

LESSON XXVIII. [Date, A. D. 29.]

Christ, going up to Jerusalem, again predicts his sufferings and death—Ambition of the sons of Zebedee—Two blind men healed at Jericho.—Matt. xx. 17-34; Mark x. 32-52; Luke xviii. 31-43.

MATT. XX. 17-34.

AND Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

NOTES ON MATT. XX. 17-34.

Verse 17. *Jesus, going up to Jerusalem*] For the purpose, as we think, of attending the approaching passover, though, according to Mr. Townsend's arrangement, it would seem to be for the purpose of raising Lazarus.* St. Mark informs us that the disciples "were amazed, and as they followed, were afraid:"—*amazed*, probably at our Lord's boldness in again venturing himself where he had recently been exposed to imminent peril, and that, too, with the knowledge of the bitter hatred which many of the rulers bore him, and *afraid* of the consequences to themselves and him. *Took the twelve disciples apart, &c.*] That, according to Luke, (xviii. 31,) he might show them how "all things that were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man should be accomplished." These

* We beg again to press upon the reader our conviction that this part of the sacred narrative is separated from its true historical connection by the introduction of the account of the sickness, death, and resurrection of Lazarus. There is good reason to suppose that the incidents here noticed belong to our Lord's last visit to Jerusalem, *not* to his journey to raise Lazarus.

18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

"twelve disciples" were the apostles Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, Jude, Simon Zelotes, and Judas Iscariot. "Apart" means *by themselves*; Jesus drew them from the rest of the company, if others were present, and conversed with them in private.

Verses 18, 19. *We go to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed*] Meaning, apparently, that on arriving at Jerusalem he should be "betrayed," &c. These words strongly determine this journey to be that which immediately preceded the last passover, and consequently our Lord's last visit to Jerusalem. The whole of this discourse is minutely prophetic, and shows that our Lord had the scene of his sufferings, in all its humiliating and most painful details, constantly before his eyes. Mark the particularity of the predictions: 1st. That he should be *betrayed*, which he was by Judas, Luke xxii. 3, 4; 2d. To whom—the *chief priests and scribes*, composing the national council—literally fulfilled; 3d. That they should *condemn him to death*, which they did as a blasphemer, see Matt. xxvi. 65, 66; 4th. That they should *deliver him to the Gentiles*, the Romans, to *mock*, and to *scourge*, and to "spit upon," Mark x. 33, and to be "spitefully entreated," Luke xviii. 32, and to crucify; all which circumstances did really take place; 5th. That *on the third day he should rise again*, which he most assuredly and triumphantly did. See Matthew xxviii. Need we stronger proof that Christ's death was voluntary? The minute particularity of this description is astonishing; and, as Doddridge observes, is a remarkable proof that

19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again.

Christ was endued with a prophetic spirit; for, humanly speaking, it was far more probable that he should have been either murdered, as Stephen was, in a transport of popular fury, or *stoned* by the order of the sanhedrim; especially as Pilate gave them permission to judge him according to their own law. *Shall deliver him to the Gentiles*] Meaning the Romans. It seems to have been in the power of the sanhedrim to adjudge an offender to death for certain violations of law, but the *execution* of the sentence belonged, at this time, to the Romans, they having taken the power of life and death into their own hands. *To mock, scourge, and crucify*] It is probable that the Jews did not anticipate all the indignities which were heaped upon Christ:—neither do they seem to have delivered him to the Romans *in order to his being* “mocked or scourged;”—our Saviour is therefore to be understood as merely declaring that such would be the treatment he should receive. To “mock,” is *to ridicule, to deride*; this the Romans did when they arrayed Christ in purple, put a reed into his hand for a sceptre, and tauntingly bowed the knee before him, pretending to pay him kingly honours. To “scourge,” is *to whip*. This operation was performed on the bare back; the subject of the punishment having been first stripped naked from the shoulders to the middle. To “crucify,” is *to put to death by extending the body on a kind of gibbet, made of two pieces of wood, crossing each other, either at right angles, something like a capital †, or diagonally, somewhat like an X*. *Spitting* on any one has always been considered an expression of the utmost contempt. “Spitefully entreat-

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.

