdivision, beginning with the opening of the eyes of Bartimæus, includes the various parables of responsibility, the entry into Jerusalem, the effort of the Pharisees and Sadducees to ensnare Him, and the prediction of the closing days.

Sec. 1. Ch. 18: 35—19: 27: Grace and responsibility.

We have two examples of grace, and a parable of responsibility.

a. Vers. 35-43: Bartimæus.

This is the prelude to the final journey to Jerusalem, typical of how in the latter days Is-

rael's eyes will be opened, and how, wherever a soul owns its need, that need will be met.

b. Ch. 19: 1-10: Zacchæus.

The symbolic act of opening blind eyes is succeeded by the clear gospel of grace to the rich publican Zacchæus, one who receives Christ, and whose life shows, not empty form, but genuine faith.

c. Vers. 11-27: Responsibilities during the King's absence.

Growing out of these two acts of grace, we have the responsibility ever connected with it, in the parable of the pounds. While very similar to that of the talents in Matthew, it differs in several respects. The like gift is given to each servant, for responsibility is the same in kind if not in degree. Here, the *measure of faithfulness* is varied and rewards given according to that faithfulness, while that which fails to recognize the grace of the Master and calls Him a hard man, refusing any exercise of what has been entrusted to him, meets with judgment.

Sec. 2. Ch. 19: 28-48: The entry into Jerusalem.

Most beautiful is this scene where the Lord looks down upon the city with divine sorrow, enters it amid the plaudits of those who follow Him, and cleanses the temple.

a. Vers. 28-40: The triumphal entry.

The colt here is seen alone, and not, as in

Matthew, in company with its mother. It is grace entirely, not government. The King enters amidst the plaudits of His people; and when the Pharisees would check the disciples in their praise, He replies the stones would cry out if they held their peace.

*b.* Vers. 41-44: Divine lamentation.

What a sight we have as we see our Lord in tears!

Dear to His heart was that city where so soon He was to be crucified. How gladly would He have protected them and kept them from the inevitable sorrows they were bringing upon themselves, but it was too late. Pride had blinded their eyes.

*c.* Vers. 45-48: The cleansing of the temple.

Still He goes on if even yet their eyes might be opened. He cleanses the temple, showing its need in the very language of the prophets. All, however, is in vain. The chief priests have determined upon His death.

Sec. 3. Ch. 20 : 1-19 : Their treatment of Christ.

This is similar to what we have already looked at. We have first the question of authority (1-8), and next the vineyard and the heir (9-19). How our Lord brings home to the Pharisees His knowledge of their guilt! and how could they, in the face of this omniscient disclosure of their sin, fail to be brought to repentance? Truly, it was with open eyes that they were saying:            is



the Heir; come, let us kill Him;" and yet, such is grace, that later still another opportunity is given them ; as Peter says: " I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. "

Sec. 4. Ch. 20: 20—21: 4: The questions from and to unbelief.

We have here the questions of those who feign an interest only to ensnare the Lord.

a. Vers. 20-26: Tribute to whom tribute is due.

Grace does not relieve from responsibility to the powers that be, while the claims of God are ever supreme.

b. Vers. 27-40: After death, what ?

The question of the Sadducees as to family relationships in the resurrection brings out the truth as to the glory of that age. Necessarily, there is a change in the future. That which has to do with time passes, while all that is of grace is enduring. Our Lord also takes occasion to show how Moses, whom the Sadducees professed to believe, taught the resurrection: God declaring Himself to be the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob-God, not of the dead, or extinct, but of the *living*. Therefore the patriarchs were not really dead, but living, and this was the pledge of their resurrection.

c. Vers. 41-44: David's Son and Lord.

How faith delights at the paradoxes of Scripture! We can answer that which was inexplica-

ble to the Pharisees ; we know Him who was both the *Son* of David, and his Lord.

*d.* Vers. 45-47: Warnings against self-righteousness.

The scribes having manifested themselves in their questions, our Lord can manifest them before the people. They love the chief places and to be themselves exalted, while all is for a pretence.

*e.* Ch. 21: 1-4: Two mites.

Contrasted with the hypocrisy of the scribes and the ostentatious liberality of the rich, our Lord singles out the poor widow whose heart is in what she gives, a gift measured not by its apparent worth, but by its character. And He still sits over against the treasury and watches what we cast therein.

*Sec.* 5. Vers. 5-36: The prophetic discourse.

We need not dwell long upon this, as we have already gone over it in Matthew and Mark.

*a.* Vers. 5-24: The predicted destruction of Jerusalem.

This portion differs from that in Matthew and Mark in that it seems to refer more definitely to the first destruction of Jerusalem under the Romans. This is typical of the final judgment upon the nation, which, however, is not dwelt upon in Luke.

*b.* Vers. 25-36: The coming of the Son of Man.

Here we are in the time of the end, and the signs of the distress are manifest; but when the world is quaking, the remnant can lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh. They are to watch the shooting of the fig-tree, and whenever the signs of His coming draw near, they are to recognize them. Meanwhile, as in the place of responsibility, they are to watch.

*Subdivision II. Chaps. 21 : 37—23. Redemption by the cross.*

We enter here upon the closing scene where the Lord by His own death accomplishes the salvation which He had been proclaiming and ministering throughout this Gospel.

*Sec. I. Ch. 21 : 37—22 : 62 : From the Passover to the betrayal.*

This part gives us the events from the celebration of the passover when Judas made his plot to betray the Lord, up to Gethsemane where the betrayal took place.

a. Ch. 21 : 37-22 : 23: The passover supper.

Our Lord seems to hold Himself aloof from the people who were about to reject Him. It seems as though He would throw as many barriers in the way of their wicked plot as was consistent with His own changeless purpose in grace to go to the cross. Therefore Judas deliberately makes his plot as led by Satan, to which the chief priests gladly agree (21 : 37-22 : 6). Then comes the day of unleavened bread

and the passover feast. We again see how our Lord provided for the feast. The man bearing the pitcher of water may suggest the Old Testament prophecies which pointed forward to what was about to take place (7-13). The Supper itself follows (14-23), where our Lord distinguishes between the passover supper and that new feast which He establishes. Thus, we have the pass-over cup given first in which He will not participate. Israel's joys wait for Him till the coming of the Kingdom of God. Next, the Supper which we celebrate is instituted. We notice here the similarity between Luke and Paul ; a similarity which, as we have already seen, suggests the close connection between this Evangelist and the apostle to the Gentiles. Each in his own way is occupied with the grace of the gospel going out to the Gentiles.

*b.* Vers. 9-38: Words for the disciples.

There follow here special warnings for the disciples as to lowliness, self-confidence and trust. Let them beware of the thought of greatness (24-30). Peter's denial is foretold (31-34); they are to be cast upon God alone (35-38).

*c.* Vers. 39-46: The agony in Gethsemane.

The presence of an angel and the bloody sweat are peculiar to Luke ; both are in perfect accord with his theme, the sufferings of the Son of Man.

*d.* Vers. 47-53 : Betrayed with a kiss; defended with a sword.

Only here is Judas' perfidy rebuked by the Lord : " Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss ? " How powerless, His *own* are to defend Him is shown in the smiting one of the servants with the sword. Our Lord must undo this. He has not come to destroy, but to save.

e. Vers. **54-62**: Peter's denial.

Alas for human love and human righteousness! The crowing of the cock reminds us of that self-confident boasting which ends in open denials of our Lord.

*Sec. 2.* Ch. 22: **63-23: 25**: The two trials.

The two trials, before the high priest and before Pilate, are given here.

a. Vers. **63-71**: The good confession of Christ.

The mock trial before the council is given most briefly. The Lord refuses their questionings; they are only bent upon His destruction: they will neither believe nor let Him go. But He tells them of His coming in power to judge, in answer to their question, Is He the Son of God ? This is sufficient for them, and they give sentence against Him.

b. Ch. 23: **1-4**: The charge,

The trial before Pilate is given here in several parts at which we look separately. Before Pilate they do not accuse Him of being the Son of God, but, in direct falsehood, of forbidding to give tribute to Caesar and declaring that He Himself was a king. Pilate either knows the falsehood

of this or detects it, and in answer to their charge, declares he finds no fault in Him!

c. Vers. 5-12 : Before Herod.

This trial before Herod is given in Luke alone. Herod, the fox who would have killed the Lord, and had slain John the Baptist, would take the opportunity to see some sign; not that his conscience might be awakened, for that had already been done only to be effectually stifled in the beheading of the faithful messenger of God, but to gratify his curiosity. How solemn to see Pilate and Herod alike *in* their refusal to stand by accused Innocence, clasping hands over the death of the Son of God !

d. Vers. 13-25 : The surrender of Pilate.

Brought back from Herod where He had been mocked and set at naught, Pilate makes a weak effort to secure the Lord's *release*. How pitiable that the judge and governor of the proudest nation upon earth, whose subjects were before him, lacked the moral courage to do what he knew was right ! It shows us that what the world needs is not so much power as moral uprightness.

Sec. 3. Vers. 26-56 : The crucifixion.

The narrative of the cross follows, in which we have that which is peculiar to Luke and to his theme.

a. Vers. 26-31 : On the way to Calvary.

Simon the Cyrenian we have already seen im-

pressed into the service to bear the cross after Jesus. From the manner of the narrative we would gather that he was either already a believer or became one afterwards. Perhaps his association with the Lord at this time was used to bring him to repentance and faith. The word to the women is peculiar to Luke. If they were burning the green tree-Christ, what would be done with the dry?-what should the end be of those who had no life?

*b.* Vers. 32-43: The dying thief.

Faith has ever loved to linger here, and we need add very little to what is blessedly familiar to us. From Matthew, we learn that both malefactors were railing upon Him, so that the repentance and faith of the one is all the more striking as taking place during the period of his suffering. It is often said that we have here an exceptional case of salvation. In a sense, it is rather the rule, for it is a sample miracle of grace for every one who sees his just condemnation and turns in faith to the Lord.

*c.* Vers. 44-46: The rent veil. The work finished.

Most briefly is this closing scene described. If there is darkness over the earth, there is light in the presence of God, and the way is opened thither.

*d.* Vers. 47-49: The effects upon the people. The centurion here evidently speaks for others

as well as for himself. Even a hardened Roman soldier must bear witness to the reality of what he has seen.

*c.* Vers. 50—56: The burial.

We have dwelt upon this elsewhere and will refer the reader to it (pages 129, 130).

*Subdivision III. Chap. 24.* The resurrection and ascension.

All that our Lord had set Himself to do is now finished. Nothing remains but for God to set His seal of acceptance upon all that His loved Son had accomplished. It is this which gives its special character to the resurrection, as well as the absolute fact that it was not possible that our Lord should be holden of death. So, both for personal and official reasons, the resurrection is a necessity.

sec. I. Vers. 1—12 : "Why seek ye the living among the dead ?"

The rest of the Sabbath is here linked with the resurrection of the first day. Thus the old and new blend together. The twofold witness of the angels—appropriately spoken of here as *men*—declares to the women who visit the sepulchre that the Lord was not dead, but risen. They recall His words to them ; and remembering these the women return with the joyful tidings to the eleven and other disciples. However, their words are not believed; nor does Peter, who also goes to the sepulchre, seeing it empty,



with the linen clothes lying within, seem to grasp the truth. Doubtless this is the same occurrence as that narrated in John, Peter alone being here spoken of.

*Sec. 2.* Vers. 13-35: On the way to Emmaus.

Our Lord will not let matters rest thus. If His disciples are slow to believe and not ready to diligently seek Him, He will even go after them still; the Good Shepherd will gather together His sheep. He finds two of them wandering afar, though their hearts are sorrowful indeed over what had lately "come to pass." The Lord draws near to them ; He draws out their sorrow and ministers to their wounded hearts from all the written Word; then, when faith has been rekindled, manifests Himself in the breaking of bread. Instantly He vanishes from their sight; but faith brings them back to the rest, there to find the Lord again, who had revealed Himself also to Peter.

*Sec. 3.* Vers. 36-53 : The revelation of the Lord on earth and in heaven.

Beautifully here we have the Lord witnessed to. He is seen first visibly on earth (36-43). He assures them of His identity and makes them realize His bodily resurrection by partaking of food. Next (44-49) He brings before them the Word which had predicted all these things, opening their mind also to understand the Scripture; He appoints them witnesses of these great facts,

and declares that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations. They were, however, to tarry at Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Ghost who would endue them with power for their testimony. This is in accord with the entire Gospel of Luke and links directly with the opening of the Acts by the same author. Lastly (50-53), we see Him ascending. From beloved Bethany, the scene of His earthly communion, "the house of lowliness," He blesses them and in that act is carried up into heaven. The last they see of the beloved Son of Man is with uplifted hands in blessing. Returning to the temple, they wait in joy and peace the promised coming of the Spirit ere they go forth on the ministry of His grace which He had begun "both to do and to teach."

## JOHN

**General Theme**—The Son of God, the Word made flesh and tabernacling amongst men displaying the glory of the Father and the nature of eternal life as seen in Himself; communicating this life to others whom He meets in grace, and bearing witness patiently to those who despise that grace; separating His own from the world of Judaism, as well as heathenism, to be witnesses for Him upon earth, for which He gives them the promise of the Spirit to guide them into all truth; then, leading up their hearts in prayer and worship, He goes to the cross to make available all the grace which He had declared, and in resurrection proclaims it.

Division I. Chaps. 1-2: 22. The Word, the Only Begotten of the Father, declaring Him—the Eternal Life in the person of Christ.

Division II. Chaps. 2: 23—17. Eternal life communicated, seen in its birth, communion and power, with the various stages of opposition, and provision for His own by the way.

Division III. Chaps. 18-21. The offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once whereby all the will of God is effected and its results made known by the risen Lord.

“ Three ” is the number of divine fulness and of manifestation. Its applicability to the life of

our Lord has already been noticed in Mark and Luke. It is peculiarly appropriate to the Gospel of John, for here all the fulness of the Godhead bodily is manifested in the Lord Jesus. The general character of each division is quite similar to that of the previous Evangelists.

The first division shows us our Lord in His individuality, the Eternal Life abiding alone. The second division, by far the largest part of the book, shows us that Eternal Life in its various departments as presented to men for their acceptance or rejection. When communicated, its blessed effects are seen from new birth on to the full outflow of testimony to others. When rejected, the opposition develops and intensifies until it culminates, as we have seen throughout, in the cross. The third division is, of course, the same in each-the death and resurrection of our Lord.

In John we have, as has been elsewhere noted, an entirely different point of view from the three Synoptists. These, as we saw, have a character largely common to them all and different from the fourth Evangelist. In general, we might say that John begins where the rest leave off, not of course historically, but morally. The Lord, for instance, cleanses the temple toward the close of His ministry in the Synoptists. Here, He does it at the beginning, for the simple reason that He is seen as outside Judaism and prac-

tically rejected from the very start. It is also well to remember that this separation is intensified because the Judæan ministry of our Lord is given rather than His labors in Galilee to which the Synoptists are largely confined.

With comparatively few exceptions, the entire scene of our Lord's ministry in John is laid in Judæa. This in itself will account for the different kinds of miracles spoken of and the discourses connected with them. We add here, once for all, that the general manner of our Evangelist is to state a fact connected with which there is some special truth, and then around that fact as a centre our Lord gathers the various spiritual truths belonging to it. In this way, He leads those who have faith, on from the outward miracle to the deeper miracle of grace; while those who reject the testimony of the miracle at the same time go on in an opposition which becomes more pronounced and more inexcusable.

When He has gathered out His own by the truth, a separation is effected between them and the world, so that now the ministry is of a more private character, appropriate to a true Christian position. This leads us further to say that our Evangelist is distinctively the Christian Gospel : that is, Christianity as an established fact, so that we might say it does not so much lead up to Christianity as it looks back from it and traces

it from its inception. This will account for the partial absence of dispensational truth in the Evangelist, and for the explanation of Jewish terms and customs as though his readers were not familiar with them, and for the further fact that the doctrines involved are largely in their full Christian form.

Our Evangelist therefore stands alone, even as our Lord stood alone while here. Few indeed of His disciples understood Him, and yet here and there throughout, we find a faith which apprehends Him and to which He can reveal Himself with a fulness and clearness that is startling in its contrast to what we have in the Synoptists; and yet there is no contradiction between the fourth Gospel and the others. Indeed, it is this which impresses us with the absolute inspiration of the word of God, that where the themes are so different, and the manner of treatment, one would say, almost contradictory, yet the result is a harmony which manifests the master Mind that controls all. Thus, the stamp of truth is upon the whole.

If Luke shows us Christ as the Son of Man, dwelling largely upon His perfect humanity, equally does John present Him as the Son of God, and dwells upon His divine personality. And yet while this is evidently His theme throughout, it is as though the Spirit of God delighted to show the deity of our Lord in the

lowliest circumstances. It is as though God would bring the highest ideas of spiritual excellence into connection with the greatest depths of man's need; and how beautifully the light shines forth in such surroundings!

**Division I. (Chaps. 1-2 : 22.)** *The Word, the Only Begotten of the Father, declaring Him-the Eternal Life in the person of Christ.*

John begins the Bible anew, with a fresh Genesis, where not only the creation is spoken of, but the Creator described as the One in whom was life, which Life was marked by light, a light which reveals the moral state of the darkness into which it enters. The Incarnation is then declared, preceded and followed by a notice of the ministry of John the Baptist, necessary for even the apprehension of Christ. He then is presented, baptized and anointed; begins His ministry ; gathering, in type, a heavenly and an earthly company about Himself. These are the main themes of the first division.

**Subdivision I. Chap. 1 : 1-18.** *The Word, the Life and the Light.*

Our Lord's deity is stated in the most absolute way, and as One in companionship with God in the beginning, as Creator too who also enlightens men. The nature of this Light is then dwelt upon with its rejection by His own people, the Jews; then its effect in men wherever it is received,

by God's will, they become His children. All this is effected through the Word having become flesh-the incarnation.

Sec. 1. Vers. 1-4: The Word with God, and God, Creator, Life and Light.

These words will sufficiently characterize this brief section, which presents subjects for adoring meditation, and is one of the most profound portions of the entire word of God, withal amazingly simple. "The Word" is the expression of thought, suggesting in itself that purpose of the manifestation of the fulness of God to His intelligent creatures. "With God" speaks of the distinction in the person of the Godhead. "Was God" tells us He was essentially divine. The same Person who, become flesh, was in the beginning with God. We compare with this the first chapter of Hebrews and the first of Colossians, where His deity is described in somewhat similar terms, although that which we have here is peculiar to John and sounds the key note, we might say, of his Gospel.

Sec. 2. Vers. 5-11 : The Light and the darkness.

The Life was the light of men which shone in dark'ness. Doubtless, from the beginning, all testimony for God has been through the Word. We have indeed those adumbrations of the incarnation most delightful to trace throughout the Old Testament.

If, however, this Light is to find an entrance,



the opening must be made through a ministry which shows man his need. Therefore John the Baptist is spoken of here-the moral forerunner as he was dispensationally looked at in the other Gospels. "His own," the Jews, do not receive the Lord. This is stated, as we said, at the beginning of the Gospel, a thing which becomes apparent in the other Evangelists toward the middle or close of their narrative.

Sec. 3. Vers. 12-18: The true Tabernacle.

This brief section is so full that it is difficult to characterize it in a single phrase. We have therefore given that which is prominent. First, however, in contrast with the unbelief of His own, we have the blessed results wherever the true Light is received. To such, He gives authority, or right, to become the children of God, whose birth is due not to blood-natural descent; nor to the will of the flesh-human energy in the individual; nor to the will of man-energy exerted from the outside-but to God, entirely a divine work.

"The Word," whom we have seen in His uncreated glory in the first verse, here veils Himself in a tabernacle of flesh. The word "tabernacled" does not necessarily imply that the abode was temporary, but suggests the lowliness and grace of our Lord. Indeed, we find the eternal state described by a similar term; in the new heavens and new earth we see the taber-

nacle of God with men, and He dwelling with them. It tells us of the eternal grace which takes its place in the midst of those He loves.

"The Word " as thus enshrined in its tabernacle, exhibits a Shekinah of glory transcending the evanescent splendor in the tabernacle of old. There, all was in type. Here, all is in reality. No wonder faith cries out exultantly, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father. " It is this tabernacle-glory which took up its abode in the midst of Israel until, cast out by them, it is withdrawn into the heavens; but, blessed be God, still real for faith, it rivets our gaze, still "full of grace and truth." It was to such an One that John bore witness, and faith adds again its testimony that "Of His fulness," a divine fulness in grace, brought to our apprehension, we have received "grace upon grace. " This is contrasted with the law as given by Moses, which could only be a type, and which must give place to the higher revelation of God in the person of His Son. No one could see God under the law and live. Now, in the Only Begotten Son as made known from the bosom of the Father, all the divine affections are come out to us.