ed,” means, treated with spite or malice. St. Luke informs us, (chap. xviii. 34,) that the disciples “understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them.” This may seem strange to us, for our Lord's language is here very plain and clear; but we must consider that from their childhood their minds had been filled with very different views of the Messiah from those here presented to them, and they probably thought their Master was now speaking in a kind of parable, and that his expressions contained a secret meaning, to which they had not, as yet, the key. This misapprehension was doubtless the result of their preconceived notions of the character of the Messiah's kingdom; for on this subject only do they appear at all dull of comprehension. The disciples apprehended, it is true, powerful opposition and great danger; but they might suppose that this, when permitted to a certain extent, would only give occasion for a display of their Master's power in the destruction of his enemies. In this perplexed state of mind, however, they continued to follow him even to Jerusalem, thereby proving the sincerity of their faith, and the strength of their attachment.

Verse 20. *Then came the mother of Zebedee's children, &c.*] That is, the wife of Zebedee, and mother of the apostles James and John. This woman's name was Salome, as appears from a comparison of Matthew xxvii. 56 with Mark xv. 40. She had doubtless followed Christ from Galilee, with other pious women who occasionally attended on our Lord in his journeys. *Worshipping him*] That is, prostrating herself before Jesus, according to the eastern manner of showing respect.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

Verse 21. *What wilt thou?*] Meaning, what wouldst thou have? Perhaps Jesus knew, from her manner of approach, that she had some request to make. *Grant that my two sons may sit, &c.*] Spoken in allusion to the prevailing custom of placing those in highest dignity nearest to the throne. Mark, in his account, makes no mention of Salome, but represents the two brethren as making the request. This probably arose from his knowing them to be the instigators of the petition; but, as in common life a man is said to *do* what he employs others to do *for him*, so doubtless on this occasion the sons preferred their request through the agency of their mother. There is, therefore, no contradiction in the accounts, though that of Matthew is rather more particular.

It is generally admitted that this petition was offered under a mistaken sense of the nature of Christ's kingdom, and consequently, with an erroneous view of his character as its ruler. It seems to have been regarded as a temporal and earthly, not a spiritual and heavenly dominion, and he as a mighty earthly prince. Now as to be privileged to sit at the right and left hand of such a prince is a mark of the highest honour and distinction, (see 1 Kings ii. 19, Psa. lxxv. 9,) it is plain that the brothers are to be understood as soliciting the stations of highest authority and influence, under the Messiah, in the kingdom they thought him about to establish. So when Christ is said to be seated at "the right hand of God," (Acts vii. 55, Col. iii. 1,) the meaning is, that he is exalted to unequalled dignity and glory. The ambitious views of James

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

and John may have originated in their being honoured, on certain occasions, with marks of favour above any of the other apostles, Peter alone excepted. See Mark v. 37; Matt. xvii. 1, &c. The promise, too, which our Lord had made but a short time before, that the apostles should sit upon twelve thrones, (Matt. xix. 28,) may have had some effect in inducing this request of the two brethren.

Verse 22. *Ye know not what ye ask*] By this declaration our Lord both reproves the ambition of the two disciples, and intimates that they were ignorant of what was really involved in their request. *Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?*] It is said to have been customary among the ancients generally to assign to each guest, at a feast, a particular *cup*, as well as dish, with the kind and proportion of wine he was privileged to use. Hence, both in sacred and profane writers, the *cup* is metaphorically used for the portion of good or evil that is assigned to men by the Almighty: though it more frequently denotes an afflictive than a prosperous lot. See Psa. xxiii. 5; lxxv. 8; Jer. xlix. 12; Isa. li. 17; John xviii. 11. *And baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*] To "baptize" is to sprinkle or pour water upon, or to be immersed in water. There is here, however, no allusion to the New Testament ordinance of baptism, but to the extreme suffering which our Lord was to undergo. The idea of being *immersed in*, or *overwhelmed with*, suffering, is what is here meant by the words "baptize" and "baptism." The being immersed in, or overwhelmed by waters, is a frequent metaphor in

23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

all languages, to express the rush of successive and severe troubles. So the Psalmist cries out, in his affliction, "Thy waves are gone over me;" (Psa. xlii. 7;) "the waters are come in unto my soul." (Psa. lxi. 1.) Our Lord is therefore to be understood as intimating, in this passage, that so far were the highest offices in his kingdom from being situations of temporal advantage and honour, that they would bring unto their possessor the severest labours and most painful sufferings. *We are able*] Meaning, that they were ready and willing to undergo any suffering with him, in order to the attainment of the honours they desired. Their answer, so full of self-confidence, is proof how little they knew themselves; for in the time of his extremest need, "they all forsook him and fled."

Verse 23. *Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, &c.*] And so they did; for both endured afflictions for the truth's sake, and thus "drank of" the same "cup," and were "baptized with" the same "baptism," as their Master, though in a lower degree. They, however, but comparatively *tasted* of the cup, whereas he drained its bitterest dregs. James was the first of the apostles to seal the truth with his blood, being put to death by Herod about A. D. 44, and John, after undergoing many privations and sufferings, is supposed to have died in extreme old age. *To sit on my right hand, &c.*] Meaning, to select those who sit there, or in other words, to confer the highest stations in the kingdom. *Is not mine to give, but*

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

25 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know

it shall be given unto, &c.] We are not to infer from this that Jesus Christ is less than God; or that he will not confer the rewards of eternity (which are what he here refers to) in his own right. The passage is generally allowed to be incorrectly translated. It should read, "Is not mine to give *unless or except* to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Thus, "the expression argues no defect in the power of Christ, but merely a perfect conformity to the will of his Father."—*Whitby*. As Mr. R. Watson remarks, "The passage neither states that the Son had no power to dispose of the honours of his own kingdom, nor that eternal glory is to be given only to the elect, chosen by the Father in Christ from the foundation of the world; but simply that Christ had no power, as Salome and her sons supposed he had, to grant the honours of his kingdom on the principle of favouritism; but that he administers the affairs of his kingdom, and assigns its offices and rewards, in perfect conformity to the will and counsels of the Father. At his second coming he will reward every man according as his work shall be. The highest dignities are therefore *prepared* for those who are, by holiness, zeal, and labour, best prepared for them. Thus is both the favouritism of earthly attachments, and that which is supposed to arise from an eternal election of persons to eternal glory, equally shut out."

Verses 24, 25. *When the ten heard it*] That is, heard the request. By "the ten" the other apostles are meant. *They were moved with indignation against the two brethren*] A strong feeling of anger was excited in their minds. St. Mark says, "They were much displeased."

that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ;

The ground of dissatisfaction was the desire manifested by James and John to be made superior to their fellows. *But Jesus called them*] Meaning, probably, that he called all the apostles. He was apparently prompted to this by the manifest displeasure of "the ten." In endeavouring to reconcile them, he inculcates his favourite lesson of humility, and places before them all, his own most instructive example : "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." *Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them*] By "the princes of the Gentiles," the various rulers of the kingdoms of this world are to be understood, and by their "exercising dominion over them," is probably meant that they 'orded it over the people, and compelled submission to their edicts by civil penalties. This was true of all civil governments in our Lord's time, when those just and enlightened principles of personal and political freedom which now generally prevail (and for which the world is indebted to the Bible) were unknown or disregarded. *They that are great exercise authority*] This clause is of the same import as the former ; though the meaning is, perhaps, more clearly expressed here.

Verses 26, 27. *It shall not be so among you*] Meaning, they should not govern in like manner, nor with similar views. This passage sufficiently shows that Christ's kingdom "is not of this world ;"—that is, it is not conformed, either in its spirit, end, or form, to the civil governments established among men. It does not follow, however,

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant :

that his church is without government, or that it has not officers who are commissioned by him to bear rule. But when it is considered that the government of the Christian church is wholly adapted to it as a spiritual society, and consists—1st. In direction ; 2d. In brotherly reproof when a fault has been committed ; 3d. In faithful and patient admonition when the fault has been persisted in ; and 4th. In exclusion from the table of the Lord, the visible sign of membership, but without the infliction of civil disabilities, or penalties, it is at once apparent that this species of government is widely different from that exercised in civil communities ; which, even when administered in the mildest manner, is frequently obliged to have recourse to threats, or the actual infliction of fines, imprisonments, or corporeal chastisements, to accomplish its purposes. *Whosoever will be great, or distinguished, let him be your minister*] That is, your helper, or servant, such being the import of the word "minister," as well as of the original term. *Whosoever will be chief, or most eminent,—possessed of most authority,—let him be your servant*] Mark has it, "the servant of all." The word here rendered "servant," literally means *slave*. The import of this sentence is essentially the same as the preceding clause ; though there may, perhaps, be an advance in the thought, implied in the comparison between a *servant* or *helper*, and a *slave*. If so, our Saviour should be understood as saying, If a person seeks to be *great* among you, let him condescend to be your servant ; if he would be *very great*, so as to be *first, pre-eminent*, let him seek for this pre-eminence by condescending to be your slave. The depth of his humility shall be the measure of the

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

height of his true dignity. It thus appears that the true honour of the Christian arises more from the service he does to others than from the power he possesses over them.