*Subdivision II.* Chap. 1: 19-34. The testimony as to Christ by the forerunner, and the Lamb of God marked out by the Spirit descending as a dove upon Him.

Sec. 1. Vers. 19-28: John's testimony as to himself and to Christ.

John has been preaching and baptizing, thus arousing the attention of the religious leaders. They send to ask him, after the manner peculiar to themselves, who he is and what he has to say of himself. He boldly confesses that he is not the Christ, nor yet Elias, nor the Prophet foretold, whom they seem to think is different from the Christ; and when pressed still further, has nothing to say of himself but that he is a voice sounding out in the moral desert of this world the coming of the Lord (Jehovah). When challenged as to why he baptized, John similarly gives a lowly place to the simple rite of water baptism, and points them to One who is in their very midst, of whom they are ignorant, yet infinitely above him.

Sec. 2. Vers. 29-31: Behold the Lamb of God.

How this Evangel of the Lamb of God fits into the testimony of the man who bore witness of sin! He is not satisfied, however, with declaring the sacrificial work of Christ, but points to His divine pre-eminence. It is the One who was before John in point of position, as of course in point of time. As such, John had not known Him, but merely as the promised Messiah. He seems now, however, to confess Him, as he does in a moment, in His divine glory.

*Sec. 3. Vers. 32-34:* Baptized with the Holy Spirit.

John now bears witness to His Godhead. He is not merely the Messiah, but the One in whom the Spirit of God dwells. He had not known Him as such, but God had marked Him out thus, and when John saw the Spirit resting upon Him, he could with fullest assurance declare this was the Son of God who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

*Subdivision III. Chap. 1: 35-42.* The heavenly company.

As soon as John, for the second time, points out the Lord as the Lamb of God, two disciples, one of whom is evidently our Evangelist and the other Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, follow Him. They desire to know where He dwells. He invites them to come and see. Simon is brought into this company and has his new name given to him, Cephas-Peter, "a stone." Thus we have a company formed on the testimony of John to the Lamb of God, a company marked, we may say, by separation unto a heavenly Christ.

*Subdivision IV. Chap. 1: 43-51.* The earthly company.

In the former gathering, the sovereignty of grace stirred up the disciples to follow Jesus. In the present, we see the Lord finding first Philip, and Philip finding Nathanael, to whom he declares the presence of the One of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. Nathanael,

stumbling at the Lord's connection with Nazareth, finds his doubts removed by the Searcher of hearts who has seen him under the fig-tree, standing, we might say, for the remnant of Israel. Nathanael confesses Him *as* the Son of God and the King of Israel, and our Lord promises millennial glory as the "greater "thing compared with His revelation of Himself to Nathanael. Thus, the earthly company is, in type, formed.

*Subdivision V. Chap. 2: 1-12.* The bringing in of this earthly blessing.

The marriage in Cana of Galilee (Galilee is always connected with the remnant in contrast with Jerusalem which is connected with the Pharisees) opens up the order in which blessing is going to be brought to Israel in the latter days. The joy fails in the midst of the feast, even as Israel's joy has ever failed in the midst of her most favored seasons. The waterpots, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, suggest the ordinances of the law. These are empty unrealities until filled with the living power of divine truth. Then drawn out, this truth becomes the wine of joy for Israel's feast of tabernacles.

We note the place the mother of our Lord has at the beginning and again at the close of our Evangelist. Divine grace accords her her rightful place, but guards against the abuse which Rome has made of this.

Our Lord thus sets forth His glory, a glory for His Church and for Israel. His disciples believe on Him; we may be sure, not with the full knowledge of all that was involved, and yet a divine work had been wrought in their soul. Coming down to Capernaum, He remains there among the remnant of Israel for a few days and then passes on to the capital of the nation.

Subdivision *VI. Chap. 2: 13-22*. The temple cleansed.

This would be next in order; if Israel receives blessing, her temple would be purged and the Lord whom she sought would suddenly appear there. So He comes, casting out the merchandise, the Canaanite, as we might say, from the house of the Lord. Instead of bowing to His authority the Jews ask a sign. In His answer, our Lord gives the parable, as we may call it, of His death and resurrection, They will not believe until they believe in *that*; and refusing Him they are left in the darkness. They can only helplessly speak of the great glory of their temple, little realizing that the Tabernacle of God was amongst them, a Tabernacle to be laid down and taken again in threedays. His disciples do not understand this as yet, but the Spirit quickens their memory after the resurrection of our Lord; and thus, as we have seen, the Spirit is ever looking at things from the standpoint of Christianity and of the resurrection.

**Division II. (Chaps. 2 : 23-I 7.)** *Eternal Life communicated, seen in its birth, communion and power, with the various stages of opposition, and provision for His own by the way.*

There is a fulness about this part of the Evangelist which it is impossible to exhaust; which even to apprehend is difficult. We have evidently, throughout, the operation of eternal life upon the hearts of men, seen either in blessing or in judgment. The possession of this life, by that very fact, separates from the world and bears witness to its enmity. It is further described as life in the power of resurrection which, as the Light of the world, illumines every needy, believing soul, and separates from the fold of Judaism, leading indeed up into resurrection-scenes outside this world. With the resurrection of Lazarus, the line of separation between Christ and His people on the one side, and the world and the Jews on the other, is clearly drawn in chapter 12. In the remainder of the division our Lord ministers the promise of comfort, guidance and power to His own in their earthly life, leading their hearts up finally to enter with Him into the privileges of His great, high-priestly, intercessory prayer. The progress therefore is continuous from the beginning of the eternal life in new birth to its full display in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ as revealed in the prayer.

*Subdivision I. Chaps. 2 : 23-4.* The blessing of eternal life imparted to faith.

The blessing circles here, we might say, about two poles, in two opposite characters; the one a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews; the other, a sinful woman of Samaria. To the first, our Lord declares the necessity of new birth; to the second, He reveals Himself. For both, life is provided, but there must be faith to receive it, and the woman in this seems to be first.

*Sec. I. Ch. 2 : 23—3 : 21:* New birth and the basis upon which it rests.

Naturally, when life is our theme, we begin at the beginning, and birth marks practically the beginning of life.

a. Ch. 2 : 23—3 : 8: The need of new birth.

This is the first passover at Jerusalem in our Lord's public ministry. As we have said elsewhere, our Lord's entire life seems grouped about the passover scenes in the Gospel of John. Two classes of observers are impressed with His miracles, and many believe in His name. This is evidently intellectual, without deep conviction. On the other hand, one is evidently awakened in a different manner, and although his timidity prevents him from confessing Christ (he does not do this until the cross) yet there is a sincerity of inquiry which our Lord meets by the solemn declaration of the necessity for new birth. All excellence of the flesh can never rise



higher than itself. If there is anything to link man with God it must be by the Spirit. Nicodemus as a teacher should have gathered this much from the Old Testament itself, where in the longing of David for the creation of a clean heart within him, and the prediction of Ezekiel that God would take away the stony heart out of His people, together with many other typical and prophetic intimations, there was abundance to show the necessity for the new birth. He has however not apprehended it, and our Lord has to remind him of God's sovereignty. The wind blows where and as it will. We see its effects. We cannot trace its cause. So with those born of the Spirit.

*b. Vers. 9-18:* The Son of Man upon the cross, the object of faith and giver of eternal life.

Most precious is the Cross put side by side with the witness to the necessity of new birth. Nicodemus is still pondering, and our Lord asks the teacher of Israel how, if he cannot understand things which God has made known upon earth, he could expect to enter into the heavenly revelations whose glories no one knows but the One who is in heaven. Our Lord proceeds therefore to lay the broad foundation upon which alone man can rest, from which he can gaze into the heavens, and by which those heavens are opened to him. He uses the Old Testament, not by mere intimation as He had done, but by direct

reference to the uplifted serpent. Thus, at the very outset of this Gospel, we have the actual truth of redemption unmistakably set forth. To know God as revealed in the Cross of His Son is salvation and eternal life.

*c. Vers. 19-21:* The Light which manifests all things.

This is the true Light. The condemnation for men is that, when it has entered the world, they refuse to come to it to have their deeds re-proved and put away. This, our Lord speaks of later.

*Sec. 2. Vers. 22-36:* The friend of the Bridegroom rejoicing in the Bridegroom's voice.

We have here a view of the lovely character of John the Baptist. We are so accustomed to think of him as the stern denouncer of sin, that we may **forget** his complete self-effacement when comparing himself with Christ. His disciples may unconsciously be jealous for their master's dignity, but with John there is nothing but joy as he hears how men are flocking to Christ. "He must increase, but I must decrease" is the motto of his life. The closing part here shows how fully John entered into the truth of the place of the Son and His gift of eternal life to every one that believes upon Him.

*Sec. 3. Ch. 4: 1-42:* A well of living water.

We come now to that most delightful of gospel types where our Lord deals not with the master

in Israel, hedged about with his dignity and perhaps self-righteousness, but where divine love is free to go out and seek one afar off.

a. Vers. 1-26: At the well.

We need not more than point out the various stages in our Lord's reaching the heart of the sinner. Notice first how sovereign grace, as He leaves Judæa lest He should appear to be in conflict with His faithful servant John, leads Him not by the ordinary way, beyond Jordan, level and easy to travel, but through the rugged hills of Samaria. He must needs go there to meet the woman. He asks her for a drink of water, not merely to quench His thirst, but rather to afford Him the opportunity to give to her the water of life. This indeed He tells her of almost immediately, for on her expressing surprise that He a Jew should have any dealings with a Samaritan, He says: "If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that asketh thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water. "

Further describing this water, and showing that it is not an earthly thing, He declares it is eternal life. Whoso drinketh of this water, whatever it may be-wealth, pleasure, honors, sin,-drinks only to have his thirst awakened again, a thirst which eventually shall never be slaked in eternity; but he who drinketh of the water which He gives has his thirst quenched forever, and

has in himself a satisfying spring of water ever flowing-to eternal life.

Her desire is now awakened and she asks directly for this water. Our Lord therefore puts His finger upon her sin as the only way in which He could minister the gift of God to her. The sin brought out, she recognizes she is in the presence of one in the counsel of God, and at once, as is so common, begins to speak of religious differences. Again our Lord, while in faithfulness declaring that salvation is of the Jews, tells her the hour is coming when true worship shall neither be in Jerusalem nor in Samaria, but in spirit and in truth, wherever there is a heart that is brought to the knowledge of God. We know this hour is now present. True worshipers, brought by the knowledge of themselves to know also the grace of God, worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. The woman turns instinctively in her thought to the promised Messiah and-amazing grace-she finds herself in His presence? This is the imparting of eternal life. It is the revelation of the Father to a sinful soul by the Christ. The grounds of it do not come out here, of course, but we have the full character of eternal life outlined.

*b.* Vers. 27-42: Fields white unto harvest.

Our blessed Lord's yearning soul longs for others beside the one who had just been brought to know Himself. Leaving her waterpot in the

complete abandonment of self-forgetfulness, she runs to the village where perhaps she had shrunk from the public *gaze* before, and there declares the One she had found—the Christ, who had shown her her sin and whose true character she had learned.

The disciples beg our Lord to take food, but oh, how His soul is feasting! He is making the Father's will, the Father's heart, known to needy souls; He longs too for His disciples to share with Him in gathering a rich harvest for God! Of this harvest we see a first ingathering at this despised city of the Samaritans. Many believed the testimony of the woman, and, coming to the Lord, they have that testimony so confirmed that it is an individual conviction in themselves.

Sec. 4. Vers. 43-54: Mercy spreading to Israel.

Again our Lord reaches Galilee, the place of the remnant, where He meets not with the cold unbelief of the Jews nor with the incredulous questions of their leaders, but with reception by the Galileans who had seen His miracles. He performs another miracle at Cana of Galilee, similar in import though different in character from the previous one, in healing the nobleman's son nigh to death. Our Lord heals him at a distance, going far beyond the faith which thought His presence was needed. It is like our Lord's word to Thomas: "Blessed are they that have

not seen, and yet have believed. " Thus the blessing goes out to Israel.

Subdivision *II*. Chaps. 5-8: 1. Eternal life separating from a world under judgment, sustained by Christ and flowing forth in refreshing to the world.

In this subdivision, we have more of conflict with unbelief than in what has preceded. Indeed, in the first subdivision, beyond the indifference of the leaders, or the slowness of Nicodemus, we have but little manifestation of opposition. But that opposition now rises; and, as we have frequently seen, the occasion is a miracle wrought upon the Sabbath Day. Henceforth, until the 12th chapter, we shall find unbelief and faith going side by side, and the eternal life which the Lord imparts must force its way through all obstacles.

*Sec. I.* Ch. 5: Honor given to the Son who is carrying on His Father's work, an honor to be displayed in the day of judgment. Meanwhile, the eternal life is given to the believer in Him.

a. Vers. 1-9: The healing of the impotent man.

Bethesda, the "house of mercy," with its five porches filled with its multitude of impotent folk suggests the responsibility of man and the powerlessness of the law really to bless, although mercy is held out to those who could fulfil its conditions.

The man has been afflicted thirty-eight years -the length of Israel's wandering in the desert after their refusal to obey God, He confesses his inability, although he seems to think that all he needs is "help." Later on, this seems to indicate a lack of true apprehension of grace on the part of this man, but there is no lack in the grace which goes out to him, healing him and setting him on his feet.

b. Vers. g-18: The broken Sabbath.

The Jews have eyes only for the violation of the ceremonial law and cannot accept a manifest miracle from God as justifying such a violation. The man seems willing enough to play into their hands. Indeed, he had been apparently so self-absorbed as to fail to discern who had healed him. The Lord will not however leave him, but seeks to reach his conscience; the warning He gives him evidently suggesting that all was not right in his soul. At once the poor man shows where his heart is by telling of the Lord to His enemies, and they persecute the Lord because of what they call His violation of the Sabbath. The Lord simply calls attention to the fact that some one else has broken the Sabbath and not Himself. Man's sin has broken God's rest, and ever since the fall-true on the Sabbath as on every other day—"My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Their own conscience should have bowed to this and owned the truth. Instead,

they hate Him still more because of His announced Sonship to the Father. Unlike modern unbelievers, they saw that such a claim meant equality with God.

c. Vers. 19-29: The Son and the Father; eternal life and exemption from judgment the portion of all who believe in Him.

Our Lord here declares in the most unmistakable way His dependence upon the Father and the Father's delight in Him. He assures them that the works which the Father does He also does, and indeed that judgment has been, by the Father, committed into His hand (19-23). Thus, eternal life is the portion of every one who recognizes Christ and believes in the Father who sent Him. Such shall never come into judgment. They have already passed from death into life (24).

The resurrection is next described (25-29)—a spiritual resurrection, which even now is going on, when spiritually dead ones hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear live; and a literal resurrection is coming, when those who are in their graves shall come forth to life or to judgment. This last, as will be noticed, does not separate in time, but only in character, the two resurrections, of the just and of the unjust. We know, from another scripture, that a thousand years intervenes between the two (Rev. 20, 4, 5).



*d.* Vers. 30-47: The witness to the Son of God.

Our Lord speaks first of His own witness, a witness which is true because in all He seeks God's glory (30-32). Next, the testimony of John, a burning and shining light, is spoken of (33-35). Higher than this is the testimony of the Father in the works which He had wrought (36, 37). Last, we have the testimony of Scripture which bears witness of Christ (38-40). 'Why then would they not accept so overwhelming a witness ? Was it not because they had no love of God in their hearts ? He had come in His Father's name. They, not caring for the Father, did not believe Him. Another, the Anti-christ, would come in his own name. Him they would receive, because they loved themselves. How could they believe with this self-love and seeking of honor from man-putting man between their souls and God? The very law of Moses in which they trusted condemned them as guilty. Had they truly believed Moses, they would have owned their sin and thus have known Him of whom Moses wrote; but if they rejected the testimony of the law, which brings to repentance, they would also reject the testimony of Christ in offering them salvation.

Sec. 2. Ch. 6: The Bread of life.

The previous chapter has shown us eternal life given to the believer. It has also shown

how this develops an opposition on the part of self-righteous legalism which leaves the believer alone in a hostile world. Our present chapter therefore provides for the sustenance of this life in the wilderness scene, and at the same time it bears witness to unbelief, pleading with opposers to accept the grace of God.

**a. Vers. 1-21 : The twofold miracle.**

As we have said, our Lord's discourses, in John, gather around some miracle or event, as we have here in the feeding of the five thousand (1-14), (the only miracle recorded by all four Evangelists), and the walking on the water (15-21) ; about these, and especially the first, our Lord's discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum is framed.

**b. Vers. 22-71 : The discourse in Capernaum.**

Nothing can more clearly illustrate the difference between the three Synoptists and John. The former give us the narrative with very little comment, while in John the comment so far exceeds in importance the narrative, that we almost lose sight of the miracle. We must note the subdivisions of this discourse a little more minutely than usual.

(I) Vers. 22-33 : The Bread of God from heaven.

The multitude have been attracted by the earthly benefits enjoyed rather than by the evidence of God's presence among them ; therefore

they seek to have their temporal needs met further. Our Lord warns them that there is need for other bread. The meat that perisheth, such as their fathers ate in the wilderness and died, is not sufficient for the needs of an immortal spirit. They must have that food which endureth unto eternal life, a food which He would give them, for God had designated Him for this special work.

Speaking of work seems to suggest to them their inability to labor acceptably for God. They ask then what they might do, and our Lord tells them there is but one work of God for them. It is to "believe on Him whom He hath sent." He is the true Bread, and to believe in Him, therefore, is to eat of that Bread which has **come** down from heaven.

(2) Vers. 34-51: False and real faith.

They ask, somewhat as the woman of Samaria had asked, to be given this Bread, but their state of soul is not like hers. Our Lord presents Himself to them as the Bread of life. To believe on Him will be to have their hunger satisfied, never again to be renewed. But although they had seen Him, they do not truly believe. This true faith is only shown by those *whom* the Father has given in sovereign grace to the Lord. Whoever has this faith may be assured of instant acceptance. Our Lord has come from heaven to do the will of the Father. This will is ex-

pressed from both points of view-divine sovereignty and human responsibility. All that the Father has given Him shall be kept and raised up at the last day; and lest they might think this excluded any, He adds: "Every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him hath eternal life."

All this wondrous unfolding of grace meets with but murmuring from them. They stumble, as they did at Nazareth because of His lowly connection, and our Lord reminds them that any turning to Him must be the result of sovereign grace, even as the prophets had declared. Plainly He now tells them he that believeth on Him hath eternal life; and again, drawing to the close of this part of His discourse, reminds them that their fathers had fallen in the wilderness, but he who eats this Bread shall never die.

(3) Vers. 52-58: His flesh and blood,

At the close of the previous division our Lord had described the Bread more fully. It was His flesh which He would give for the life of the world. This He now enlarges upon. The Jews question how He could give them His flesh, and our Lord replies that except they eat His flesh and drink His blood they have no life in them; and except they feed upon that flesh (a different word, suggesting the constant nourishment provided by that which was first accepted by faith) they cannot have eternal life. Such only will

be raised up in blessing at the last day. Thus the Bread of life not only imparts but sustains the life of the soul. This is that true Bread which came down from heaven. A man eating this shall live forever.

(4) Vers. 59-71: His own disciples tested.

The discourse on the Bread of life has met with opposition on the part of the unbelieving; but here we have His own professed disciples tested also by this heart-searching word. It is the Spirit alone that gives life, and where that is lacking there can be no true faith. Thus our Lord reminds them that no one can truly believe except as quickened by the power of God. When many of His disciples have thus departed, our Lord turns to the twelve, with that tender appeal, "Will ye also go?" Here, thank God, in the response of Peter—a response similar to his confession at Cæsarea-Philippi—we have the proof that the seed does not all fall upon stony ground: "Lord, to whom shall we go?" He might not understand all that our Lord had declared, but there was enough in those words of life to quicken his heart and to give him the assurance that here was One who had the words of eternal life and about whom there could be no question that He was the Holy One of God. But even of the twelve one is under Satan's power, yea, is himself a devil.

It may be well to point out the fourfold repe-

**tition** of the expression, "I will raise him up at the last day," in this discourse. We have it in verses 39, 40, 44, and 54. In the first, it is connected with God's sovereignty in election. The end is sure for every one who has been given by the Father to the Son. The second makes it equally assured for every believer in the Lord Jesus. The third shows that such believers have been drawn by the Father; therefore faith itself is the gift of God. The fourth shows that all depends upon the death of Christ. Thus, we have linked together the election of God, the faith of man, the grace of God in communicating that faith, and the atoning work of Christ as the basis upon which it rests. These all unite to declare that the objects of divine grace will be raised up in blessing at the last day.