Verse 28. *Even as the Son—came not to be ministered unto, &c.*] “Even as,” means, *in like manner*; and “to be ministered unto,” has the sense of, *to be served or waited on*, as a great personage. Such homage and attention as were paid to the great, Christ neither claimed nor received: and though he was from eternity “equal with God,” he came as “a servant,” and “went about doing good;” laying aside his glory, and making himself “of no reputation” among men. So the apostles were not to seek after worldly distinctions, but in *like manner* with himself, do all in their power to serve others. Our Lord’s reason for thus referring to his own example was to impress the more deeply on the minds of his followers the lesson of meekness and humility he had just taught them. *And to give his life a ransom for many*] A “ransom” is, strictly, the price paid for the redemption of a captive; the term literally signifies, to buy off. The Scriptures represent mankind as captive to, or enslaved by, sin,—and as being exposed to the wrath of God, for violating his holy law. In order to deliver them from this exposure to the divine displeasure, and to procure for them the gracious helps of the Holy Spirit, by whose aid they might become freed from the bondage of sin, our Lord Jesus Christ undertook their cause, and as “without shedding of blood there is no remission,” he proffered to meet, in his own person, the punishment due to them. Men

were thus *bought off* from the doom to which they had exposed themselves. It is in this sense that Christ here says he “came—to give his *life a ransom*.” In exact accordance with this declaration is the statement of Paul, (Eph. i. 7,) “We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,” and of Peter, (1 Pet. i. 18, 19,) “Ye were not redeemed [literally, bought off] with corruptible things, as silver and gold—but with the precious blood of Christ.” God, therefore, did not (and it is fairly presumable *could not*, consistently with the perfection of his character and government) freely and unconditionally place men in a salvable state: he however accepts the sacrifice of Christ as an expiation for their iniquity, and whosoever applies to him for the benefit of that atonement, trusting in its merit, is assured that he shall receive the forgiveness of sins, and all other “benefits of Christ’s death and passion.” The word rendered “for,” in this passage, signifies that Jesus died not merely for the *advantage* of men, but especially *in their stead*: see 2 Samuel xviii. 33, “Would I had died for thee,” where the Greek of the Septuagint has the same word as that here rendered *for*. Such is also the case in Matthew ii. 22, “Archelaus did reign in Judea *in the room of Herod*.” It is for this reason that Christ’s death is termed a *vicarious* one; the word “vicarious” signifying in the room of another. The doctrine of vicarious atonement is not peculiar to the Bible. It was held among the ancients generally, as is abundantly proved by their systems of sacrifice, though the true import of the doctrine was known only by revelation. The word rendered “many” has here the sense of *all mankind*, as is clear from a comparison of Daniel xii. 2, with John v. 28.

29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

Verse 29. *As they departed from Jericho, &c.*] Jericho was a place of great antiquity. It appears to have been a considerable place in the time of Joshua, by whom it was taken and demolished, and a curse pronounced against the man who should undertake to rebuild it. Josh vi. It was rebuilt in the reign of Ahab; 1 Kings xvi. 34; and appears to have been the seat of one of the schools of the prophets, 2 Kings ii. 4, 5. In the time of our Saviour it was a flourishing city, having been strengthened and adorned by Herod the Great, who had a palace there. Josephus states that it was second only to Jerusalem in the extent and magnificence of its buildings. The ancient city has now so entirely disappeared that it is difficult to decide exactly where it stood. The modern village, called by the natives Riha, stands on or near its site, and is the only inhabited place in the once fertile and populous plain of Jericho. Robinson thus describes it:—"It is a degenerate shoot, both in name and character, of the ancient Jericho. Situated in the midst of this vast plain, it reminded me much of an Egyptian village. The plain is rich, and susceptible of easy tillage and abundant irrigation, with a climate to produce any thing. Yet it lies almost desert, and the village is the most miserable and filthy that we saw in Palestine. The houses, or hovels, are merely four walls of stones taken from ancient ruins, and loosely thrown together, with flat roofs of cornstalks or brushwood spread over with gravel. They stand quite irregularly and with large intervals; and each has around it a yard enclosed by a hedge of the dry thorny boughs of the *nūbk*, [a kind of thorn.] In many of these yards are open sheds with similar roofs; the flocks and herds are brought