*Sec. 3. Chs. 7—8:1:* The outflow of the Spirit.

We have in this portion the account of what took place at the feast of tabernacles. The other feasts have been, with the possible exception of that mentioned in the fifth chapter, the Passover. As has been already remarked, much of what is narrated in John occurs in connection with the various feasts. This feast of tabernacles, celebrated at the close of Israel's year, was a memorial of their wilderness experience ; while they also celebrated the ingathering at the close of their year. It was thus a feast of great joy, and typifies the entrance into the millennial

kingdom. As all else connected with the law and Israel's responsibility, this feast could only be a confession of failure on their part. Instead of this, they make it a season of profession, like the Sabbath, in which the manifested results of their own failure would contradict any thought of their having reached the end of their wilderness experiences. As our Lord in the previous chapter presents Himself, we might say, as the true paschal Lamb-originally pointed out by John, His death foretold in the lifting up of the serpent, and then presented for them to feed upon-so we have Him here as the true Giver and Interpreter of the joy that belongs to the feast of tabernacles.

*a.* Vers. 1-g: His time not yet come.

His brethren, as yet unbelieving, urged Him to make a public display of Himself. This He refused to do, for He could not identify Himself with the feast whose joy rested on so unstable a basis.

*b.* Vers. 10-36: His teaching at the feast.

Our Lord does go up, however, not in the way His brethren had requested, but simply to continue His gracious work of ministry. His hearers express surprise at His wisdom. His answer shows whence that wisdom came, and how it could be understood. If one is subject to God, desiring to do His will, he will know of the doctrine which the Father had given to Him who

sought only the Father's glory in making Him known (10-18).

Instead of bowing with grateful hearts and receiving such teaching, however, the people manifest themselves as opposed to God. Therefore, instead of the law of Moses being kept by them, they broke it in plotting the destruction of One to whom Moses bore witness (19-24). The Lord then continues openly to teach the people ; there is great murmuring among them as to whether He is indeed the Christ; and they express the thought that no one could know whence Christ came: therefore this Man whom they thought they knew so well could not be the Christ. Our Lord shows His knowledge of their thoughts and cries out that they do know Him and whence He is; if in heart they had known God, they would therefore have received Him. A great excitement evidently exists among the people. Nothing but the sovereign restraint of God prevented them from making away with Him, but His hour had not yet come and therefore no one could harm Him (25-31).

The Pharisees evidently feel that they cannot allow Him to go on unchecked, and seek to arrest Him by sending the officers of the temple. Our Lord meets this with the simple declaration that He was with them only a little while longer and pleads with them, for as they now are they could never go where He was going.



c. Vers. 37-39: The great day of the feast.

Their feast is come and well nigh gone. How ineffectual had been all their celebration! how empty their drawing up water in golden vessels and pouring it out with the words of the prophet foretelling Israel's millennial blessing, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Alas, they had no salvation, no water, no joy worthy of the name. It is here, in the face of an empty ritual, that our Lord cries aloud in those words which have found an echo in how many hearts: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." And here we have not merely the satisfaction of thirst, as in the promise to the woman of Samaria, but *rivers* of living water flowing out from the once empty heart of man-now so full that it overflows with joy and carries refreshment to others. We are told what this fulness is, not merely the life which our Lord imparts, but that life as energized and controlled by the Holy Spirit: "This spake He of the Spirit which they that believe *on* Him should receive." All looks forward, therefore, to the gift of the Spirit after redemption had been accomplished.

d. Vers. 40-8:  $\tau$  : "Never man spake like this Man."

There is much further questioning and contradictory statement. They apparently were ignorant or had forgotten that He had been born

Spirit of God Himself who descended upon our Lord at His baptism, and through John bore witness that He was the Son of God, The sheep hear His voice. He calleth them by name as He had called the woman of Samaria (although she was not really in the Jewish fold), the woman in the 8th chapter, and the blind man. These are led out by Him who goes before them; the sheep follow Him and shrink from the voice of strangers.

Next (6-21), our Lord makes plainer that He is not only the Shepherd, but also the Door of the sheep. He thus compares Himself with the false shepherds who had gone before. How many kings of Israel and false prophets had claimed to be the true shepherds, as Ezekiel declares (ch. 34)! Wherever there was a true king or prophet, a man of faith, it was ever his joy to disclaim that he was the true Shepherd. Such as David looked forward to the coming of the Shepherd and waited for Him.

Our Lord is the Door of the sheep, but in order that He may make it plainer, He leaves out such designation. He is the Door by which if *any* man enter in, he shall be saved, have liberty and sustenance. This is in contrast with the work of the thief who has come only to kill and destroy. The Lord has come to give fulness of life. To do this He lays down His life for the sheep. Hirelings, as the leaders of the peo-

ple then were, were powerless to deliver the sheep from the wolf. Indeed, when danger threatened them, they fled. "The Good Shepherd" knows His own sheep and they know Him, a knowledge similar in character to the mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son, for it is a knowledge of life and nature. The sheep, for whom He lays down His life, are not merely the sheep of the Jewish fold, but all those who have ears to hear His voice. These all, whether in the Jewish fold or scattered among the Gentiles, become one flock under the Shepherd who laid down His life that He might take it again. Need we wonder that the Father loves an obedience like this? Let our hearts respond to it with love also.

The effect of such life-giving words is various. Many reiterate that He has a demon. Others, touched by the Lord's discourse say: "These are not the words of one that hath a demon."

It is the feast of the dedication when this conversation takes place (22-30), a feast not prescribed in the law, but added to celebrate the cleansing of the temple from its defilement under Antiochus Epiphanes. It would therefore suggest the reformation of the natural man. Significantly, we are told it was winter, a chilling time spiritually, for the atmosphere was filled with unbelief.

Again they ask, as though in doubt as to who

He is. Again our Lord declares that the reason why they do not know Him is a spiritual one—they are not of His sheep that hear His voice. He knows His own sheep, they follow Him and are eternally secure, held safely in His and the Father's hands, for He and the Father are one. The response to this precious truth is the same as that given when He had declared Himself as being before Abraham. They take up stones to throw at Him. Nothing can be done with such hatred but to bear a final testimony from Scripture. Again they seek to take Him, and He leaves Jerusalem to go to a place of retirement until the appointed time comes for Him to be delivered up into their hands. There, where repentance had been preached, many believe on Him—a significant fact; the icy atmosphere of mere reformation is no place for faith.

Sec. 3. Chs. II, 12: The resurrection. Life once more offered to them.

These two chapters are linked together as the two previous ones. The resurrection of Lazarus furnishes the setting around which the events of the succeeding chapter are grouped. The former declares the Lord's power; the latter suggests His glory; but neither power nor glory can attract those who are wilfully blind and spiritually dead.

**a.** Vers. 1-46 : The Resurrection and the Life.

Sickness has come into the home where our Lord was known and loved (1-4); still, instead of going at once, in response to the message, to heal Lazarus, our Lord remains *away* until death intervenes (5-16). Then, going to Bethany, He first meets Martha, who apparently suggests that even yet the Lord might work a miracle. However, upon probing her, she discloses that she did not fully realize what was meant. But her faith in the Lord is genuine, and therefore our Lord would remind her that He is the resurrection and the life (17-27). We have next, most touchingly, the exhibition of the tender sympathy of our Lord before He puts forth His power (28-38). Having done this, He shows forth the glory of God, calling the dead from the grave and commanding him to be set free from the habiliments of death (38-45).

*b.* Chs. II: 47-12. The results.

The effects of this miracle are now set forth; first in the determination of the leaders to put our Lord to death (47-52). Next, He withdraws for a season, so that their purpose shall not be consummated until the time appointed of God, at the passover (53-57). The feast at Bethany (12: 1-3) is in precious contrast with the enmity of the leaders. Here, at least, our Lord is welcome. It is typically a Christian feast in which we have manifested the power of divine grace which has given life, the liberty of true service

unencumbered by self-seeking, and the joy of true worship which pours its fragrance upon the feet of the blessed Lord.

The treachery of Judas speaks for itself (4-8). The procession into Jerusalem is similar to what we have in the other Evangelists, but the resurrection is prominent in the thoughts of many (9-19). The desire of the Greeks to see Him is a little foreshadow of the coming blessing to the Gentiles; but our Lord will not anticipate that happy time. Well does He know that His own death must precede any glory among the Gentiles. **The** corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, else it would abide alone (20-33).

Then follow our Lord's closing words of warning, together with the application of the prophet's words to the condition now manifested among the Jews, a condition exactly like that which the prophet had seen, only more hardened and hopeless (34-43). The Lord then utters His last public words to those who did not believe in Him (44-50). With these His public ministry closes; nothing is left for the world but their rejection of Him. Divine love and light had passed among them ; they had seen it, had rejected it in the face of works of power and of love ; had listened to words the like of which never fell from the lips of man ; had been well-nigh persuaded at times that He must be the

One sent of the Father, and yet the enmity of their hearts had asserted itself; now even divine love must leave them to their unbelief. Thus closes this portion of the book.

Subdivision *IV. Chaps. 13—17*. Provision for His people in the world.

These precious chapters are to be taken together. Their general theme might be given as "Part with Me." For this, the feet must be washed (ch. 13) and the Spirit given (ch. 14). Thus, fruitfulness will be assured (ch. 15) and strength to meet the inevitable opposition by the way (ch. 16). The intercessory prayer (ch. 17) beautifully concludes this precious portion.

*Sec. I. Vers. 1-17*. Washing the disciples' feet.

The full consciousness of His glory, with thoughts of His people, is given as the ground of our Lord's gracious act. About to depart out of the world, leaving His own in it amid the dangers to which they were exposed, longing for communion with Himself, His love leads Him to stoop to serve them in this lowly way. Formalism loses the blessing of our Lord's act here by a literal imitation of an act which was not instituted for permanent observance. We find abundant reference to baptism and the Lord's Supper in the book of Acts and in the Epistles, for instance; but the washing of the feet is not spoken of in the same way. This, in addition to its evident symbolic character, should suffice to guard

us from a misunderstanding of this simple act. When Peter objects to His taking this lowly service, our Lord's reply shows its spiritual, symbolic character, 'What I do *thou knowest* not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.'

The simple and evident teaching is that as we go through a world full of defilement we need to be kept in communion with the Lord. Salvation is assured once for all. The new nature has been imparted. This our Lord declares in explanation of His act: "He that is washed (bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The cleansing of the ways, and not the cleansing of the *soul*, is evidently before us. Thus, as we know in advance, there is no contradiction between the eternal security of the child of God and his constant need for the cleansing of his ways. Not only is our Lord's symbolical act in washing His disciples' feet dwelt upon, but His command is that we should do the same toward one another. How much we need to drink into His spirit in order that we may serve one another in this lowly way! Alas, much that goes under the name of washing one another's feet is using a rod rather than bowing in lowly service.

Sec. 2. Vers. 18-38: The traitor detected. The denial foretold.

We might call this part almost an application of what has just preceded. Our Lord forewarns them of His betrayal, and Judas, detected, with.



draws from their presence. He would also guard against Peter's denial; but, alas, the one who had been so slow to have his feet washed was equally slow to believe himself capable of so base an act as denying the Lord.

*Sec. 3. Ch. 14.* God's two abodes.

The first part of this chapter gives us the end of the way, and shows how our Lord desires that we should even here enjoy the fellowship which will then be undisturbed. The two parts suggested in the title of this section speak of the Father's house on high and the Spirit's abode down here.

a. Vers. 1-7: The Father's house.

In spite of the betrayal and the denial, our Lord would reassure His beloved disciples. God was to be trusted, and so should He be. There were many mansions, room enough for all, in the Father's house. Thither He was going by way of the cross; therefore His entrance there would prepare a place for us. To that place He would receive us, not by death, nor by angelic messengers, but *Himself* would come to take us there. All this links so closely with the blessed hope of the Lord's coming that we need not speak further of it here, except to note the simplicity of it all. Details do not occupy the heart that is waiting for Christ. "I will come and receive you;" "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

b. Vers. 8-14: "Show us the Father."

The disciples still see but dimly the wondrous fulness of the truth, which, indeed, as we know, must wait for the coming of the Spirit to be fully manifest. Philip desires to see the Father, not realizing that he had seen the Father perfectly manifested in the Son, in His works and words. So, as He represented the Father, they should in their little way represent the Lord, doing His works, yea, greater ones, which seems to suggest the great Pentecostal revival and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So, too, prayer was to be their resource for every need. Thus they should not think they lacked anything for their blessing: although they had not yet seen the Father face to face, they had all their need supplied.

c. Vers. 15-27: The Spirit's abode.

This is here enlarged upon. In loving the Lord they naturally would keep His commandments and His word. The Lord promises, therefore, to send a Representative to abide with them forever, even the Holy Spirit, unknown to the world, but who would so effectually dwell in the disciples, giving them the spirit of adoption, that they should not be orphans, although the Lord were not visibly present. Indeed, the dwelling-place promised on high was to be anticipated on earth; the abode was to be their own heart—the Father and the Son dwelling with every one who kept His word. While the enjoy-

ment of this is, of course, dependent upon the measure of faith's true-hearted obedience, yet the fact is true for every one who has kept the word of Christ by trusting in Him.

a?. Vers. 28-31: The Lord's death foretold.

They must not hopelessly mourn because of His leaving them. Should they not rejoice to think He was going to the Father who was all His delight ? He speaks plainly to them, that they may be prepared for all this. Shortly, the prince of the world, Satan, would come in connection with His trial, and the cross, when He would not speak much with them, but He now pours out into their hearts all the wealth of His love, linking them with Himself, anticipatively, in such a way that the world may know that He loved the Father and fulfilled all His perfect will.

Sec. 4. Ch. 15 : 1-16: The true Vine and fruitfulness.

As we have seen, our Lord was not content to provide a home for us at the end of the way ; He longed to have a home with us by the Spirit throughout our journey. The character of this indwelling is now described. It is no mystic self-absorption, producing an unnatural state of monkishness, but a fruitfulness in every good word and work which will glorify the Father.

a. Vers. 1-8: "Abide in Me."

If there is to be fruit, it is by abiding in the

Vine. This is not an external association, which might indeed be where there was no life; nor can it be thought that the union contemplated will be without fruit. Fruitfulness is evidently intended and expected. Indeed, if there be no fruit, it is clear proof that one is not vitally linked with Christ. While this passage does not teach salvation, yet it is in perfect consistency with it. None but false professors are dead or fruitless branches which are to be cut off, whose end is to be burned.

6. Vers. 9-16. The obedience of love.

This fruitfulness is expressed in obedience, seeking to please Him who pleased not Himself. There is a fellowship here; not that of the servant who knoweth not his master's will, but of *friends* who have had the highest proof of His friendship, and who know that He has chosen them. Where this knowledge is enjoyed, prayer is the natural expression of the soul's dependence, prayer which cannot fail to get its answer.

Sec. 5. Chs. 15: 17-16: 27: Chosen out of the world; hated by it.

This portion emphasizes the character of the believer's relationship to the world and the meaning of the Spirit abiding with him.

a. Vers. 17-25: Loving one another; hated by the world.

We are taught of God to love one another. We do not expect the love of the world, however.

Indeed, this speaks badly for one who professes to belong to Christ. The servant must not expect different treatment in the world from that accorded to his Master. Would he really desire it? Hatred to the Lord by the world, therefore, means that we may expect something at least of the same.

*b.* Vers. 26-16: 3 : The Spirit in us the power for testimony in a hostile world.

It is by the Holy Spirit alone that we can be sustained and enabled to bear witness for Christ in the face of the inevitable persecution which will come upon us. The Lord abundantly prepares for this.

*c.* Vers. 4-15 : The Spirit in relation to the world and to saints.

The Lord, in describing the Spirit's work, dwells upon His testimony to the world and His work in the saints. His testimony in the world is convicting, in a threefold way. Not merely does He bear witness of ordinary sin, but He intensifies that sin. The crowning sin of all is unbelief. The Spirit convicts the world of this; also of righteousness-that is, the One whom the world is condemning as a malefactor, the Spirit declares has been received by the Father. Thus a direct issue as to righteousness is raised-the rejection of Him whom the Father has exalted can only mean judgment. Of this, the Spirit also bears witness because the

prince of this world, Satan, is judged by the cross of Christ. This then is the Spirit's work with reference to the world.

For saints, there is a blessed contrast. For them, the Spirit delights to reveal Christ. The One rejected by the world has been believed in by His people. Therefore the Spirit will guide these into all truth. He will take the things of Christ and show them to us. He will glorify Him and show us things to come. Thus His blessed ministry in the saints of God is sanctifying, and glorifies Christ. We may be sure therefore that wherever the Spirit is unhindered He will lead to occupation of heart and mind with the Son of God.

*d.* Vers. 16-22: "A little while."

He must leave them now shortly, but in a little while they shall see Him again. This first "little while" might refer to the interval when our Lord was in the grave, but it seems distinctly to look on to the whole present period. At least, such for us is a clear application. This "little while" is suggested by His words, "Behold, I come quickly."

*e.* Vers. 23-27: Dependence.

While we wait, we are to be in dependence upon Himself, a dependence expressing itself in prayer. Of course, all this has special reference to the circumstances of the disciples to whom it was directly spoken, but it needs little adap

tation for us to see its application to the saints of God at all time.

*Sec. 6. Vers. 28-33: Speaking plainly.*

Plainly now the Lord declares to them that as He had come from the Father into the world, He was now to return to Him. They seem to understand Him and to enter into what He has said; but how feebly we will see in a little while. All of this portion has special reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit, and until He comes nothing would be known as it should be.

*Sec. 7. Ch. 17: The Lord's prayer.*

As a climax, we have the wondrous intercessory prayer of our Lord. He has made provision for every contingency by the way. Again and again He has exhorted them to prayer. Now, having told them all that was in His heart, so far as they could bear it, He turns with perfect confidence to His Father, giving us an example how we should engage in prayer, leading out our hearts to where He found the joy that controlled His life.

*a. Vers. 1-5: The Giver of eternal life.*

In view of His finished work, our Lord claims the glory which is at the end of it; a glory in which, however, He never forgets His own. Indeed, these have been given to Him by the Father; eternal life He has imparted to them—a life in which the only true God is known in the full perfection of His nature and character; a knowledge which is not intellectual, but experi-

mental, and through Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

b. Vers. 6-21: "Not of the world."

The Lord is no longer in the world where His own remain for a while. It is for these He prays. As long as He was with them, He kept them. Now He is going to the Father, He entreats by all that the blessed name of "Father" means—a name given as the special treasure to the Son—that His own may be kept from the evil which is all about them. It is not a mere physical keeping; nor does He ask that they may have a hedge put about them of outward separation from the world, nor that they should be taken out of it, but rather sanctified by the truth, the truth which His word embodies and which shows Christ separated—thus sanctified from the world for His people in order that we also might be separate in heart from it.

c. Vers. 22-26: The glory.

The Lord has a glory which has been given to Him, which we are to share with Him. He also has a glory all His own which He had with the Father before the world was. This divine glory we could not share, but we shall be with Him where He is, in order that we may behold it and know that love which the Father ever had to the Son, This knowledge the world has not. His own alone know the Son. To these He has declared the Father's name, and pledges Himself



still further to declare it, in order that love which the Father has to His Son may, with Him, abide in our hearts.

Division III. (Chaps. 18-21). *The death and resurrection of our Lord.*

We already have dwelt in detail upon this closing scene and will do little more here than note the parts into which the narrative is divided.

*Subdivision I. Chaps. 18—19: 16.* Offered without spot to God.

That which characterizes the narrative in John is our Lord's divine dignity throughout. He is Master in the whole situation; as He Himself had declared, He laid down His life of Himself. No one took it from Him. He had power to lay it down and He had power to take it again. All was done in obedience to the will of His Father.

*Sec. I. Vers. 1-11 :* In Gethsemane.

The agony is not recorded here. Instead, we have a glimpse of His divine power as His captors go backward and fall to the ground. Peter is named as the one who cut off the ear of Malchus. In divine light, both the actor and the sufferer are no longer veiled, but stand out in their true character.

*Sec. 2. Vers. 12-27 :* Before the high priest.

Few details are given of the mock trial, except that Annas, as well as Caiaphas, is implicated in it. The Lord is seen in perfect meekness, and

yet that meekness is not weak but can reprove sin. Peter's denial also is fully recorded here.

Sec. 3. Vers. 28—19: 16: Before Pilate.

Here the judge is not the Roman Governor, who is vainly vacillating between fear of man and superstitious dread, but the true King who in meek majesty governs all that takes place.

a. Vers. 28-32: The first part of the trial.

b. Vers. 33-38: The Kingdom of truth not of this world.

c. Chs. 18: 38—19: 7: "Behold the Man! "

d. Vers. 8-11: The greater sin of knowingly doing wrong.

e. Vers. 12-16: "Behold your King."