into them at night, and render them filthy in the extreme. A similar but stronger hedge of *nūbk* branches surrounds the whole village, forming an almost impenetrable barrier. The few gardens round about seemed to contain nothing but tobacco and cucumbers. One single, solitary palm, now rears its head, where once stood the renowned 'city of palm trees.' Not an article of provision was to be bought here except new wheat, unground. We had tried last evening to obtain something for ourselves and our Arabs, but in vain; not even the ordinary lentils were to be found.—Did the palm-groves exist here still in their ancient glory, the resemblance to Egypt and its soil would be almost complete; as the repeated decay and desolation of Riha, have raised it upon mounds of rubbish, similar to those of the Egyptian villages."

Because of the wide difference which seems, at first sight, to exist between the statements of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, touching the impartation of sight to the blind beggars of Jericho, it has been supposed by many expositors that these evangelists do not all refer to one and the same event, but to two or three distinct miracles. The chief reasons for this supposition are, 1st. That Matthew and Mark represent the miracle they record to have taken place *as Jesus departed from Jericho*; Luke, *as he approached that city*: 2d. That Matthew states there were two blind men healed, Mark and Luke, that there was one. Notwithstanding these discrepancies in the accounts, however, we think they may be harmonized; and that there is better reason for supposing the sacred historians to refer to one and the same incident than there is for understanding them to speak of two or more distinct miracles. In reference to the first difficulty it may be observed, that the words of Luke rendered "when he was

30 And behold, two blind men sitting by the way-side, come nigh unto Jericho," may simply mean, "when he was nigh," the language being interpreted either of the approach to, or departure from, Jericho, as the context shall require. In proof of this statement the reader is referred to "another expression of St. Luke, of the very same sort," (chap. xix. 29,) where it is said that "when he was *some nigh* to Bethphage and Bethany," though our Lord had evidently *gone from* the latter village toward Jerusalem. If this explanation be admitted, the three evangelists will be found, so far, to agree. As to the difference in the number healed, it is certain there were *two*, for Matthew expressly says so; though because of some accidental circumstance, (as that one was much better known than the other,) Mark and Luke name but one. In like manner, in the account of the Gadarene demoniac, which circumstance is mentioned by these same historians, and by them only, Matthew informs his readers that there were *two* men dispossessed, (Matt. viii. 28-34,) though Mark and Luke (Mark v. 1-20, Luke viii. 26-39) name but one. (It will be remembered that in neither case do Mark and Luke assert there was *no more* than one.) Besides, it does not seem at all likely that if Jesus had opened the eyes of a blind man on entering Jericho, for the doing which all the people gave praise unto God, that the same people would, on having passed through the city, rebuke another blind man for calling upon him as the first had done. On the contrary, would they not have been far more likely to have urged the unfortunate being to Christ, that he also might receive a like blessing?

Verse 30. *Two blind men*] Luke says, (xviii. 35,) "a certain blind man;" and Mark calls him (x. 46) "blind Bartimeus." "Bar" is said to be a Syriac word signify-

when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

ing son; accordingly, "*Bartimeus*" would mean, as is probably suggested by Mark, "the son of Timeus." *Have mercy on us*] The "mercy" they desired was, that sight might be imparted to them. (Ver. 33.) *Son of David*] A term by which the Jews frequently designated their expected Messiah. From this application of the title to Jesus, it would seem that these blind men thought him to be that honoured personage. The appellation was certainly properly bestowed, for our Lord was a lineal descendant of David.