Subdivision II. Chap. 19: 16-42. The crucifixion.

Sec. 1. Vers. 16-30: The Scripture fulfilled.

a. Vers. 16-18: Golgotha.

b. Vers. 19-22: The title.

c. Vers. 23, 24: His garments.

a?. Vers. 25-27: His mother.

e. Vers. 28-30: "It is finished."

Sec. 2. Vers. 31-42: After His death.

a. Vers. 31-33 : "A bone of Him shall not be broken. "

b. Vers. 34-37: "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

c. Vers. 38-42: The fragrance of His death.

Subdivision III. Chaps. 20, 21. The resurrection.

a. Vers. 1-10: The empty tomb. (Peter and John.)

*b.* Vers. 1-18: "My Father and your Father." (Mary Magdalene.)

*c.* Vers. 19-23: "Peace be unto you."

*d.* Vers. 24-31: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." (Thomas.)

*e.* Ch. 21: 1-14: At the Sea of Tiberias.

*f.* Vers. 15-19: The restoration of Peter.

*g.* Vers. 20-25: "The disciple whom Jesus loved."

We thus reach the close of this wondrous, divine Gospel of the Son of God. Twice does the beloved disciple speak of the Gospel which he has written: First, (chap. 20) he tells us that the Lord did many other things which were not written in that book, but that "these are written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through His name." Then, at the close of the 21st chapter, he tells us that if everything the Lord has done should be written, he supposes the world itself could not contain the books. Having had a glimpse into the infinite depths of His person and His work, we in measure realize the subject is infinite. Heaven and eternity will be required to know that which passeth knowledge, and which shall ever beckon us on to sound the depths of that bottomless sea of love, of that Eternal Life which was with the Father and has been manifested unto us.

## CHAPTER VII

### Parables and Miracles

HAVING gone over the Gospel narratives several times in various ways, we desire in this present chapter to gather together the different parables and miracles of our Lord, and say a few words upon the subject in general and upon the prominent place which they occupy in our Lord's ministry.

#### I. Parables

No one who reads the Gospel narrative with any degree of attention can fail to note that all four Evangelists, and particularly the first three, give great space to the parables of our Lord. His teaching was evidently characterized by this method. May we inquire why He should have adopted such a method rather than the more directly didactic manner probably practised by the scribes?

1st. In the first place we are struck by *its simplicity*. The natural things are thus made pictures of spiritual ones—as children's picture-books and illustrations, whether verbal or pictorial, often present a subject with far greater clearness than could be done by mere abstract statements. We probably little realize how much we are indebted to this use of parables by our Lord. Indeed, we

unconsciously use them ourselves as though they were a statement of doctrine. We speak, for instance, of the "stony-ground hearers; " of "the gospel-feast; " of " the prodigal son," in terms which show that the parable and the truth it embodies have become blended into one clear, mental picture.

2d. *Its clearness.* It is often thought that a parable is less accurate than an abstract statement. We sometimes hear it said of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in the 16th of Luke, that it was "only a parable," as though this made it a less accurate description of the eternal and solemn realities which it discloses. We may be sure that when our Lord gave a picture it was a correct representation of the solemn truth. The seven parables of the Kingdom give us a complete view of it in its various parts which we could not get so vividly and clearly in mere abstract statements.

3d. *Its obscurity.* It may seem a contradiction to what we have just said when we add that there was an evident purpose in the parables to conceal the truth presented, so that the ordinary or unexercised hearer would ignore its true character. This, our Lord Himself tells us. He declares that "to them that are without, all these things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear and not understand" (Mk. 4: 11) .

The apparent contradiction vanishes when this distinction is noted. "Those that are without," who have blinded their own eyes so that they cannot see, look upon the parable simply as an interesting narrative, but have no exercise as to its application.

The parable, then, especially when given in a more formal way, was a statement of divine truth covered over by the illustration, so that only those who were really hungry for the truth would look within. To such, there would be no difficulty. Indeed, as we have already said, the very form in which the teaching is given stirs the interest and gives a clearer perception. But this speaking in parables suggests a moral distance, a separation between the Lord and the mass of the people. If they were to apprehend His teaching, they must desire to do so.

4th. The unity of truth. Another reason, we may well believe, why our Lord spoke in parables was to bear witness to the essential unity that underlies all truth. Nature is itself a parable. The lilies of the field and the birds of the air are parables setting forth the wisdom and care of God, and so with all else. Doubtless, if we have eyes to see, and are sufficiently exercised to pursue the subject with reverent, prayerful diligence, we will find that the world about us, as well as the written word of God, abounds in similes and parabolic teaching of every de-

scription. Indeed, this is the key to all typical interpretation in which the Old Testament abounds.

We find therefore that the parable suggests a key for the interpretation of the word of God throughout, and for that other word, the creation, which also is the product of His skill. The skeptical man of science reads this parable of nature, but, alas, he has deprived himself of the key of knowledge. He little realizes the wondrous nature of the parable whose details he may be examining.

These preliminary remarks must suffice us. We trust they will suggest many other thoughts, and that the reader will be stirred to take hold of this great truth of symbolism. We add a list of the parables with a brief word as to their significance :

The seven parables of the Kingdom, given in the 13th of Matthew, are united together, as has been pointed out in the analysis of the first Evangelist. We therefore will not here speak of them as thus grouped, nor of any other of the parables, but pursue a different method of arrangement, giving first those parables recorded in but one Gospel; then, in two; then in all three Synoptists. There is no parable recorded in all the four Gospels.

Recorded in One Gospel only

**In MATTHEW**

1. The Tares. Ch. **13: 24**:-The good seed—with which the Lord's people are identified; and the worthless tares-the children of the wicked one, the mixed condition of the Kingdom until the appearing of our Lord.

2. The Hid Treasure. Ch. **13 : 44**:-The world purchased by the Lord for the sake of Israel.

3. The Pearl of Great Price. Ch. **13: 45** :—The Church purchased by the sacrifice of Christ.

4. The Draw net. Ch. **13: 47** :-The gathering and separation of the Gentiles at the close of the present dispensation.

5. The Unmerciful Servant. Ch. **18: 23** :—The true character of forgiveness.

6. The Laborers in the Vineyard. Ch. **20: 1** : -The sovereignty of grace in rewards.

7. The two Sons. Ch. **21: 28**:-The Jew and the Gentile.

8. The Marriage of the King's Son. Ch. **22: 2**:-The call of the Gentiles and the detection of false profession.

g. The Ten Virgins. Ch. **25: 1**:-The true and the false profession, at our Lord's appearing.

10. The Talents. Ch. **25: 14**:-Responsibility during our Lord's absence.

11. The Sheep and the Goats. Ch. **25: 31** :—Judgment of the living nations.



## In MARK

1. The Seed growing Secretly. Ch. 4: 26:—  
The law of progress in both good and evil.

2. The Householder, Ch. 13: 34:—The necessity for watching.

## In LUKE

1. The two Debtors. Ch. 7: 41 :-Grace the measure of gratitude.

2. The Good Samaritan. Ch. 10: 30:—Christ the true Neighbor of man.

3. The Friend at Midnight. Ch. 11 : 5 :-Importunity in prayer.

4. The Rich Fool. Ch. 12 : 16 :-The folly of living for the present only.

5. The Watching Servants. Ch. 12: 35 :—Waiting for the Lord.

6. The Faithful Steward. Ch. 12 : 42—Faithfulness.

7. The Barren Fig-tree. Ch. 13: 6—Patience toward Israel.

8. The Great Supper. Ch. 14: 16 :-The gospel going out to the world.

9. Building a Tower. Ch. 14: 28:—Counting the cost.

10. Going to War. Ch. 14: 31 :—Finding conditions of peace.

11. The lost Piece of Money. Ch. 15: 8:—The Spirit's work in seeking out the sinner.

12. The Prodigal Son. Ch. 15: 11:—The Father's grace in welcoming the wanderer.

**13.** The Unjust Steward. Ch. 16:1 :-Preparation for the future.

**14.** The Rich Man and Lazarus. Ch. 16: 19: -Contrasts in the world to come.

**15.** The Unjust Judge. Ch. 18: 2:—Continuance in prayer.

**16.** The Pharisee and the Publican. Ch. 18: 10:—Justification not for the self-righteous, but for the repenting sinner.

**17.** The Pounds. Ch. 19: 12:-Various degrees of faithfulness in service.

#### IN JOHN

**1.** The Temple Destroyed and Raised up. Ch. 2: 19:—Our Lord's death and resurrection.

**2.** The Blowing of the Wind. Ch. 3 : 8 :-The sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in new birth.

**3.** The Living Water. Ch. 4: 10:-Life and satisfaction in Christ.

**4.** Hidden Food. Ch. 4: 32 :-Sustenance in service.

**5.** Fields white to Harvest. Ch. 4: 35:—The world ripe for the gospel.

**6.** Rivers of Water. Ch. 7: 37 :-The fulness of the Spirit.

**7.** The Light of the world. Ch. 8 :12 :-Christ the illuminator of the soul.

**8.** Day and Night. Ch. 9 : 4:-The present, the only time for service.

**9.** The Door and the Porter. Ch. 10: 1-6 :-

Christ recognized by the Holy Spirit as the true door.

10. The Door of the Sheep. Ch. 10: 7 :-Christ the way of entrance into salvation.

11. The Good Shepherd. Ch. 10: 11 :-Christ sacrificing Himself for His people.

12. The Sheep. Ch. 10: 27:-The character and eternal security of the believer.

13. The True Vine. Ch. 15: 1 :-The only means of fruitfulness.

### Recorded in Two Gospels

1. The House on the Rock and on the Sand. Matt. 7 : 24; Lk. 6 : 47 :-The true and false foundation.

2. The Leaven. Matt. 13: 33; Lk. 13: 20:—Error corrupting that which is good.

3. The Lost Sheep. Matt. 18: 12; Lk. 15: 4: -Christ seeking the lost.

### Recorded in Three Gospels

1. The Candle under a Bushel. Matt. 5: 15; Mk. 4: 21; Lk. 8: 16; 11: 33:-The truth to be confessed.

2. New Cloth on the Old Garment. Matt. 9: 16; Mk. 2 : 21; Lk. 5: 36 :-The incompatibility of law and grace.

3. New Wine in new, not old, Bottles. Matt. 9: 17; Mk. 2: 22; Lk. 5: 37:-The energy of the Spirit in regenerate man.

4. The Sower. Matt. 13: 3; Mk. 4: 3; Lk. 8: 5:  
-Various kinds of reception of the word of God.

5. The Mustard Seed. Matt. 13: 31; Mk. 4: 30; Lk. 13: 18:—The outward growth of the Kingdom.

6. The Wicked Husbandmen. Matt. 21: 33 ;  
Mk. 12 : 1 ; Lk. 20: 9:—Christ rejected by the Jews.

7. The Budding of the Fig-tree. Matt. 24 : 32; Mk. 13: 28; Lk. 21: 29:—Signs of the nearness of our Lord's coming.

A large number of these parables are given quite elaborately and with much attention to detail. A number of them are briefer, and some are only a simile or comparison ; but they are all parabolic in the sense that they are meant to teach some special truth by a physical simile. The parables in the Gospel of John are different from those in the Synoptists, as we might suppose. We might almost say the entire Gospel is a parable. Everything in it has an unmistakable spiritual significance. We have no doubt that this would apply to all the Gospels, as we shall note in a moment. Some of the parables were no doubt given more than once; indeed, the simile of the candlestick is twice recorded in Luke. It is probable that the parable of the lost sheep, in the same way, was given at different times. We may note in passing that this parable is the only one of which there is a

semblance in John as well as in Matthew and Luke.

Ere leaving this part of our subject, we would call attention to the evident parabolic teaching in the substance and arrangement of the narratives. Thus, the descent of the Spirit in bodily shape as a dove is a parable enacted. So also the order of events, as the transfiguration and the healing of the demoniac, in which we have a parable of the present glory of our Lord and His return to heal Israel.

But we touch here the subject of miracles, which we will presently take up. Enough has been said, it is hoped, to draw our attention particularly to the subject of parabolic teaching. It was a favorite method with our Lord, evidently, and we may well crave to be in harmony with His thoughts.

A word in closing this subject must be said as to the explanation of the parables. It is sometimes contended that there is no certain standard of interpretation; but several considerations will show us that this is not the case. In the first place, our Lord Himself gives in great detail the explanation of the parable of the sower. Similarly, the parable of the tares is explained. In Mark, He distinctly says that these are samples of how all parables are to be interpreted. "Know ye not this parable? How then will ye know all parables?" He evidently intended that

those parables which He explains should guide us in the interpretation of the others. A large number of the parables are unmistakably clear in their teaching. No one has any difficulty about the prodigal son, the lost sheep, the lost money, etc.

The parables in John are so closely connected with direct doctrinal statements that they blend into one. This leaves comparatively few parables difficult of explanation. A clear knowledge of dispensational truth will prove of great service here. The parable of the leaven is perhaps one of the most glaring instances of misinterpretation because the prophetic future is ignored, as well as the Scripture meaning of leaven. Who, with the knowledge of what is to take place in the future, would imagine that the introduction of the gospel into the world would gradually transform it until it was entirely converted and the Millennium was introduced ? It is the misunderstanding of this Scripture-truth, that the world as such is never improved but that even profession will go on retrograding rather than advancing, that has resulted in the misinterpretation of the parable. Similarly the Old Testament doctrine of leaven should prove most clearly that it was never an influence for good. God strictly forbade it in the offerings made by fire to Him.

Remembering the significance of the parable of

the leaven, we are not **easily misled** by the rapid and phenomenal growth of the mustard seed. The former gives the development of evil *within* the professing Church. The latter parable shows the *external* growth of the Kingdom as great world-power. As such, it bears not fruit for God, but affords a shelter for the birds of the air, which in the parable of the sower are likened to Satan.

The parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price have similarly been misinterpreted through failure in remembering the very first element of the gospel. Who that knows the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and what He has suffered for us that He might purchase us for Himself could think of the sinner being called upon to sell all that he has (he has nothing but his sins), and to buy that which is the *gift* of God? The anomaly is manifest at once. Seeing the character of each, and knowing the distinction between Israel and the Church, we easily get the true meaning—the purchase of the world (the field) by the sacrifice of Christ for the sake of Israel (the treasure) hidden in it; and the purchase of the Church, (the pearl) by the same sacrifice, by One who was seeking for it.

The parable of the draw-net is clear in its connection with these when we get the dispensational bearings.

The parable of the sheep and goats offers *no*

difficulty when we realize that there is more than one judgment: the first referring to what takes place at the beginning of the Millennium; and the other occurring at the close of the 20th of Revelation; the latter also being a judgment of the dead, while the former is of *living nations*.

The parables in Luke deal largely with the gospel of God's grace and offer perhaps not so many difficulties as the more dispensational ones in Matthew.

A word may be needed as to the parable of the unjust steward. Many have found a difficulty in the Lord's commendation of an evidently unrighteous man. Let it be noted that it does not say *our* Lord, and the commendation may refer to his own master. Furthermore, the commendation is simply for his wisdom, not for his unrighteousness. The man thought enough about the future to provide for it. So let the children of God use the mammon of unrighteousness, the wealth of this world which may be entrusted to them, with reference not to present enjoyment but to responsibility as to the future. How blessed it is when a child of God spends his earthly possessions in such a way that he will not be ashamed to meet the record when he enters the everlasting habitations.

## 2. Miracles

A few remarks as to miracles in general may be useful at the beginning of our subject.



1. The possibility of miracles. We shall not spend much time in discussing the anterior possibility, and indeed probability of miracles. All depends upon what we mean by a miracle. In one sense, much of what takes place in nature is a miracle. The processes of seed germination, the growth of the plant, its fruit-bearing, the perennial enlargement of the tree, with its annual fruits; the endless diversities of animal life—these, to say nothing of the physical and chemical changes constantly going on, are miracles, if being beyond our comprehension and marvelous constitutes a miracle. They are miraculous also if the superintendence and intervention of God in the affairs of His universe is meant, for as we have been seeing all nature is a parable, so in another sense it is all a miracle.

But we do not understand by a miracle, those ordinary manifestations of divine superintendence which are constantly going on about us. What differentiates a miracle from these is its exceptional character. The floating of a piece of iron is contrary to all observed facts regarding the properties of iron and of water. So also with every miracle. There is something about it which attracts attention because of its exceptional character. The healing of sickness may take place gradually, and, as is too often the case, God may be utterly ignored, and men fail to acknowledge Him in the cure. It is the *suddenness*

of the cure in the miracle which attracts the attention and demands an explanation.

This brings us to what seems to be the essential character of every miracle—an occurrence contrary to the ordinary course of events, which can only be explained by reference to God's direct intervention. The manner of this intervention may not always be seen. Sometimes it is an intervention of knowledge, as perhaps in the miraculous draft of fishes. We need not suppose that our Lord created the fishes for this draft, but rather that He knew where they were, or by some influence gathered them thus together.

We must, however, be on our guard against seeking for naturalistic explanations of miracles. Their very essence requires that God intervene, and where this is admitted, the measure or manner of His intervention is comparatively of small moment.

We recur therefore to the question as to the possibility of miracles, and reply: If God has created all things by His almighty power and upholds them by the same power, we cannot conceive the possibility of the limitation which men have sought to put upon that power. He has neither exhausted His resources nor abrogated His supremacy. In addition to this, when we remember the moral question at issue, that man is prone to forget God, to turn a deaf ear

to His pleadings and the teachings of those whom He has sent, we need not be surprised if from time to time God should permit His servants to work a sign which gives unmistakable evidence of His presence. 'Therefore we find throughout the Old Testament miracles are given at critical stages. In the land of Judah, they were given to call attention to God's demands, and were largely of a judicial character. Later on, in the life of Elisha the healing of Naaman's leprosy, feeding the multitude and even raising the dead, were given with special reference to the need of the people at the time, to cause them to know that God was again turning their hearts back to Himself as declared by Elijah in his prayer upon Mt. Carmel.

2. The object of miracles. Perhaps most persons who accept the possibility of miracles need to be checked as to the number and occasions when God has intervened. Romanism has never had any difficulty about the possibility of God working miracles, but it has so clogged up the whole history of our Lord's life and that of the early Church with the multiplication of needless and often grotesque, not to say unrighteous, miraculous acts that we are constrained to protest against any such abuse of a solemn and precious truth.

That God **can** intervene in the affairs of this world and act in a manner independent of or

contrary to His ordinary providential methods, is the truth; but there is a marked economy in miracles. We find the history of the people in the Old Testament going on in a quiet, natural way, we may say, uninfluenced by miraculous features, save as these were necessary for a specific purpose.

In this connection, the daily miracle of the manna stands out exceptional in its frequency; but when we remember the special object which God had in view, together with the necessity for what He did, there is no contradiction to what we have already seen. Israel as a nation was to have pressed upon its spirit the reality of God's sufficiency and His goodness in caring for them. Thus, not for a day or a year, but for the forty years of their journeying through the wilderness, He provides in a supernatural manner for them. When, however, they come into the land, this miraculous supply of food ceases, for the need is passed, both for their actual sustenance and for the constant witness to God's supreme power.

In passing, it may be well to mention that there have been well meant, but entirely needless explanations of a natural sort, of the miracle of the manna and some of the plagues. For instance, the water turned into blood has been thought to be the red color of the river at a certain period of its flood, caused by the coloring

matter of the soil through which it has flowed. So, too, it has been suggested that the manna was the gum of some tree. As a matter of fact, there is a substance called manna, used now as a medicine which could not be conceived of as an article for food unless as great a miracle were wrought in altering its nature as in providing the true food.

We return therefore to the simple statement that a miracle is an intervention of God in the affairs of this world, in such a way that the intervention cannot be explained by the ordinary laws of nature. This intervention is for the express purpose of calling the attention to that which God is about to declare.