Verse 31. *The multitude rebuked them*] Reproved them for making so much noise, and charged them to hold their peace. It is probable that "the multitude" deemed them to be merely clamouring for alms. *But they cried the more*] Mark says "the more a great deal." They became the more earnest and importunate in their requests: probably fearing that Jesus would pass them by unnoticed. And indeed our Lord appears, at first, not to have regarded them, but seems to have pursued his way, probably designing thus to try their faith. At length, however, he stood still, and called them unto him; upon which, according to Mark, certain of those who accompanied Jesus spake encouragingly to Bartimeus, and probably to the other also, saying, "Be of good comfort; rise, he calleth thee." On hearing this, Bartimeus rose, and through

34 So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

joy and haste, "cast away," or threw off, "his garment," or outer robe, and came to Christ. "The cry of a believing penitent," says one, "is sufficient to stop the most merciful Jesus, were he going to make a new heaven and a new earth; for what is all the *irrational* part of God's creation in worth, when compared with the value of one immortal soul!"

Verse 34. *Jesus touched their eyes, &c.*] According to Luke, he spake, saying, "Thy faith hath saved thee;"—not meaning that faith had opened their eyes—this it had no power to do,—but that it had led them to trust in Jesus as being able and willing to bestow upon them the gift of sight. So faith, in itself, has no power to save from sin; but it leads the poor, blind, lost sinner to him who has power: and it is in this sense that we say we are saved by faith. The Saviour, who so kindly heard the cries of, and imparted sight to, these poor blind men, is equally ready to hear our prayers, if we really feel our need of spiritual blessings, and earnestly implore his mercy. Let none, then, be discouraged; but relying on his power and goodness, seek earnestly this favour, for he "waiteth that he may be gracious."

3

LESSON XXIX. [Date, A. D. 29.]

Conversion of Zaccheus—Parable of the Pounds.

LUKE xix. 1-28.

AND *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho.
2 And behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

NOTES ON LUKE xix. 1-28.

Verses 1, 2. *Jesus—passed through Jericho*] Meaning, probably, that the incidents here introduced occurred *after* he had left that city. For a notice of Jericho see p. 338 of this volume. Now as the miracle of giving sight to the blind man was performed after leaving Jericho, and the incident here introduced was, apparently, subsequent to that event, and probably toward the close of the day, (see verse 5,) it would appear that the interview between Christ and Zaccheus occurred somewhere between Jericho and the metropolis. *A man named Zaccheus*] "Zaccheus" is a Hebrew name, and it is therefore probable that the person here noticed was a Jew. See further on verse 9. *Chief among the publicans*] The "publicans" were the collectors of the taxes, or tribute, paid for the support of the government; the "chief publicans" were the farmers, or receivers-general, of the taxes of certain districts, and to them the inferior collectors were subject. For fuller information see note on Luke iii. 12, 13, pp. 172, 173, vol. i. In most of the provinces of the Roman empire the offices of "chief of the publicans" are supposed to have been filled by Roman citizens, as they were stations of considerable rank, influence, and not unfrequently of great emolument: but the Jews are thought to have formed an exception to the rule, and to have been favoured

3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was ; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before and climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him : for he was to pass that way.

with having persons of their own nation appointed to these and other offices. *He was rich*] This fact is named, perhaps, both as an encouragement to rich men, and to the honour of Zaccheus. "He had never," remarks Bishop Hall, "been so famous a convert if he had been poor, nor so liberal a convert if he had not been rich."

Verse 3. *He sought to see Jesus, who he was*] Meaning, what sort of person he was—how he looked. It would, therefore, seem that he had no knowledge whatever of Christ. "It was well," says the prelate just quoted, "he was desirous to see Christ. Little do too many rich men care to see that sight ; the face of Cesar on their coins is too more pleasing. Yet can I not praise him for this too much ; it was not, I fear, out of faith, but curiosity. * * * Only this I find, that this curiosity of the eye, through the mercy of God, gave occasion to the belief of the heart. He that desires to see Jesus, may be in the way to enjoy him." God graciously makes use of every means to bring men to the enjoyment of himself.

Verse 4. *He ran before and climbed a sycamore, &c.*] Ran ahead of the crowd, so as to climb the tree before their approach. The zeal and invention of Zaccheus thus compensated for his shortness of stature. The following 'reflections' of Bishop Hall, though quaintly expressed, are really valuable, and are commended to the serious consideration of the reader: "The publican easily finds both his hinderances and the ways of their redress. His remedy for the press is to run before the multitude ; his remedy for his stature is to climb up into the sycamore

Surely, had Zaccheus stood still on the ground, he had never seen Christ ; had he not climbed the sycamore, he had never climbed into heaven. O Saviour, I have not height enough of my own to see thee ; give me what sycamore thou wilt, give me grace to use it, give me a happy use of that grace. * * * In vain shall he hope to see Christ that does not outgo the common throng of the world. O Saviour, I would be loath not to see thee in thine assemblies ; but I would be more loath not to see thee in my closet. * * * A little man, if his eye be clear, may look as high as the tallest ; the least pigmy may, from the lowest valley, see the sun or stars as fully as a giant upon the highest mountain. O Saviour, thou art now in heaven ; the smallness of our person, or [the lowliness] of our condition, cannot hinder us from beholding thee. The soul hath no stature, neither is heaven to be had with reaching : only clear thou the eyes of my faith, and I am high enough."