3. The manner of miracles. We have already spoken of this in general and add only a few thoughts. There is always a certain dignity about the true miracle that bears the stamp of reality upon it. No matter how simple the means used or the act performed, it is never inconsistent with the holiness, truthfulness and goodness of God. Even when there is a miracle of judgment, as in the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira, we, in common with those at the time, see the necessity for such a solemn act. As nothing contradicts the dignity of truth, so we need hardly say there is no denial or contradiction of the great laws of nature, For instance, for iron to swim is, as we have said, mir-

aculous, and yet any one of us can make iron to swim. That is, we can support it upon the surface of the water, provided we put forth sufficient power to hold it there. The miracle consists in the putting forth of this power manifestly by God. Were we to attempt it, we should in some way support the iron from the outside. God does not turn the iron into wood and thus make it float; He simply upholds it upon the surface of the water by His own power; and yet in the miracle of changing the water into wine, there is something analogous to this change of substance. Without attempting to go too deeply into details, we might say that the water becomes wine by the intervention of God's power. As has been beautifully said by another, the miracle by which the rains are changed into the luscious grape and so into wine takes place before men's eyes each year; the only difference is the time required. We therefore conclude that the subject of the manner of miracles presents few or any difficulties. Granted that God chooses to act, there is a boundless field for the method of His action. We may be sure only of one thing, that He will never act in a manner unworthy of Himself.\*

4. The miracles of our Lord. If at various stages in men's history of old God intervened in a mir-

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\* A helpful tract "Aleck's difficulty as to Miracles" may be read with profit in this connection. Postpaid, 3 cts.

aculous **way** to attract their attention, we need not be surprised that the greatest of all His interventions, the Incarnation (pointed to as it was by every manifestation of God in the past), should be characterized and accompanied by displays of divine power calculated to arrest the attention of all classes of men.

The Incarnation itself is the greatest of all miracles—"God manifest in the flesh" is the wonder of the ages. It is, and continues to be, a witness of divine intervention without a parallel. He who knows Christ as the incarnate Son of God has no difficulty about belief in miracles. Indeed, we may go further and say that he who knows the great miracle of grace wrought in his own soul, whereby he has been born again, has no difficulty about other acts of power by the same God who has given him a new life.

The miracles of *our* Lord stand out from those of the Old Testament, or those in the Acts, just as His personality stands out distinct from that of the most faithful of the prophets or other servants of the Lord. They are unique in that they are not only the interventions of God through His servants, but because there is an inherent power in Christ Himself. Indeed, it is God in Him doing the works. Nor does this contradict in the least what our Lord declares, that He did these things by the finger of God. He was ever the dependent and subject One, the perfect Ser-

vant; but this, while veiling His own personal glory, did not deny it; so faith ever recognizes Him, not only as God's workman, but as having the power in Himself.

5. The connection between parables and miracles, Everything that our Lord said, had a definite, spiritual purpose. We may be sure that this was also true of everything He did. They were not desultory acts. Everything contributed to the one great testimony which He was giving, for He came down from heaven not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him, This will was the salvation of sinful *man*, effected by His grace. This salvation consisted in bringing man into the true knowledge of God, a knowledge of such kind that it resulted in moral likeness to Him. The miracles which were wrought, therefore, were not merely supernatural acts to call attention, nor indeed mere acts of kindness. We may be sure our blessed Lord's tender heart of compassion went out toward all who were sick and oppressed by the devil. If our hearts are moved by pity for the suffering, we may be sure that His throbbed perfectly in divine compassion; and yet we greatly miss the scope of the miracles if we think of them simply as therapeutic acts.

There are three words for miracles: " signs, " " wonders " and " mighty deeds. " The " wonder " suggests the effect of which we have been speaking. Man's attention is attracted by a su-



pernatural act. The "mighty deed " suggests the power which has been put forth in arousing this attention, but the " sign" suggests that there is a correspondence between the miraculous act and the revelation to be given in connection with it. This opens up an exceedingly profitable line of study; a line, we may say, which goes far beyond treating miracles as the mere evidences of Christianity. Our faith is confirmed by seeing the evident wisdom and purpose in their performance. We find, thus, that blindness is a spiritual, as well as a physical malady; thus the man in the 9th of John not only has his bodily eyes opened, but the eyes of his heart; while the Pharisees, declaring that they saw, really remained blind.

The feeding of the five thousand is connected with the feeding of men with the bread of life. Cases of demon possession are connected with physical maladies in such a way as to suggest not merely that bodily affliction may in certain cases be connected with special Satanic activity, but that the disease typifies a certain form of sin.

The miracle, therefore, is simply an enacted parable. It is a parabolic pantomime in which spiritual truth, not merely as to the power of God, but as to the nature of sin and the character of divine grace is set forth. It is this which we desire especially to note as we examine the various miracles recorded in the four Gospels.

Pursuing methods similar to those followed in the examination of the parables, we now add a list of the miracles wrought.

Narrated in One Gospel only

In MATTHEW

1. Two Blind Men healed. Ch. 9:27 :-Mercy for blinded Israel.
2. A Dumb Demoniac cured. Ch. 9:32 :-The power of Satan closing the lips, overcome by the Lord.
3. The Coin in the Fish's Mouth. Ch. 17:24:—All resources of nature at the Lord's disposal.

In MARK

1. The Deaf and Dumb Man healed. Ch. 7:3' :—The restoring of relationship to God, which produces a testimony to His praise.
2. The Blind Man healed. Ch. 8:22 :-The gradual workings of grace.

In LUKE

1. The Draft of Fishes. Ch. 5:1 :-Divine omniscience and power manifested.
2. Raising the Widow's Son. Ch. 7:11 :-Love stronger than death.
3. The Woman with the Spirit of Infirmary. Ch. 13:11 :-A release from Satan's power.
4. The Dropsy healed. Ch. 14:1 :-Deliverance from Pharisaism.
5. The Ten Lepers cured. Ch. 17:11 :-One in ten a worshiper.

6. Malchus' Ear healed. Ch. 22 : 50 :-Thoughtfulness of divine love.

#### In JOHN

1. Turning the Water into Wine. Ch. 2 : 10:-The Word received in penitence, producing joy.

2. The Nobleman's Son cured. Ch. 4: 46:—Mercy to Israel at a distance.

3. The Impotent Man at Bethesda cured. Ch. 5: 1 :-Sovereign grace above law.

4. The Blind Man cured. Ch. 9: 1:-The opening of the eyes of the soul-new birth.

5. The raising of Lazarus, Ch. 11 : 43:-The power of resurrection.

6. The Draft of Fishes. Ch. 21 : 1:-The gathering in of the Gentiles.

#### Narrated in Two Gospels

1. The Demoniac in the Synagogue. Mk. 1 : 23; Lk. 4: 33 :-Deliverance from Satan's power manifested in holy things.

2. The Centurion's Servant healed of Palsy. Matt. 8: 5 ; Lk. 7 : 1 :-Grace in power going out to the Gentiles who trust in Christ.

3. The Blind and Dumb Demoniac. Matt. 12 : 22; Lk. 11: 14 :-Satan's power, sealing the lips, overthrown.

4. The Syrophenician's Daughter. Matt. 15: 21 ; Mk. 7 : 24 :-Mercy to the alien.

5. Four Thousand fed. Matt. 15: 32; Mk. 8: 1 :-The Bread of Life for hungry souls.

6. The Cursing of the Fig Tree. Matt. 21: 18 ; Mk. 11: 12 :-God's strange work.

### Narrated in Three Gospels

1. Healing the Leper. Matt. 8: 2; Mk. 1: 40; Lk. 5: 12 :-The defilement and guilt of sin removed.

2. Peter's Mother-in-law cured of Fever. Matt. 8: 14; Mk. 1: 30; Lk. 4: 38:—The restless energy of the flesh stilled.

3. The Storm calmed. Matt. 8: 26; Mk. 4: 37; Lk. 8: 22 :-Christ's power over circumstances.

4. The Demoniac of Gadara. Matt. 8: 28; Mk. 5: 1; Lk. 8: 27 :-Multiplied Satanic power overcome.

5. Cured of the Palsy. Matt. 9: 2; Mk. 2: 3; Lk. 5: 18:—The helplessness of sin removed by its forgiveness.

6. The Issue of Blood. Matt. 9: 20; Mk. 5: 25; Lk. 8: 43 :-The weakness and defilement of sin removed.

7. Raising of Jairus' Daughter. Matt. 9: 23; Mk. 5: 38; Lk. 8: 49 :-Life out of death.

8. The Withered Hand healed. Matt. 12: 10; Mk. 3: 1; Lk. 6: 6:-The weakness of the law displaced by the power of grace.

9. Walking on the Sea. Matt. 14: 25; Mk. 6: 48; John 6: 19:—"Thy way is in the sea."

10. The Demoniac Child cured after the Transfiguration. Matt. 17: 14; Mk. 9: 17; Lk. 9: 38:—Israel 'delivered from the power of Satan.

II. Blind Bartimæus. Matt. 20: 30 (two blind men) ; Mk. 10: 46; Lk. 18: 35 :-The beginning of restoring mercy for Israel in the latter days.

### Narrated in Four Gospels

Feeding the Five Thousand. Matt. 14 : 19; Mk. 6 : 35; Lk. 9 : 12; John 6: 5 :-Christ the Bread of Life, the true Manna provided for all His people who believe in Him.

We add a word as to our Lord's avoiding the crowd at Nazareth, Lk. 4: 30. This is sometimes given as a miraculous act, but the words do not necessarily suggest this. Indeed, when we remember that our Lord never seems to have wrought a miracle in His own behalf, we are slow to think that He did it here. He simply passed through their midst, while in their noise and confusion they were as yet perhaps not sufficiently united to attempt to carry out their purpose. We rather incline to refer such acts as this, and those in John, to the providential care of God over Him, and what are called natural causes.

We have thus before us a most inviting field for study and research. We have endeavored to give to each miracle, in a few words, the special spiritual lesson connected with it. It is difficult to do this within the brief space of a few lines, and we cannot here enter upon anything like a full enlargement and justification of the *spiritual application* of the miracles. We believe, that

what has already been said is sufficient justification for this, especially when taken with our Lord's application of the miracle of the blind man. We may reverently paraphrase His own question: Know ye not this miracle? How then will ye know all miracles ?

Another scripture links closely the spiritual truths with the signs wrought. In His message to John the Baptist, our Lord says: "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk ; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:5). Here, the preaching of the gospel to the poor is so closely connected with the miracles performed that we are constrained to think of these as the gospel enacted, even as the preaching was the gospel proclaimed. We believe, therefore, that each miracle sets before us some such outline of truth as the following.

(1) The malady speaks of some form of sin :—

Leprosy, of its guilt and defilement.

Blindness, of God shut out.

Deafness-His voice not heard.

Palsy-insensibility and helplessness.

Dropsy-feeble heart action, conscience asleep  
(inert kidneys)-pride of self-righteousness.

Fever-the restless, false stimulation of nature's energy.

Issue-chronic defilement.

Withered hand—a form of paralysis, nature's strength withered.

Demoniac possession—the power of Satan, connected also with dumbness, deafness, and being bowed down.

(2) The method of cure shows how divine grace acted through our Lord.

*Touching* the leper suggests the grace which brought Him down to our very need. Fully traced out, this would mean the Cross.

Various acts are connected with healing the blind. His *simple word* was spoken, showing the power in that word. The *laying His hands* on the sightless eyes recalls again the Cross where He came down to our darkness. The *clay and spittle* put upon the eyes speaks of the sentence of death, the penalty due to sin.

Deafness is interesting because dumbness is connected with it. Indeed, the same word in Greek is translated both "deaf" and "dumb." It means literally *dull*. When the avenue between the soul and God is closed, there can be no speaking out His praise. The Lord's putting His fingers into the ears and touching the tongue with spittle suggests His *abhorrence* of this condition, but His grace in delivering the poor soul from it. How precious is the thought that even His abhorrence of sin, as expressed by the spittle, is for salvation in those who yield themselves to His mercy !

Taking *by the hand* is similar to a touch, only a stronger thought. It is not merely the imparting of power, but showing its link with Himself. And so we might dwell further upon every detail and find the fullest confirmation of what we have said. Each miracle becomes indeed a miracle of grace where we wonderingly gaze upon every detail as exhibiting our helplessness and His grace, with His ways of love.

One case of surgery remains to be spoken of. Significantly, it is the undoing of Peter's rash act in cutting off a servant's ear. The act speaks of undue severity-cutting off people's ears, instead of opening them. How often has our Lord to undo our poor, blundering use of the sword! A touch is here sufficient.

We have said little about death and the resurrection power of our Lord, exemplified in the three (the number of resurrection) cases of raising recorded. When sin is seen in some of its *effects*, it is characterized in different ways. Thus, as we have leprosy, palsy, blindness, etc., so we speak of drunkenness, profanity, skepticism, and the like. But when **death** intervened, we hear nothing of its cause. The simple fact has taken place and there is no need for going into further detail. There is instruction in this. The outward form in which sin manifests itself suggests that the sinner is still alive, although sorely in need. There is, of course, a sense in



which this is true, but when we come to see man's real condition, we find it not merely one of sickness or of exhibition of certain forms of evil; he is dead—"dead in trespasses and sins." Here it is not a question of what the form of sin is. He may be a drunkard or a self-righteous moralist, but there is no *life* to God.

In the three miracles of raising the dead we have death seen, first: in the case of Jairus' daughter, as having just taken place, in a child. Next, in the widow's son at Nain, death has gone on toward burial, and our Lord arrests the bier on its way to the tomb. It is now a young man. Next, we have death at the end of a course of sickness which our Lord had purposely declined to arrest. The subject is one whom He loves. Here, his death has taken place so long previously that corruption has set in. This is the most hopeless to human appearance, though indeed the power required to call into life is just the same. In each case, Christ is the Resurrection and the Life.

We notice also the difference in the sequel. In the case of Jairus' daughter, our Lord commanded something to be given her to eat. When there is life, there can be nutrition. The young man begins to speak and our Lord relieves his mother's sorrow by putting her son in her arms again. Lazarus is bound with graveclothes, and the word for him is, "Loose him and let him go." Carnal

ordinances have no claim upon the soul set free. We next see Lazarus at the feast with our Lord.

This brief and imperfect glance at this most delightful subject of miracles must suffice. We can only commend it to the prayerful and constant study of the Lord's people. They will be abundantly rewarded with fresh and unsuspected glimpses of the grace of our Lord and His methods of showing that grace.

## CHAPTER VIII

## Doctrinal Teachings of the Four Gospels

THE Bible is not a book of theology. Its truths are not arranged in what we might call a logical manner. In one sense the chronological method is followed. Doctrines are revealed as the occasion for making them known is reached; but even this is hardly sufficiently clear. Doctrines are found, like the precious ore embedded amongst the rocks, distributed throughout the entire Scripture. To gather these doctrines, therefore, requires a survey of the entire word of God. Of course, in the Epistles we have doctrinal truth presented in a more abstract, connected way, but even here it remains true that the Epistles are instinct with life, and every truth presented has its experimental connection with the soul.

To borrow another illustration, the doctrines of the Bible are like the various nutritive elements found in the articles of food. Here, in the most natural and at the same time most attractive way, we find the truth associated with simple, natural narratives of God's approach to man, and of man in his dealings with his fellow, and above all in his relations to God. Out of all

this mass we gather the great truths as to God and man, and man's relation to God.

In the four Gospels, as we have seen, we have Christ as the central theme. There can be no question as to this. When we remember that the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father hath declared Him, we need not be surprised to find also in the Evangelists a wealth of doctrinal truth, although not presented in a doctrinal or dogmatic way, about the great subjects of God and man, of sin and salvation.

We purpose in the present chapter to give a brief outline of the more prominent doctrines found in the Gospels. How far do they transcend the teachings of the Old Testament, and how far are they incomplete when compared with the Epistles ?

### **1. The Doctrine as to God-the Trinity**

The knowledge of God is, as some have put it, "The noblest of all sciences." We guard however against the thought that we can gain a knowledge of God as we would of the natural sciences. Indeed these do not yield their true meaning until we couple them with God, for surely He is revealed in all the works of His creation; but the knowledge of God as given to us in the Scriptures, and particularly in the New Testament, is a moral, rather than an intellectual, acquirement. It is this which our Lord declares when He says: "This is life eternal,

that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Perhaps nowhere in the entire word of God, not even excepting the Epistles, is there such richness and fulness of doctrine as to the Godhead as in the four Gospels. The reason is not far to seek. It is the Son who is before us, and it is He who has made known the Father. It was the name upon His lips constantly. Every miracle He wrought was in obedience to the Father. Every word He uttered was to declare the Father's name and character. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find the revelation of God set before us here with a fulness that must command our reverence and adoring gratitude.

**God the Father.** As we have just said, it is the Father's name which is ever upon our Lord's lips, and this does not mean merely the relationship of God to the Lord Jesus as we speak of His relationship to ourselves, but it means specifically the first person of the Trinity revealed as Father, the One who declares His good pleasure in His Son.

**God the Son.** Similarly, the Son is of course revealed, not merely in His human nature, nor as God incarnate, but back of that we have clear intimations of the eternal relationship between the Father and the only begotten Son who was in the bosom of the Father (John 1 : 18). The doctrine of the incarnation, we need hardly say,

is on every page of the Gospels. We will examine this more in detail later. Our object just now is to trace the doctrine of the Trinity.

**The Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit also is put before us as a divine person. He is seen at the baptism of the Lord Jesus. The Pharisees are warned against the awful sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. There is no thought here of an *influence* or an emanation from God, or of a supernatural spiritual Being not divine. So far from this, our Lord speaks of Him as a divine person who has a specific work to do. When John the Baptist spoke of our Lord as the One who would baptize with the Holy Ghost, or, before that, in the holy mystery of the incarnation itself, on to the precious details about the promised Comforter, we are again and again brought face to face with the truth of the personality and deity of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

It is not the manner of Scripture to give proof-texts in the bare, literal way that men naturally crave. It would seem as though the Spirit of God purposely avoided this; for as we have said, the knowledge of God is not an intellectual, but a moral perception. Of course the intellect is involved, but much more is necessary. Therefore we find nothing of a formal character, as though the doctrine were introduced for the sake of making orthodox statements. There is

the most absolute freedom and absence of restraint in the narrative of the Gospels. All flows along with a simplicity and clearness, with a fervor and a depth which mark it as the work of God. There are, however, passages where the fulness of the Godhead shines out in an unmistakable way. Thus, at our Lord's baptism, significantly at the very time when He takes the lowliest place in anticipation of the cross where He goes for His people's sin, we have a glimpse of the Trinity. The Son is before us; His true glory veiled but not dimmed by His tabernacle of flesh. The heavens are opened and the Holy Spirit descends as a dove upon Him, while the Father's voice from that heavenly glory proclaims His beloved Son. Thus, Father, Son and Spirit are alike revealed.

After His resurrection, as recorded in Matthew, our Lord meets His disciples in Galilee, and sends them forth to make disciples of all nations, to bring, we may say, all into subjection to God, to establish the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth. They are to make disciples of all nations in a twofold way, putting the name of God upon them in the outward act of baptism, and instructing them in all that the Lord had made known. Baptism was to be "unto the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Here again, then, we have the full Trinity (Matt. 28:16-20).

In His last words with His disciples, before

His suffering, as we have them in John, our Lord again speaks in the clearest way of Himself, of His Father, and of the Holy Spirit. Who that reads, for instance, in the 14th chapter of John of the coming of the Comforter and of the indwelling of the Father and of the Son, can doubt that our Lord gives us again a view of the trinity of divine Persons? These are but instances. The very fibre of the Gospel narrative is made up of truth as to the three blessed persons of the Godhead. We are at present, however, speaking merely of the fact of the Trinity, and confine ourselves to this.

Let us ask but one question. Can the reader conceive of a fourth person being mentioned, co-ordinate with the three blessed Ones of whom we have spoken? Or can he conceive of only two? This in itself, in the most impressive way, convinces us of the truth of the Trinity.

## 2. The Attributes of God

(1) **God, a Spirit.** Of the nature and attributes of God as thus revealed in the Trinity, the four Gospels furnish us with abundant material. "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24); "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18). These and other scriptures declare the spirituality of God as contrasted with man His creature, or the universe His creation.

"The devil taketh Him up into an exceeding



high mountain " (Matt. 4:8); "Angels came and ministered unto Him " (Matt. 4:11) ; " Those possessed with demons " (Matt. 4:24); "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26: 53.) These and many other scriptures speak of spirit-creatures. We read of the prince of the demons, the wicked hosts of fallen spirits, as the legion that possessed the demoniac of Gadara; of the angels who ministered to the Lord, the multitude of the heavenly hosts, more than twelve legions of whom would gladly have responded to the Father's command to attend upon His Son ; but immediately we recognize that none of these can for one moment be thought of in any other way than as creatures. They are either fallen creatures like the devil and his kindred spirits, or the unfallen angels who delight to attend upon the Son of God. Thus, not only is God's spiritual essence declared in distinction from all material existences, but in contrast with all the hosts of spiritual beings who are His creatures.

(2) His **Infinity**. " He that sent Me is with Me " (John 8 : 29) ; "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee" (Mk. 14: 36). These and other scriptures suggest the infinity of God. Even an archangel, mighty as he is, is a finite being; Gabriel can only stand in the presence of God as before his Master whose presence is infinite.

(3) His Omniscience and Omnipresence. Thus, too, "Thy Father which seeth in secret" (Matt. 6: 4) tells His omniscience. "Your heavenly Father feedeth them" (Matt. 6 : 26) shows His providence (ver. 30).

(4) His Eternity. "The glory that I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17 : 5) ; "The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1 : 2), declare His eternity. There was never a time when God was not. At the beginning, with His Son, He was present. The glory of the divine Beings was but manifested in creation, a glory which had existed from all eternity.

(5) His **Unchangeableness**. "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5 : 18). "Have ye not heard that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female," etc. (Matt. 19 : 4) ; "As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began" (Lk. 1 : 70). Such scriptures as these show the unchangeable character of God. There has been no alteration in His purposes and of course none in His Being.

We come next to speak of those attributes which we usually call "moral," as contrasted with those that speak of knowledge or power. In the abstract it is possible to conceive of a being, we will not say with infinite (for that would be to think of the Godhead) but of immense power

and knowledge, yet devoid of those moral attributes without which the others would be exercised for evil. Such a creature is Satan: with attributes of knowledge and of power (not inherent as in God, but by virtue of his creation), and yet "he is a liar and a murderer from the beginning ;" "He abode not in the truth." He is a tempter (Mk. 1: 13), the arch enemy of man and of God. The heathen have deities whom they have invested with superhuman and well-nigh limitless powers, and so uncertain has their moral character been, that they had to be placated, cajoled, deceived, treated as human beings, only with great power for harm and a certain amount of power for good, if they could only be induced to exercise it. Such deities are in reality but the demons of which Scripture speaks; and they have probably been correctly characterized, at least in some of their attributes. In contrast with all these are the changeless, moral perfections of God.

(6) **His Righteousness.** "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee" (John 17 : 25) ; "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory," etc. (Matt. 25 : 31)—the judgment of the living nations is here spoken of. Throughout the Gospels, wherever judgment is spoken of, or the law of God, we find this attribute of divine righteousness unmistakably declared.

(7) **His Holiness.** "Holy Father, keep through

**Thine own name "** (John 17 : 11). Similarly, throughout the four Gospels there is the insistence upon holiness as the inherent character of God. Perhaps in no way is this more strongly manifested than in its contrast to the unholiness, for instance, of the demons (Mk. 1: 23), an unclean spirit; or the sinfulness of man (Lk. 7: 37), "the woman that was a sinner;" and expressed in the general declaration, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

(8) His Love. "God so loved the world" (John 3: 16); the whole parable of the Prodigal Son and multitudes of other instances bring out this precious attribute of God, declaring He is love.

(9) His Goodness. Perhaps this should not be differentiated from His love, and yet it is displayed where men have no eye for His love. See Matt. 5: 45: "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good." Throughout the Gospels, we have the constant testimony to His goodness, forbearance, longsuffering, etc. These general attributes may be classed under this one head, suggesting His benevolence. As has just been said, this is in close connection with His love. The distinction however can be recognized.

(10) His Truth. "To know Thee, the only true God" (John 17: 3). Here also we are in close contact with the attributes of righteousness and holiness. The element of truth, however, can be recognized and distinguished. Thus, "I am

the Light of the world " (John 8 : 12) ; " If it were not so, I would have told you " (John 14 : 2) ; " The Spirit of truth " (John 16: 13). Remembering that our Lord has declared or exhibited the Father, every moral attribute in Him is a shining out of the same in His Father and in the Godhead generally. This is a most important and precious thought to remember in connection **with** any effort at giving an outline of the divine attributes. They are not, as is so often the case with men, partial or one-sided, but each attribute permeates and characterizes all the rest, so that our conception of God includes every attribute. We cannot think of Him as sacrificing one attribute for the exercise of another. His righteousness shines forth in His love, *and* His holiness is declared in His judgment, while His long-suffering and patience are manifested even in the final judgment of the ungodly.

But we must pass from this brief and partial characterization of the blessed God, to speak a little more in detail of the separate persons of the Trinity.

**The Father.** To quote the passages referring to the Father would be to give a synopsis of all four Gospels. Throughout this entire portion, His name is ever upon our Lord's lips. Particularly in John is it prominent and all the more striking because here we have the essential Godhead of our Lord more directly before us. We

will therefore give no texts of Scripture in speaking of the Father.

**The Son.** The person of Christ is the great "Mystery of godliness." We are in the presence of an inscrutable truth. Our Lord Himself has told us that "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. 11 : 27). Our safety lies in holding fast to all that Scripture reveals, not seeking unduly to harmonize it, but recognizing that whatever God states must be true, and, were we able for it, capable of perfect understanding. Indeed there is no difficulty for humble faith in apprehending all sides of the truth as to the Son of God. Unbelief alone stumbles here, but faith rejoices in it all and does not intrude into that which God has not revealed.

In speaking of the person of Christ there are three features :

- (1) His deity. "The Word was God" (Jno. 1 : 1).
- (2) His *humanity*. "*The* Word became flesh" (Jno. 1 : 14).
- (3) *The unity of His person*. "Behold the Lamb of God" (Jno. 1 : 29).

These three passages from the first chapter of John will suffice to set forth the person of the Son of God. Throughout that Gospel, and indeed in the Synoptists as well, we have constantly put before us the person of the Lord. Sometimes we see His deity shining forth in an unmistakable way, as when He arose and stilled

the storm on the Lake of Galilee. Sometimes His humanity seems exclusively before us, as when He slept, or was wearied with His journey, or was hungry.

It is His full person that is before us in all four Gospels, though from the standpoint of incarnation. Thus, the truth as to the person of the Lord somewhat resembles what we have been seeing as to the attributes of God. They can be distinguished, but must not be separated. The two natures in our Lord are evidently there, but in His humanity we will find His deity shining, and in His Godhead we will see His humanity. Thus all is preciousy blended together; and when we think of His miracles, of His teachings, it is God who is working, but the dependent Man as well. It is One who is giving us the words of God, and yet who spake as never man spake. This truth applies to His entire life and work—all has the stamp of His entire person upon it. This apprehension of the person of Christ is most precious. We commend it to the constant and prayerful study of the children of God.

**The Holy Spirit.** What we have already said as to the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit will suffice to give the key to the teachings of the four Gospels upon the third person of the Trinity. We find both at the beginning and throughout the entire narrative, that He is referred to in various ways, and always as a person. He is

seen as the agent of new birth (John 3 : 5) ; as the One who led and guided our Lord and by whose power He wrought His miracles; as the divine Being whose presence was manifested in all that our Lord did and said, and therefore, if these acts and teachings were ascribed by any to Satan, it was the sin against the Holy Ghost which has never forgiveness. Particularly in chapters 14-16 of John, the teaching as to the Holy Spirit is rich. We see Him here as sent by the Lord from the Father; as sent also by the Father; as bearing witness to the truth; as convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and as leading His people into all truth. The special promise of the Spirit is given in Luke, and we are told that our Lord would baptize with the Holy Ghost.

These and other scriptures must suffice. They show the deity and personality of the third person of the Godhead in an unmistakable way.

We have now taken a rapid survey of the teaching of the four Gospels as to the Godhead, and looked at the special instruction given as to each of the divine Persons. It is scarcely necessary to say that in no portion of the word of God is this teaching more rich. Indeed, we might say, nowhere is it so rich as here, though of course we do not hold up one portion of Scripture against another. But the glory of the four Gospels is that they reveal to us Christ in the fulness



of His person, as God, as Man, in one person. It is the special joy of our Lord that He reveals God the Father to us in His attributes, in His character, His love; and the Holy Spirit unites in this blessed ministry. Thus, the Gospels are most rich in what may be called theology-the knowledge of God.

### 3. The Doctrine as to Man

We come next to inquire what the four Gospels teach as to man. We will first briefly notice what is said about the constitution of man in general, and then devote more attention to what is said of him as he is.

The constitution of man. "He which made them at the beginning, made them male and female" (Matt. 19:4); "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do" (Lk. 12:4); "The rich man died and was buried, and in hades he lift up his eyes being in torments" (Lk. 16: 22, 23).

These scriptures show us that man has a body, characterized as the bodies of animals, so far as that is concerned; but the body is evidently not the larger or more important part of his being. There is a spirit which does not die, and which is conscious when the body is buried. Thus, our Lord, in speaking of death, calls it "sleep," as applying to the body. The soul, the seat of the affections and desires, is spoken of, as in Luke

12: "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." The spirit is not always differentiated from the soul, but in the passage referred to in Luke 16, evidently the man is seen as a spirit. Indeed, while we can clearly distinguish between the two spiritual departments of man, his soul and spirit, they evidently are to be taken together. Thus, it is the man who has desires, affections and feelings, and yet his spirit is a higher department of his personality, including conscience and the mind. Thus, as to the constitution of man, the Gospels, in harmony with all the rest of Scripture, show him as a tripartite person, with body, soul and spirit united together, all of them essential for the full truth of manhood. We find therefore no lack of teaching as to the resurrection of the body. "Those that are in their graves shall come forth" (John 5). In the resurrection, the natural relationships of the present life, while remembered, are not renewed. They do not die, nor are given in marriage (Luke 20: 35, 36).

Man as he is. "He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21); "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20); "From within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts ... all these evil things come forth from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7: 21-23). "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3).

These scriptures, which are but samples of what occurs on well-nigh every page of the Gospels, teach the threefold condition of man under sin. He is a transgressor whose sins have put him into a place of guilt from which alone he can be released by the mercy of God. The grounds of this we shall see later. He is also *unclean*, for sin brings not only guiltiness in the sight of God, but corruption. This defilement is seen to proceed from within, It is not a question of the hands, but of the heart. Our Lord's constant testimony against the Pharisees was that, while scrupulous about the outside of the cup and platter, within they were full of all uncleanness. He charges them with being like unto sepulchres full of dead men's bones within, though beautiful without; with being like graves that appear not, and those who walk over them are not aware of them.

The whole controversy of our Lord with Pharisaism is on this ground, The law must be fulfilled to its last jot or tittle, but they, while breaking the spirit of the law and violating the commandments of God, were pretending to adorn themselves with it. Thus, the Pharisee in the temple thanks God that he is not as other men are, and cites his religious observances as a proof of this.

Beside being guilty and defiled, man is also *helpless*. Sin brings helplessness and this could

not be more distinctly stated than in the scripture we have quoted, referring to the necessity of new birth. Here, a leader of the Jews, a teacher, comes to the Lord, and the necessity for new birth is pressed upon him. This shows how helpless the natural man is, not only guilty, not only corrupt, but also powerless to help himself.

In the chapter on Miracles, we dwelt upon the various spiritual conditions set forth in the different maladies with which men were affected. Each of these gives its testimony as to sin. A debtor forgiven presupposes trespass; a leper cleansed presupposes defilement; and a paralytic healed presupposes a helpless condition, which is seen in its absolute character in a dead person. Thus the teaching, while necessarily not presenting matters in the doctrinal, abstract form of the Epistles, gives a most unequivocal testimony to the lost and fallen condition of man.

#### 4. The Doctrine of Salvation

We use the term "salvation" in a broad sense as including the whole or any of the parts of the work of grace which meets the fallen condition of man. As we have just seen, this condition has three aspects : of guilt, of defilement, of death or helplessness. The work of grace which meets this will have, therefore, at least three forms. For guilt, there will be forgiveness; for defile-

ment, *cleansing*; and for helplessness, new *birth* or life. The principle which we have several times stated will be helpful here. We can distinguish, but must not separate. The condition of man can be distinguished as having this three-fold character, but one of these is never present without the other two. Thus, we cannot think of man being guilty, as having transgressed the commandments of God, without also being defiled and helpless. So, too, in the work of divine grace, we cannot think of pardon being extended, in the scriptural way, without its having been accompanied by quickening and cleansing. If this truth were always remembered we would be spared much confusion in endeavoring to divide asunder that which God has joined together.

We are also quite free to say that salvation in its fullest sense looks on to the final deliverance from the very presence of sin-the consummation in heaven. There is also a governmental and external salvation; such, for instance, as is spoken of in our Lord's prophetic discourse: "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved." This, we need hardly say, does not refer to the salvation of the soul, but the deliverance from the Great Tribulation through which the Jewish remnant will be called to pass, with an indirect application to us also.

We have said enough, however, to guard against any misinterpretation of our designation of this

general subject as salvation. We will now look at each of the three aspects of this saving work as presented in the Gospels.

(1) Forgiveness. As having committed sins, man is guilty and has a load upon him which must be removed by forgiveness. The truth of forgiveness is most blessedly set forth in the Gospels, Possibly the Gospel of Luke presents this precious theme more fully than either of the others, not even excepting John. The reason is not far to seek: the "gospel" is the prominent theme in Luke, and forgiveness lies at the very basis of the gospel. Thus, we have the forgiveness of the woman that was a sinner (Lk. 7), and in the same narrative we have the parable of the forgiveness of the two debtors. In the Prodigal Son we have a divine picture of forgiveness and justification, and in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican we have two added thoughts—"God be merciful (literally, be *propitiated*) to me the sinner" (Luke 18: 13). "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other" (ver. 14). The first of these gives us an intimation of the need of *expiation*—of a sacrifice. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give His life a ransom for many." The second speaks of *justification*—the full acknowledgment before all of acceptance and clearance in the sight of God. Justification, which is Paul's theme, shows

one of those links which we have mentioned between Luke's Gospel and the ministry of the great apostle to the Gentiles. Justification is exemplified by the best robe put upon the returning prodigal. The Father's kiss would suggest forgiveness, but the best robe suggests a standing given only by justification. Wherever we find salvation in this full sense in any of the Gospels we find this thought of justification connected with it. For instance: the publicans are gathered together at a feast in the Lord's presence. He justifies this by saying: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick," contrasting their past and their present. The man out of whom the legion was cast, was seated at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. These set forth the precious truth of justification. Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in the name of our Lord amongst all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Lk. 24:47). Thus, the blessed news of forgiveness was to be spread far and wide.

(2) **Cleansing.** The truth of cleansing is so intimately connected with that of the defilement which made it necessary, that the passages which bring out one declare the other also. The leper, for instance, suggests, as we have been seeing, the guilt of sin and its defilement as well: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean;" and our Lord's answer is: "I will, be thou clean."

The leprosy is cleansed; the defilement is removed; the shame is taken away. There is no question that a gospel which proclaims forgiveness without a corresponding deliverance from the defilement of sin is only a half gospel. Forgiveness lies at the basis, but, as our Lord declares, the way to make good fruit is to make the tree good. The words of mercy to the woman of whom we have lately spoken, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace," intimate in the strongest way her deliverance from her sin. So, too, with the woman in the 8th of John, where indeed our Lord says: "Go, and sin no more." The soul is made at home in the presence of infinite holiness, as well as of infinite love. The love which has forgiven is too great to allow the forgiven one to be still defiled. We need not say how this is reiterated in every miracle of our Lord.

(3) **New birth.** Closely connected with the truth of cleansing, is that of new birth. Indeed, they are but parts of the same great truth. New wine must be put into new bottles. The sinner must be born again, must have *a* new nature, if he is to be a vessel which can contain the energy of the divine life. As dead, man needs quickening. This is the condition described in the parable of the prodigal son. He was not only lost and now found, but dead and now alive. The first suggests his distance from God. The second shows his need of new birth. This is the great theme of



the Gospel of John, where we have, not only the truth of new birth, but of eternal life, the accompaniment of that birth.

Without entering into controversy, we may say in brief that life must have a beginning, and that, in ordinary language, birth is the beginning of life. The expression "eternal life " in the Gospel of John is used frequently, and no doubt in a broad way. It evidently suggests the work of the Spirit in us, but also the work of God in connection with our Lord Jesus Christ in a marked way. Eternal life is the result of faith in Him—John 3: 16; 5: 24, etc. This eternal life may be looked at as the opposite of condemnation (John 3: 18, 36), and therefore includes forgiveness. It is out of *death*, and therefore includes new birth (John 5: 24). It is on the ground of His *sacrificial work*, and therefore includes expiation (John 6: 54). It is *eternal*, for none can pluck the believer out of the hands of our Lord (John 10: 28). It is expressed *in* communion and enjoyment of God, therefore it is the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. It will thus be seen that the expression "eternal life " as used in the Gospel of John is the general one covering the whole theme of which we have spoken. Without doubt, there is the more abundant character of this life in the present time, that is, the fulness of revelation of the person and work of Christ; and above all,

the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer giving a fulness and freedom to the eternal life as we now know it. Further, there is an aspect of eternal life which looks on to glory. This we have in the Synoptists. "If thou wouldest enter *into* life ;" "In the world *to come*, everlasting life. "

(4) **How available.** We come now to ask how the blessedness of forgiveness and deliverance is to be made available for sinful man. The Gospels are as clear in this as in all the rest. "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ " are written all over their pages. The whole preaching of John the Baptist was a call to repentance. It was thus alone that the way for the Lord could be prepared; thus alone would the people be in readiness to receive Him who should come after.

Our Lord took up the same word and preached repentance; and when the Pharisees questioned Him as to His authority, He referred them back to a prior question as to John the Baptist's ministry. Had they bowed to his call to repentance? If this was not the case, they were unable to believe. So too in describing the work of grace in the soul (Lk. 15), the Lord calls it repentance. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Here it includes both the judgment of sin and the pardon that goes with it.

As illustrations of repentance we have the publican in the temple: "God be merciful to me a sinner," he says, and that of the woman washing our Lord's feet with tears. It is this brokenness of heart which God does not despise; it is repentance, and is pressed constantly throughout the Gospels. "They that are whole have no need of a physician."

Faith is always the accompaniment of true repentance. Indeed, they are but two sides of the same act. Repentance is a look at myself as in the presence of God; and faith is a look at God as for my need. Nearly every miracle wrought by our Lord was conditioned upon the faith of the recipient. "He did not many mighty works there because of *their unbelief*." "All things are possible to him that believeth." "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." So we find throughout the Synoptists; and when we come to the Gospel of John, it is not merely faith in the Lord's power to work a miracle, but faith in Himself. "As many as received *Him*, to them gave He power to become the children of God" (John 1:12). "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on *Him* should not perish." So, constantly, through this Gospel, faith in the person of Christ is pressed and the result of that faith is pardon and eternal life.

(5) **As to the world.** What is the testimony of the Evangelists as to the world? There are three expressions used in the Gospels which are all translated "world:" *kosmos*, meaning the material earth as inhabited by man, but with a moral significance in the Gospel of John; *oikoumene*, "habitable earth," or as we might say, the civilized world, referring to the Roman Empire (Lk. 2:1)—this is of infrequent occurrence; and *aion* or "age," used in a dispensational way to describe the course of time and the moral character of the period. We have thus, "Neither in this world (age); neither in the world (age) to come" (Matt. 12: 32).

As has been said, in the Gospel of John the word which we might translate "earth" has the moral significance of "age" often connected with it. Sometimes, indeed, it seems to refer to the religious world, as we call it, "Ye are of this world." Whatever the word used, there can be no question that our Lord was not of this world. In the Gospel of John, He declares that His disciples are not of this world, even as He is not, and throughout that Gospel we see Him as outside of it all. It is outside this He leads His sheep, and when He leaves them, He commits them to the care of His Father to be kept from the evil that is in the world.

We find also in the Synoptists, the term "age" constantly used for the present dispensation and

that which is to succeed it-the millennial. The Lord traces the course of the present age, He shows its ending and how the next or millennial age will be introduced. There can be no question as to His teaching here. So far from the world gradually yielding to the beneficent influences of the truth and being brought under its power, it goes on unchanged. His own are ever a remnant in the midst of it. The close of all is by judgments. Then, He will purge His kingdom of all that offends, and them that do iniquity.

We remark at this point that, beyond two anticipative references as to the Church (in Matt. chaps. 16 and 18) and in the parable of the pearl, we have nothing distinctive as to the formation of the Body of Christ in the present interval of grace, in a dispensational way. It is the time when the seed is being sown, when the enemy also is introducing the tares and the leaven of error is spreading, while profession is also extending like a mustard tree. It is the proclamation of the Kingdom, together with baptism as the initiatory rite, or the precious truth of forgiveness and membership in the family of God together with the memorial of the Lord's Supper; but "Church truth," as unfolded in the Epistles, must wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit and the sending forth of the chosen vessel fitted by grace to make known this great mystery.

(6) The Future. Those who have studied the Lord's great prophetic discourse on the Mount of Olives cannot fail to have seen how clearly is taught the truth of His second coming. It is connected, however, not with the rapture of the Church (a mystery as we have already seen not then made known), but with the judgments preliminary to His establishing His millennial Kingdom. The Kingdom of the Son of Man is to be introduced, as we saw, by judgments of the most fearful character upon His enemies who have their place with the devil and his angels in the Lake of Fire. The future for the saved is described not merely in its millennial characteristics, but in the eternal state. "In My Father's house are many mansions:" these are the everlasting habitations. "Abraham's bosom" too, from a Jewish point of view, sets forth the blessedness of the people of God after death. There is no need for the grotesque interpretation of some that our Lord released the Old Testament saints from the bondage of *sheol* where they had been confined until His resurrection. The saints are evidently comforted, as Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and this is the Kingdom of God where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are. The judgment of the 25th of Matthew, as has been said, is a judgment of the living nations prior to the Lord's coming to set up His Kingdom.