The sycamore is a wide-spreading tree, attains to a considerable height, and occasionally exhibits a trunk of great thickness. Its fruit resembles that of the fig-tree, and its leaves are like those of the mulberry ; from which circumstance it derives its name, which is a compound of the two Greek words, *suken* a fig-tree, and *morea* a mulberry. It is a peculiarity of this tree, that it bears its fruit, not on the small branches, but on the trunk itself and on the larger branches, "which," says Norden, "shoot out little sprigs like grape-stalks, at the end of which grow the fruit, close to one another, almost like clusters of grapes. The tree is always green, and bears fruit several times in a year, without observing any certain seasons ; for I have seen some sycamores that have given fruit two months after others." The fruit is like the

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.

common fig, but is smaller in size. It will not come to perfection unless it be first scraped or cut about the middle, which is done by persons who ascend the tree for that purpose. The object of this operation is to let out the water which collects at the end of the fruit, and prevents it from ripening: unless this process be performed the fruit is bitter and worthless. The wood is coarse-grained, light and spongy, and consequently of little or no value as timber. It is, however, said to be very durable; the mummy chests of the ancient Egyptians are made of this wood, and are said to be as sound and uncorrupted now as when they were first made, three thousand years ago.

Verse 5. *When Jesus came—he looked up, &c.*] Our Lord's knowledge of Zaccheus, and of his being in the tree, is commonly considered a proof of his omniscience. *To-day I must abide at thy house*] Remain, or put up there. It is highly probable that this incident occurred toward the close of the day preceding the Jewish sabbath; and that our Lord, being unable to reach the termination of his journey before the ushering in of the day of sacred rest, purposed to spend that time with Zaccheus, whose residence was doubtless not far off, rather than violate the sabbath. What a reproof is this to those who habitually desecrate that holy day! It is further probable that Christ was now but a few miles from Bethany, and that he resumed his journey thither as soon as the sabbath had passed. Our Lord's proposal to become the guest of Zaccheus was evidently an honour which the publican had not expected; and may be supposed to have been conferred, in part, in commendation of his earnest effort to see

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

Christ. It is also probable that Jesus knew Zaccheus to be, at that time, under a divine influence, and that he purposed to become his guest in order to strengthen the devout impressions thus made by his personal instructions. The incident furnishes one of many instances where the Saviour goes, in the bestowment of his mercies, far beyond the desire or expectation of men. It also shows us that he was equally willing to confer blessings on the rich as on the poor—to visit the mansion of the great as the cottage of the lowly—if by so doing he might benefit them.

Verse 6. *He made haste, &c.*] Thus manifesting his sense of the favour done him. *Received him joyfully*] Gladly. “The life of hospitality is cheerfulness: let our cheer be never so great, if we do not read our welcome in our friend's face, we take no pleasure in it.” The “joy” of Zaccheus was heightened, doubtless, by the remembrance of the censoriousness with which the Jews treated the publicans.

Verse 7. *When they saw it, they murmured*] That is, the multitude “murmured” against, or found fault with, our Lord, for his proffer of visiting Zaccheus. This was wrong, because the offspring of an envious, malicious, and proud disposition of heart. *Gone to be guest with—a sinner*] Such Jews as were publicans were very generally termed “sinners” by the rest of their countrymen, being deemed by them but little, if any, better than so many heathen: see Matt. xviii. 17: and, in the general, their moral cha-

8 And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.

Character was far from good. We have no evidence, however, that Zaccheus was a notoriously wicked man.