The judgment of the dead is suggested in Matt.

11: 22: " More tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you." This judgment of the dead is spoken of in John 5: 29 as taking place at the resurrection of the wicked, separated, as we know, by a thousand years from the resurrection of the righteous. The moral distinction alone is given in John.

We are thus brought to the end of time with one question still to be answered. What does our Lord have to say of eternity for the saved and for the lost?

As to the saved, He declares: " In My Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again (the nearest approach we have in the Gospels to the truth of the coming for the saints of the present interval) and receive you unto Myself." All the truths of eternal life and of heaven tell of this eternal blessedness, which is the portion of every believer in the Lord Jesus.

For the unsaved, the testimony is equally clear, and from the same lips: " It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched " (Mark g: 43, 44). Here, and in numbers of other passages, we have not merely *hades* spoken of as containing a place of torment for the wicked (Luke 16), but *Gehenna*,

“ the fire that never shall be quenched. ” It is this that renders so intensely solemn our Lord’s word to the Pharisees: “ How shall ye escape the damnation of hell ? ”—*Gehenna*.

We cannot fail to see in reading the Gospels that the Lord Jesus with all the energy of His holy soul spoke of the eternity of future punishment for the lost. It was this that brought Him from heaven, that led Him to plead with men, that made Him agonize for souls. It was this that led Him to the cross to open a way for men to escape the wrath of God. It is fitting, but most solemn, that nowhere in the entire word of God is the teaching as to future punishment so clear as in the Gospels, and from the lips of Him who said: “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ”

We have thus, in this rapid and partial summary, gathered a few of the salient teachings of the four Gospels as to the great outlines of doctrine. We find that they are particularly rich in setting forth God and the person of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ; that the way of salvation is made plain, and the future, both for the saved and the unsaved, is clearly stated. When we compare these truths with those of the Old Testament we see an immense advance in every particular. All that went before was partial. God dwelt in the thick darkness, revealing Himself, as we have it in the epistle to the Hebrews, “in



many parts and in many ways. " There is unquestionably a theology of the Old Testament, and from the very beginning, we could not fail to recognize God as a Being of infinite power, holiness, righteousness and goodness; but all things were pointing forward, and we have not the truth as it is in Jesus made known in the Old Testament.

Similarly, when we compare the Gospels with the Epistles, we find in the latter an advance over the former in certain directions, but it is suggestive that the truth as to the persons of the Godhead reaches its climax, we might say, in the Gospels. As we remarked in another connection, while the Epistles give us unquestionably the highest form of truth, it is not so much in contrast with, as the necessary corollary to the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ as given in the Gospels. These latter come to a close with the disciples intently looking up into heaven, whither Jesus has gone, and waiting for "the Promise of the Father" to be sent down from there. In the Epistles, as has been noted, the Spirit is present and all things are brought to our remembrance which the Lord Jesus "began both to do and to teach." Eternal praise be unto His blessed name!

## CHAPTER IX.

Typical and Symbolic Representations of the  
Four Gospels

**D**URING our examination of the characteristic differences of the four Gospels, we have purposely refrained from making **more than a** passing reference to the various intimations we have of this in the Old Testament. We will now attempt to gather, as far as we may, some of these symbolic intimations.

## 1. The curtains of the tabernacle (Ex. 26:1-14).

"The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us" (John 1:14). Those who have studied the symbolism of the tabernacle know how rich it is in setting forth the perfections and beauties of our Lord Jesus Christ. The boards of acacia wood covered with gold, and the different articles in the holy places made of the same materials, show our Lord in His incorruptible humanity, overlaid with His divine glory. We might say it is God's appreciation of His beloved Son who has taken the form of a servant. So, acacia wood, speaking of His humanity, gives the form to everything. This is all overlaid with gold: the form of man, the *display* of God.

In the curtains we have that which more particularly sets forth the person of our Lord as

manifested here upon earth. A very suggestive thought is given in the Hebrew word for "curtain." It is from the root, meaning "to tremble" or "to fear," given to it, no doubt, as, suspended from above, the curtain trembled with every breath of wind upon it. Our blessed Lord was "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." He was the perfectly dependent One, hanging upon every word of God and therefore moved by the faintest breath of the Spirit as expressing the will of God for Him.

We may expect, therefore, the curtains to set forth our Lord in His life as revealed to us in the four Gospels upon which we have been dwelling, and the question is whether these curtains, not only in general put Him before us as the dependent One glorifying God in His every step, but whether we may look further and expect to find certain correspondences between the symbolism of each set of curtains and one of the Gospels. There were four sets of curtains. Beginning from the innermost-the first, or more composite set, was of fine twined linen in which blue, purple and scarlet were woven together in cherubim; next, the curtain of goats' hair; next, one of rams' skins dyed red; and fourth, a covering of badger or seal skin over the whole. We will look at these in their order.

(1) The curtains of blue, purple, scarlet and **fine** twined **linen**. We will in a moment take up the subject

of the various colors, and therefore will not dwell upon these now. It must suffice to say that in this first set of curtains we have the most complete and composite presentation of our Lord ; but what strikes us especially is that all was embroidered in the form of cherubim. These were governmental figures suggesting the righteousness and judgment which are the foundation of God's throne. They are connected with His rule and government. When we come to inquire whether any one of the Gospels sets our Lord before us specifically in this way, we at once respond, Matthew. This is the Gospel of the Kingdom in which the King is presented to us, the One into whose hands all authority and judgment have been committed. Matthew, then, comes first.

(2) The covering of goat-skins. There are two thoughts connected with the goat: The first is that by its independence, selfwill, hardness and the dark color of its hair, it naturally suggests sin. Our Lord shows this in the parable of the judgment of the nations when the sheep stand for the blessed, and the goats for those who are under the curse. We shall find in a little, too, that the sin-offering was distinctively a goat. When Jacob and his mother undertook to deceive the aged Isaac, the skin of the kid of the goats was put upon his hands and neck. The goats' hair then may well suggest at once the thought of sin.

But there is another thought coming perhaps before this. The hair was spun into a rough cloth and this seems to have been worn by prophets. We have, for instance, Elijah described as wearing a hairy garment, or called a hairy man. So, in general, the prophets wore a hairy garment (see Zech. 13: 4, "A rough garment to deceive.") It will not do violence to this thought if, in addition, we suggest that this rough garment of coarse, hairy cloth was probably worn by servants. Our Lord speaks of this when He says, "They that wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces." John the Baptist wore a garment of camel's hair, doubtless with similar meaning.

The color of this garment of goats' hair was probably black or dark brown, "black as the tents of Kedar," for it was used much in the tent life of the wandering Arabs. The covering, then, of goats' hair suggests to us our Lord as a prophet and in the lowly place of a servant. As the Prophet, He would call the people's sin to mind, and thus the appropriateness of the dark, sombre cloth. All these are suggested in the Gospel of Mark.

(3) **The Rams' skins dyed red.** We must anticipate a little here what we shall dwell upon later on. The ram is the typical animal of the burnt offering. In the energy of his strength and his intensity he fittingly sets forth our Lord as revealed to us in the Gospel of John. The skins

reminds us that it is in the giving up of His life that our Lord is fully manifested. This, the red seems to suggest. The Gospel of John sets our Lord forth in this character. Here was an energy and a devotedness unto death in which all went up to God. The other curtains had dimensions. This has none given. God alone can estimate the measure of the devotion of His beloved Son. Indeed, it is a measure which knows no limit.

(4) The badger skins ~~or sealskins~~. The outermost covering of all was made of badger skins, or as the word is now generally rendered, sealskins. It seems to have been an animal living in the water and yet not belonging to it, suggestive of one sustained in a strange element. The skins of these were used for shoes, and as is particularly mentioned, the shoes of a bride (Ezek. 16). They suggest that separation of our Lord from the world in which He walked, a separation which marked Him out as rejected. Thus, He had "no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

The Gospel of Luke presents our Lord as the Son of Man, and while attractive to faith, He was rejected by the world at large. As a Man among men, He was most approachable, welcoming the lowly and never refusing to receive the vilest and most unworthy who would appeal to His

mercy. All this, however, did not make Him popular. His rejection is accentuated in the Gospel of Luke. From the very first at Nazareth, we find He was despised and men esteemed Him not. We think therefore that the badger-skin can fittingly suggest the Gospel of Luke-of the Son of Man who walked this earth as man, and yet was separate from the world in which He lived.

## 2. The colors in the curtains

We noticed in passing, that the curtains in the first covering were made of four colored materials, the purple, scarlet, blue and fine twined linen. Does each of these also suggest a distinctive Gospel bearing its specific character ?

(1) **The purple.** Purple is the color of royalty, and the Gospel which presents to us the King of the Jews is Matthew. We see it all through the Evangelist; no matter where He is, whether teaching upon the summit of the mountain the lofty principles of the Kingdom, or coming down to its foot to lay His royal hands in healing upon the poor leper, it is always the King in His royal progress-unknown, alas, and unrecognized by the mass of the people; but for faith ever the King of Israel. Thus, the purple is manifested in the Gospel of Matthew.

(2) **The scarlet.** Scarlet is also a color of royalty, but now rather of a world-wide splendor, the kingdoms of the world and their glory. There

is also, as we already have had suggested, the thought of death in it; and these two thoughts are blended together in the royal scarlet, as, for instance, in the cochineal or scarlet worm. Our Lord says of Himself, "I am a worm and no man," as He was brought into the dust of death, a sin offering for us ; but it was in this very presenting of Himself as a sin offering, that our Lord manifested His own glory and gained title to all the glory of this world. How fitting it is that scarlet, in brilliant contrast, should set forth the same Gospel as the dark goats' hair covering. Mark displays Christ as the sin offering, who by His atoning sacrifice has gained title to sit upon the throne of God as King over all creation.

(3) **The blue.** Blue is the heavenly color. There is one Gospel which distinctively sets our Lord before us as the heavenly Man-the Son of Man which is in heaven. In Matthew we have no ascension into heaven because it is the earthly Kingdom that is prominent. In John also we have no ascension because it is *all* heavenly. Blue is the characteristic color upon everything here : new birth is from above; salvation is the knowledge of God; eternal life looks on to the entrance into heaven. The very confession of sin is in the light of God's holy presence. Thus, the color of blue unmistakably reminds us of the Gospel of John.

(4) **The white.** Fine linen, we are told, is the



righteousnesses of saints (Rev. 19: 8). Its spotless whiteness as applied to our Lord suggests the perfection, not of His Godhead, but of His humanity. He was holy, harmless, undefiled. He was also "that holy thing" which was born of Mary, called the Son of God. Throughout Luke, we have Him presented to us in this holy, spotless humanity, so that His transfiguration shows His garments exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth could make them, giving us what God had ever before Him, the glory of the holiness that was intrinsically in our blessed Lord. These four colors thus seem to correspond to the four Gospels.

### 3. The ingredients of the ointment and incense.

(Ex. 30: 22-33).

We have here a description of the holy ointment which was to be put upon all parts of the tabernacle; and in the same chapter (vers. 34-38) a description of the incense which was to be put upon the golden altar before the veil. The ingredients in both of these were four; do these suggest to us again our four Evangelists?

Without doubt, the sweet spices are a symbol of Him who was ever fragrant unto God. We know that the unction of the Spirit upon our Lord was but the setting forth of His own preciousness, and similarly the ointment upon the tabernacle reminds us of Him all of whose garments

smell of myrrh and cassia and aloes. In like manner the daily offering up of the incense as a sweet savor to God is a figure of the presentation of the excellences of Christ. All true worship is the offering up to God of this sweet savor.

We notice that in both the ointment and the incense, there were four different kinds of sweet smelling spices, and we are led to ask if we have not here also a symbolic suggestion of Christ in the four Evangelists somewhat in the manner of the colors and the curtains. We are not able to speak as definitely about these, perhaps, as about the others; yet without desiring to appear fanciful, we will offer a few suggestions as to these various spices.

In the ointment there were myrrh, cinnamon, sweet calamus and cassia. The first and the last were in quantity double the other two.

(1) **Myrrh.** Myrrh seems, both by its composition and the frequency of reference to it in other portions of Scripture, to be the prominent ingredient. It was the resinous gum of a tree, bitter to taste and exceedingly fragrant. It was used for embalming the dead and was also a perfume used in connection with marriage. We suggest that what is set forth in the myrrh is found prominently in the Gospel of John. Our Lord is anointed by Mary here in anticipation of His death. That death was before Him from the outset, and we may say all His teachings and

all His miracles were connected with that. His first testimony to the Jews was: "Destroy this temple," etc. His words to Nicodemus in connection with the new birth speak of the inevitable necessity of the cross. The Bread of life was to be given only through His sacrifice; through the entire Gospel, there is the fragrance of His death. Need we add it was a proof and pledge of the love of God, the love of Christ which passeth knowledge?

(2) Cinnamon. Cinnamon is a well-known tree whose bark has to be removed, doubtless taking the life of the tree, to furnish an article of fragrance and sweet flavor in food, as well as a medicine. The Gospel of Mark gives this ingredient. There is the freshness and activity of unwearying labor here that offers a peculiar fragrance, most refreshing and acceptable. As our Lord is presented to us in this Gospel, we have Him providing the true medicine for the sin-sick soul.

(3) Sweet Calamus. Calamus, or sweet cane, is an aromatic, growing in the mire, sending up a shoot or cane in the air. The Gospel of Luke shows us the perfect Man growing amidst the most contrary surroundings; out of the mire of this world He extracts nothing but that which is fragrant for God. His own life is purity, while surrounded by uncleanness without. There is, moreover, in the Gospel of Luke, a pungency in

dealing with men which may well remind us of the calamus.

(4) **Cassia.** Cassia is a strong cinnamon, belonging we are told to the same family, particularly useful in medicine and furnishing by its pungency a special strength to the entire blended ointment. The Gospel of Matthew seems to answer to this thought of the cassia being in the same quantity as the myrrh, double the cinnamon or the calamus. It suggests that character of our Lord in the Gospel of the Kingdom, in which we have strength, pungency, vigor and dignity, an enlargement and intensifying of the cinnamon, we might say, as Matthew in one way is an enlargement of Mark.

All these four ingredients were to be mingled with oil. So the Holy Spirit takes the characteristics of our blessed Lord in each of the Gospels, blending them all in sweetest fragrance. Doubtless, we have the characteristics of each in every Gospel, and yet there is a prominence in the one which may be suggested in the ingredient which we think answers to it.

We come now to speak similarly of the incense. The four ingredients here are different: *stacte*, *onycha*, *galbanum* and *frankincense*.

(1) **Stacte**, or *nataph* (Heb.), meaning "a drop." This seems to point to the myrrh under another form, exuding in drops from the tree. At any rate, there is the thought of the spon-

taneous outflow of the sweet spice, suggesting that spontaneous outflow of fragrance which marks our Lord nowhere more beautifully than in the Gospel of John. We therefore connect this spice with that Gospel.

(2) **Onycha.** This is said to be a shell-fish obtained from the borders of the Red Sea and yielding, when crushed, a delicious perfume. In the Gospel of Mark, as we have already seen, our Lord's death occupies a prominent position as being distinctively the sin-offering. The Red Sea, and the crushing of the shell-fish, remind us somewhat of the crushing of the cochineal, producing the scarlet dye. We therefore connect the onycha with Mark.

(3) **Galbanum.** Galbanum probably resembles cassia. This is said to be not particularly fragrant in itself but to have the special property of imparting strength to other ingredients. In Matthew, our Lord as King often speaks in an authoritative, absolute way. Particularly in rebuking the sins of the Pharisees and scribes, His language is so strong that it almost seems unlike what we would expect. If any of His own, too, exposed themselves to correction, He loved them too much not to point it out most faithfully, and the rules of His Kingdom are given as superseding Moses. Thus we have the galbanum as applied both to His enemies and His friends.

(4) **Frankincense.** The word for this speaks of

its whiteness, reminding us again of that **fine linen** which we think is **prominent in the Gospel of Luke**. It surely does no violence to this Gospel to connect with it the fragrance of the frankincense, the exhibition of that perfect Life which went up as a sweet savor to God. It may be remembered that frankincense was put upon the showbread and upon the meat-offerings. This was all offered up in sweet fragrance to God. We thus connect the frankincense with the Gospel of Luke.

#### 4. *The Offerings* (Lev., Chaps. 1-7).

There were four offerings : the *burnt*, the *peace*, the sin and the *trespass* offerings.

The first two are "sweet savor" offerings, in that they were burnt either in whole or in part upon the altar, thus ascending in sweet savor to God. The trespass and sin offerings, however, were more directly connected with the putting away of sin, and in their fullest character, were burnt without the camp.

Connected with the burnt and peace offerings, there was the meat offering (or, as it had perhaps better be rendered, the *meal* or *food* offering) which is a type of our Lord in His *life*, and thus symbolizes the narratives of that life up to the time of the cross. The sacrifices proper are all symbolic of our Lord's *death*. **What is to occupy us now, therefore, is not so much the manner in**

which He is presented in His life, as the aspects of His holy death, which is dwelt upon in each of the Evangelists in a characteristic way.

(1) **The Burnt Offering.** The burnt offering represents our Lord as offering Himself up unto death, in whole-hearted obedience maintaining the glory of God. As He declares in the Gospel of John, "I lay down My life of Myself; no man taketh it from Me; I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." We have here beautifully blended together the willing-hearted devotion of our Lord to the glory of His Father, and obedience to Him even unto death. The Gospel of John sets this before us. It is the "whole burnt offering," which was all offered up to God. There is no prominent thought of sin; it is seen only in the death made necessary by it; and the words, "It is finished" show that all is accomplished, and all is most acceptable to God.

(2) **The Peace Offering.** The peace offering, as its name suggests, speaks of reconciliation effected. In this sacrifice, the inwards and the fat were burnt upon the altar after the manner of the burnt offering. A part also went to the priest, and all the rest to the offerer; so that we have beautifully set forth the participation in communion with God, with Christ, and the believer sharing with the divine Persons in this com-

munion. How God has found His delight in the work of His beloved *Son!*

The fat speaks of energy, an energy in man usually shown in self-will and rebellion, but which in Him went willingly to the cross, offering itself without spot to God. The inwards, the vital organs, similarly speak of the inward springs of the life of our Lord being wholly devoted to His Father. His inward affections, the reins, the exercise of judgment in the refusal of evil, all these in unblemished purity were presented to God in His death. It was this which tells of God's share in the death of our Lord,

Similarly, the priest's share reminds us that our Lord and indeed all the priestly family, share together in the blessed results of His atoning work. He Himself "shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." There is a sense in which the results of His own atoning work must fill the heart of our blessed Lord with joy. We too, blessed be His name, learn in a priestly way to feed upon the breast and the shoulder, typical respectively of His affections and His power. These both have been made good to us through His atoning sacrifice.

It is not difficult to connect this aspect of the death of our Lord with the Gospel of Luke, in which we find these truths prominently presented. It is here that our Lord says: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." It is



here, too, that He gives to the penitent thief, expiring at His side, the assurance of forgiveness and reconciliation to God. Other features suggest the same truth, so that we can easily see how the death of our Lord is presented as the peace offering in the Gospel of His humanity.

(3) **The Sin Offering.** The sin offering and trespass offering are closely connected together. In the former, however, we have a deeper view of sin than in the latter. Sin is seen in its essence as abhorrent to God, and which necessarily brings down His judgment. In the sin offering aspect we have Christ made sin for us, He who knew no sin. In this, what is prominent is not what His death was to God, as in the burnt offering, nor even God's participation in communion with our Lord and the saved soul; but the judgment of God poured out without limitation upon the spotless Substitute who had volunteered to take the place of the guilty. It is the infliction of divine wrath against sin; this being the prominent thought, we need not be surprised to find that in Mark we have the cry of anguish, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" This is wanting in both John and Luke for the reasons already indicated. It is especially appropriate in Mark for the reasons which we have given in looking at the second covering of the tabernacle. There, as will be remembered, we saw our Lord as the Prophet bearing witness to

the sin of men. The connection was so close that we anticipated something of that which is now being said in pointing out that Mark was suggested by the goats' hair, speaking of sin. When we bring the two thoughts together, of our Lord's prophetic service in Mark and His being forsaken of God upon the cross, we can see how both lines blend harmoniously together.

Infinitely pathetic, as well as solemn, it is to think that He who declared His people's sin should be the One made sin for them-putting away the very guilt which His faithfulness detected.

(4) **The Trespass Offering.** Closely connected with the sin offering, as we have said, it differed from it chiefly in that it looked upon sin, not so much in its inherent essence as enmity against God, as in its resulting injury. God, for instance, has been robbed by man of that which belonged to Him, robbed of the obedience due Him; robbed of the glory which should have been His through creatures so marvelously adapted to show forth that glory. Man has taken the time which belonged to God and used it for himself. He has taken wealth, opportunities, position, everything which belonged to Another and applied it to his own use. In this way, his sin is a trespass against God. He has been unfaithful in the truth committed into his hands, and is guilty of the trespass.

This view of sin, while it is not so deep as that of the sin offering, has perhaps a wider application. Indeed, we may say that in general all conviction begins with the trespass feature. We are awakened to see that we have disobeyed God in this or that particular, and very often an effort at restitution is made. It is the governmental aspect of sin. Matthew is the governmental Gospel, in which the rule of God and of the King in His kingdom are set forth. It is fitting, there, and most blessed to see that in the Gospel in which the glories of the King are put before us, His grace is seen in meeting the trespass of His people, their violation of the principles of His government to which they owed implicit obedience.

Thus the narrative of the death of our Lord in Matthew resembles that in Mark. In both, there is the cry of forsaken anguish, for God's wrath is poured out against sin and against trespass. In the language of the 69th psalm, we hear the blessed Sufferer in expiation of a guilt in which He had no share, saying: "Then I restored that which I took not away." Similarly, we find in Matthew's Gospel the immediate results of our Lord's death in the opening of the graves and the resurrection of some of the saints which slept. These are a part of the governmental remission of sin which appropriately find their place in the Gospel of Matthew.

### 5. The Cherubic Figures

The cherubim are first mentioned after the fall in the Garden of Eden. They were placed at the entrance of the garden, with a flaming sword turning every way to keep the way to the tree of life. Man had forfeited a right to that tree, and divine mercy shut him out, to learn a way of access to God on different ground from that of creature obedience which he had permanently lost. Never again could the creature be put into the relationship with God occupied by our first parents before sin entered the world. Thus, the cherubim are seen as the judicial guardians of the way of approach to God.

We next find them in the book of Exodus upon the mercy-seat. Here again they are evidently ministering in the presence of God. In the book of Psalms, we are told righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne, and we need not therefore hesitate to connect these attributes with the assessors to that throne, who stand pleading for divine righteousness and divine judgment. How precious does this thought fit in with the truth of the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat on the day of atonement by the high priest! Here was a sacrifice of such efficacy that the priest who offered it as the representative of a sinful people could enter and remain in the presence of God, while God's dwelling place

could continue in the midst of a sinful and rebellious people.

The cherubim bear witness to this. Once and again they are alluded to in the historical books and in the Psalms, always it would seem with reference to the mercy-seat. Even when God is seen riding upon a cherub, it is an intimation of what is called in the Chronicles, "the chariot of the cherubim," the mercy-seat. This thought is further dwelt upon in the book of Ezekiel, where, in connection with God removing from His temple because of the sins of His people, we find His glory borne by the cherubim eastward to the Mount of Olives, to disappear until, in type, the time of restitution should come and the cherubim would restore the glory back to its place, to its abode in the temple (ch. 43:2-5).

In Ezekiel, for the first time, the cherubim are described. There were four, and their faces were respectively like the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle (Ezek. 1: 10). This brings us to what we have in Revelation (chap. 4: 6-8)-a description of God's throne. When we come to symbols of the Deity, we need not be surprised to find them necessarily multiplied in order to give us some full coception of that which is beyond all our descriptions. We have, therefore, in Revelation, the throne of God and the One who sat upon it, with the lamps of fire burning before it; and

connected with it, as assessors or attendants upon the Throne, we have the four living creatures, the cherubim of the Old Testament, combined here, however, in their worship, with the seraphim or burning ones described in the 6th chapter of Isaiah.

We must return now to another line of truth for a moment, in order to see what connection there is between these living creatures and the Gospels.

First of all, we think there need be little hesitation in conceding that they are representative of angelic or superhuman beings. As such, they exhibit some of those prerogatives which God has entrusted to them as executors of His will. But when we go back of that and ask to whom God has committed *all* judgment, we are reminded that it is not to the angels that He has "put into subjection the world to come whereof we speak," but unto His Son, for "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all should honor the Son as they honor the Father. "

The execution of judgment committed to the angels, therefore, is but a type of that fuller and more complete judgment which is committed to His Son. We find, too, in both the Old Testament' and in Revelation, that angels are sometimes types of our Lord. The three men who visited Abraham were superhuman. One of

them, indeed, was the Lord. And in Revelation, we have a great and strong angel who is evidently the Lord Himself. (See Rev. 8: 3.) Whatever judgment is committed to the angels, therefore, is done only as they are in subjection to, and as they set forth something of, the character of the Son. We are thus prepared to see how these four living creatures suggest certain aspects of our Lord's character, aspects which indeed in a limited way may be seen in angelic beings who will be associated with Him in the administration of His kingdom and the execution of His judgments.

This brings us to where we can apply the symbolism of the cherubim to the person of our Lord, and we are prepared to ask: What distinctive resemblances are there between each of the living creatures and the corresponding Gospels.

That there are characteristic differences in the living creatures goes without saying. The lion, the calf, the man, and the eagle, are all diverse the one from the other. Let us now see in what way each of these corresponds with one of the Evangelists.

**The Lion.** The lion is the king of beasts, the well known symbol, even in the world, of royalty. In the book of Revelation itself, our Lord is spoken of as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." It is therefore no imagination to connect this emblem of our Lord with the Gospel of Matthew,

in which He is presented as the King. It is this first beast, the lion, who calls forth (Rev. 6:2) the rider on the white horse who goes forth conquering and to conquer. The world refused the true King and His reign of righteousness and peace. Rejecting Him, they necessarily invite, as indeed the chief priests did when they said: "We have no king but Cæsar," this world's ruler who goes forth to conquer for his own glory.

**The Calf.** This is evidently the ox of Ezekiel. As the lion is the symbol of royalty, so the ox is of labor. "Much increase is by the strength of the ox" (Prov. 14:4). This patient animal devotes its great strength to the service of man, willingly toiling for his good. How blessedly did our Lord bow Himself to the yoke in order to serve the will of God and man's need! It is this which, as we have seen, is prominent in the Gospel of Mark, which links that book with the second of the living creatures. It is this creature that calls out the second rider, on a red horse, who takes peace from the earth (Rev. 6:4). Where the peaceable service of our Lord is refused, there must be war and bloodshed, which He would have averted.

**The Man.** The face of a man suggests intelligence, sympathy and all that is essentially human. We would miss indeed this face were it absent from that glorious symbolic representation of our Lord. We have sufficiently dwelt upon



this character in the Gospel of Luke to connect it with this living creature. Christ as the Son of Man, His human birth, His human sympathies, the gospel of His grace going out to men to gather them about Himself, all are prominent here. Our Lord fed the poor. Because of His rejection, the third creature calls forth the third rider, who stands for famine (Rev. 6: 5, 6). In the Gospel of Luke we have the parable of the great supper and the Father's feast for the returning prodigal. Where these are refused, there must come indeed a famine, not only for the individual, but for the world which has rejected Him.

**The Eagle.** The eagle is the bird that soars in the heights. It is typical of that heavenly character of our Lord which is set forth in the Gospel of John. Here we have the highest, greatest, heavenliest thoughts of the person of Him who was manifested in flesh. Throughout the entire Gospel we are lifted above earth. We soar on high in company with Him who is the embodiment of all that is heavenly, divine and glorious. The rejection of such an One brings the opposite of what He offered to men-life, eternal life as linked with Himself and presented to a lost world for acceptance. Rejecting Him, nothing is left for them but the rider on the pale horse, death, with the accompaniment of judgment (Rev. 6: 7, 8).

Thus the cherubic figures confirm and illus-

trate the characteristic differences in the Gospels upon which we have been dwelling.

## 6. Other General Suggestions

Doubtless, there are many other resemblances. The four pillars which held up the veil in the tabernacle (Ex. 26: 32) -a type of our Lord's flesh (Heb. 10: 20) may suggest the four Gospels which present the person of our Lord. These pillars rest upon silver sockets, suggesting that redeemed men hold up Christ to view. The Evangelists were themselves children of God; otherwise, they would not have been chosen to present God's Son.

The four major Prophets may also have characteristics which correspond to the Gospels. Isaiah seems, *as* the great governmental prophet so frequently quoted, to stand for Matthew; Jeremiah, the prophet of sorrow and of toil, may remind us somewhat of Mark; Daniel, the Gentile prophet, may suggest Luke; while Ezekiel, soaring aloft and with special similarities to the Revelation of John, may be suggestive of the transcendent theme of the fourth Evangelist.

No doubt other resemblances could be found, and those which have been given are laid before the reader rather for further examination and testing than positive teaching.

## CHAPTER X.

## Literature on the Four Gospels

**R**ICH as is the literature upon the four Evangelists, we do not think that many will differ from us when we say the books which will prove finally satisfactory, as completely unfolding each of these Evangelists, have not yet been written. We may add, we do not believe they ever will be. Doubtless, from time to time, God gives fresh light upon each portion of His word, embodied in some specially helpful book. Then others, making use of the light thus given, write more minutely and with further helpfulness, applying the great principles brought out by the previous writer. This process will continue again and again; while fresh truths—not contradictory to what has previously been brought out, surely—but giving a wider scope, will be found; and so, should the Lord tarry, we may count upon Him to be opening up by the Holy Spirit “things new and old” out of this, as out of every part of His Word.

We desire to speak first of those books which we may call epoch-making in their character; and of these, we speak more particularly of two which have been called to the reader’s attention in other connections:

1. *The Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, by J. A? Darby; Vol. 3, *Matthew—John*.

Perhaps no uninspired writer has been so signally gifted with the ability to grasp the great, salient truths of any portion of Scripture as Mr. Darby. He has done this remarkably in the four Evangelists. There is a recognition of the general theme running through each Evangelist, which is traced throughout, and many details noticed. He is also particularly helpful in noting the dispensational features of each Evangelist. This book on the four Gospels, therefore, should be carefully read.

2. *The Numerical Bible; Matthew--John*, by F. W. Grant.

The great difference between Mr. Grant and Mr. Darby is that while the latter gives bold, clear *outlines* and follows the general current of a writer with unerring accuracy, the former is much more painstaking in *detail* and exhibits the perfection of each Evangelist in its structure and the order of the narratives. With this, the Numerical Bible gives an excellent new translation of the Text, with helpful references. It is therefore, particularly helpful in the study of the four Gospels where we can compare one Evangelist with the other, and where the special significance of each narrative is brought out in its relation and with its characteristic differences noted. In the chapter

on Analysis, we have already indicated our adherence to the general divisions and subdivisions of each of the Gospels as brought out in this work.

These two works are perhaps all that need be directly spoken of in this general way.

3. "*The Evangelists*," by J. G. Bellett.

The beloved writer of this book enjoys the peculiar distinction of having been singularly devoted to the person of our Lord. He himself would doubtless have shrunk from any such claim, but no one can fail to mark, in the minute examinations of comparatively unimportant details in the Evangelists in which our author delights, a special interest. Indeed, as a worshiper of the Lord, the fragrance of the sweet spices lingers throughout his book. Beside this, there is an accuracy of outline and a discrimination which render the work invaluable. We unhesitatingly commend it, therefore, for addition to every library in which it has not yet found a place.

4. "*A Short Meditation on the Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ*," by the same author.

5. "*The Son of God*," by the same.

These, while not exactly expositions of the Gospels, are gleaned largely from them and therefore are worthy a special mention here. They have all the excellences of style and method for which the author is so well known. "*The Moral Glory*" dwells rather upon the meat offering as-

pect of our Lord's life, while "The Son of God " is a most reverent and blessed unfolding of the true character of His *person*.

6. "*Lectures Introductory to the Four Gospels*," by W. Kelly.

7. "*Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew*," by the same.

8. "*The Gospel of Mark*," by the same.

9. "*The Gospel of John*," by the same.

Mr. Kelly was a thorough scholar, a most competent writer of helpful literature, and a lifelong student of the Bible. His many books are a monument of untiring zeal and unremitting labor, coupled with a reverent tone and much spiritual discernment. His "Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew" have been particularly commended for these characteristics as a most rich and full unfolding of the general theme of the first Evangelist, with practical applications, and full notes as to the characteristic differences between it and the other Evangelists. His other books in like manner are of much value.

10. "*The Perfect Servant*," being notes on the Gospel of Mark by C. E. Stuart.

11. "*From Advent to Advent*," notes on Luke by the same.

Mr. Stuart was a painstaking student, with much insight into the word of God. His notes on these two Evangelists afford many helpful and profitable lessons. It is always well, where

one is able, to possess himself of a number of works by different authors upon the same subject. In such a collection, Mr. Stuart's works should have a place.

12. "*John's Writings*," by R. Evans.

These notes on the fourth Gospel have also been well spoken of and can be recommended as another help in the Gospel of John.

13. "*The Gospels, Why are there Four ? Why do They Differ, and Are They fully Inspired ?*"

A helpful little handbook upon these three questions, in which the characteristic differences of the four Evangelists are brought out in brief compass.

14. "*Characteristic Differences of the Four Gospels*," by A. Jukes.

It is with some hesitation that this able little book is given a place here, not that there is anything in it, so far as the writer knows, subversive of the truth, but from the fact that Mr. Jukes later on in his life was led astray into error and taught doctrines fundamentally unsound, more particularly with reference to the restitution of all things, which, instead of applying as Scripture evidently does, to the Millennium, the "all things" spoken of in the Prophets, he refers to a final restitution even of the wicked. We cannot too strongly warn our readers against such error; but, as we said, there is nothing of this, so far as the writer has learned, in the book

here named. It discusses with much ability and at considerable length, the characteristic differences of the four Evangelists, with much the results at which we have already arrived.

15. "*Why Four Gospels?*" by D. S. Gregory.

Dr. Gregory has shown much research in this able volume. We are thankful that the writer stands for "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Dr. Gregory's main thought of the differences between the four Evangelists has been noted in the course of the present book. He thinks that each Gospel was written for a special class of hearers—Matthew for the Jews; Mark for the Romans; Luke for the Greeks, and John for the Church. There is much that is suggestive in this, and we think, taken in connection with the main object of each Gospel—the character in which Christ is presented—there may be interesting and profitable study.

Of *Commentaries*, in the more general sense, upon the four Gospels there are large numbers, many of which are orthodox and give us much that is helpful and suggestive in the way of historic notes, outlines, harmony and the like. There is, as a rule, an absence in these books of clearness as to dispensational and prophetic truth, together with a haziness as to the distinction between the saved and the unsaved, the assurance of salvation, and other important truths



which form the groundwork of the books heretofore noted. Still, for the Bible student, the commentary has its place and importance.

(1) We mention in a general way, the *Commentaries of Lange*. These are large volumes which go into their subject with much detail. Perhaps for general purposes, there is nothing superior.

(2) Other commentaries are those on *Matthew* and *Mark* by *Dr. Addison Alexander*. These are really excellent works.

(3) *Alford's Greek Testament on the Four Gospels* has a number of useful notes for the more advanced student.

(4) The *Commentary by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown* is also worthy of mention.

(5) *The Englishman's Greek Concordance* by *G. V. Wigram*, and

(6) *Strong's Concordance*, will be helpful in the word studies of the Evangelists, a most profitable and important line of work.

(7) *Robinson's Greek or English Harmony of the Four Gospels* will be found very helpful in putting before the eye the parallel narratives of the Evangelists. Some work of this kind will be found almost necessary if one is going to pursue the comparative study of the four Gospels.

(8) There is another helpful book of the same kind by *John H. Kerr*.

We come next to the "*Lives of Christ*" of

which there are all kinds. Perhaps the best of these is "*The Life and Times of Jesus, the Messiah*" by *Edersheim*. It has wide and deep knowledge of rabbinical lore and is a valuable work.

"*The Life of our Lord*" by *Andrews* is reverent in tone.

We do not pretend to give a list of the many books of this kind that have been written. They will be found in general to devote much space to the history and comparatively little to the deep inner significance of the character of the different Evangelists. We turn from reading them with a fresh conviction that if God has given us four Gospels, He intends that we should read them as *four*, and that all efforts at harmony should be secondary.

*Trench on the Parables and on the Miracles* is interesting and in many ways suggestive and excellent. He does not catch the characteristic truth as to leaven, and in some other particulars has missed the thought, but the works are scholarly and sound and reverent in tone. The same may also be said of *Calderwood on the Parables*.

In the list of books given above, it may be well to say as to commentaries and general works of reference, that they are for the more advanced student, who is supposed to have his senses "exercised to discern both good and evil." Some-

times in a dictionary or concordance, or a commentary, an unscriptural view may be expressed. It is understood that our commendation applies to all such books only for the purpose recommended, and not absolutely to the doctrines they may possibly contain. Of the other books, sufficiently clear and strong commendation has been given.

WE have now reached the end of what was attempted in our little book. As we glance back over the various subjects that have been before us, and especially consider the analysis of each of the four Evangelists, we may well be impressed with the magnitude of the subject. And how could it be otherwise when the subject is Christ, the Lord? Poor indeed are our efforts to trace His wondrous footsteps- poor in comparison with the ineffable delight of the Father in His Beloved One-but how great the privilege! May we increasingly value, with ever-deepening wonder and worship the stupendous fact of Immanuel, God with us. "God was in Christ."

"God manifest, God seen and heard,  
The heavens' beloved One."

"We know the Son of God has come." He has been in the world in which we live. He came for us, in infinite love to us individually. All His words and ways-expressing as they did absolute obedience and giving a perfect manifestation of the Father's heart and nature-were also, and for that very reason, for us. As we hear Him uttering things kept secret from the foundation of the world, in the parables; or see the enacted miracle of grace in His healing touch; or follow Him step by step in His lonely path which led onward to the awful goal-wherever we see Him it is God manifest in the flesh.

Above all, when we draw near with Him to Gethsemane, and listen while He weeps such sorrow as has never been known, and then see Him led in meekness, as a lamb, until Calvary is reached—while we gaze on that wondrous cross and see something of the unspeakable woe of His desertion by God—our hearts melt with gratitude, love and worship, we fain would grasp His feet and begin the praise of heaven.

Into that heaven whither He has now ascended, faith follows Him with steadfast gaze, and, in the power of the Holy Spirit sent down by Him, enters into the fulness of the grace that He has brought to us—the blessedness of acceptance, justification, nearness of access, sonship, priesthood, membership in the Church His body, and the coming glory in which we shall be displayed.

But as we thus revel in the joy of our blessing, let us turn afresh to Him who has purchased it for us, remembering what it cost Him, and following with new light and love the path He trod from the manger to the cross. All acquires a new meaning—the love, the singleness of aim, the suitability of every act and word, are seen with increased clearness, as we are led by the Holy Spirit to pass all in review.

God forbid that we should even think of this as “knowing Christ after the flesh.” The Jews and even His disciples had carnal and earthly expectations of what the Messiah would do. Some of

these hopes were purely the ambition of pride; others the misapprehension of Scripture ; and even those which were true were not to be fulfilled till after the completion of the present period of grace. “ We trusted it had been He who should have redeemed Israel” tells of a blighted hope, which was to be displaced by something far more glorious-while later on the former prospects would all be more than realized.

Such hopes, unenlightened by the Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit, may be classed as “knowing Christ after the flesh” (with the careful guarding against applying such language to the future earthly hopes of Israel, as if they were carnal), but to know Christ as He is revealed in the Gospels is not in any way such as this. It is rather to become acquainted more deeply with His personal character, His faithfulness, love, hatred of sin, kindness and compassion. Let us never think of the Gospels as something lower than the Epistles. They present to us the Person of the Son of God, in His perfect earthly path, as He revealed the Father to us.

Occupation with our Lord thus will beget in us a spirit of true self-judgment; self will be more and more seen in its true light, and in comparison with the character of our Lord, we will see how the sentence of death, inflicted by the cross, was an absolute necessity for the flesh.

Similarly, as the flesh is seen in its true character, and the world, both religious and secular, seen as the sphere fitted for the flesh and not for God,-we will turn with increased satisfaction and adoring worship to a Person who filled God with delight while He was here, and who now fills heaven with the fragrance and beauty of His Person. Thus we will become more heavenly as we are more engaged with "the *Son* of Man who is in heaven. "

May the Holy Spirit fill us with the joy of occupation with the person of the Son of God.

**" Let thii mind be in you, which was *also* in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God *also* hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of thiigs in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"** (Phil. 2: 5-11).

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