Verse 8. *Zaccheus—said unto the Lord*] Probably on reaching his own house, and in the presence of the disciples. Other conversation may be presumed to have passed, leading to this declaration, but which the evangelist has not detailed. *Half of my goods I give to the poor*] Meaning, I do purpose, and hereby promise to give: not that he had been in the habit of so doing. The present tense is thought to be used as more expressive than the future of the determination Zaccheus had formed to devote, henceforth, this portion of his goods to charitable objects. *If I have taken any thing by false accusation*] Meaning, if he had extorted from any one more than the law authorized him to collect:—this the publicans are said frequently to have done. *I restore fourfold*] That is, four times as much as had been unjustly taken. Here is an evidence of genuine repentance. “To pretend repentance, without restitution,” says Dean Tucker, “is mere hypocrisy: for where we have committed an injury, and will not make all the amends and reparation in our power, how can we be said truly to repent of it?” The reader will perceive, by referring to Lev. vi. 2, 4, 5, and Num. v. 6, 7, that Zaccheus here exceeded the requirements of the law, which merely demanded that the amount of which the aggrieved party had been wronged should be returned, with the addition of one-fifth, by way, probably, either of mulct or fine, or as a compensation for that gain which the property of which he had been unjustly deprived might

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

have acquired. When an injury of this kind has been done, the *least* that the offender *ought to do* is, to refund principal and interest, for the injured person has a right to all that his property would have honestly produced him.

Verses 9, 10. *Jesus said unto him*] Rather, say some, concerning him, for our Lord spoke not to Zaccheus, but to the bystanders, (probably the disciples,) concerning Zaccheus, who is mentioned in the third person,—*inasmuch as he also*. It may be that Jesus first addressed himself to Zaccheus, and then to the others. *This day is salvation come to this house*] The word “house,” here, means the family of Zaccheus, and especially Zaccheus himself. By “salvation” here, some understand our Lord to declare himself to be the “salvation” of Israel; others take the term to denote the *grace of God* in the heart. *He also is a son of Abraham*] Meaning, probably, that as Zaccheus was before, (in all likelihood,) a *lineal* descendant of that great and good man—in other words, a Jew; so he was now made a spiritual child of “the father of the faithful”—one of the true Israel of God—(Rom. iv. 11,) by becoming an imitator of Abraham’s faith. *The Son—is come, &c.*] See on Matt. xviii. 11, vol. ii., p. 380. By these words our Lord seems to hint at his being the Messiah; and that he was so understood by the bystanders, seems almost certain from the following verse.

Verse 11. *As they* (probably the disciples) *heard these*

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

things] The "things" or sayings more particularly referred to appear to be the declarations contained in the two verses immediately preceding. *He spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, &c.*] If the latter part of this verse be taken as explanatory of the former, the import of the evangelist's declaration will appear to be, that the persons here alluded to—disciples or others—expected that Jesus would, on his arrival at Jerusalem, openly avow himself the Messiah, and proceed at once to establish that glorious dominion the Jews had so long and ardently desired. Aware of this feeling among his followers, our Lord seeks, by means of this instructive parable, to dissipate the illusion of a temporal kingdom, and teaches that he was about to go "to a far country," for the purpose of receiving "a kingdom," vastly different in its character from that which they deemed him about to set up.

Verse 12. *A certain nobleman*] A "nobleman" is a titled gentleman, as a lord, duke, &c. Such distinctions are unknown in this country, but are frequent among the monarchical governments of the old world. The word is here used to represent a prince. *Went into a far country to receive a kingdom*] The words "to receive a kingdom," mean to be confirmed in the possession of a kingdom,—to procure for himself royalty. It is possible that there is here allusion to a well-known fact in Jewish history;—namely, the conduct of Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, who, having been appointed by his father's will king of Judea, took a journey into a "far country," (Italy,) to receive from the Roman emperor a confirmation of his authority. The allusion to Archelaus, however, is but in illustration

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

of the truth here intended, and not the principal object of the story, for our Lord undoubtedly designed, by the nobleman, to represent himself; and by that nobleman's going into a far country, &c., he meant to denote his own ascension into heaven, to receive that exaltation to the mediatorial throne which he was about to purchase by his sacrificial death. See Acts ii. 36; v. 31. *And to return*] Namely, at the end of the world; for the awards referred to in the progress of the parable may be understood of the decisions of the last day.

Verse 13. *He called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds*] That is, one pound each. Nothing particular is denoted by the number ten: it is merely assumed for the purpose of preserving the connection of the narrative. The coin here denominated "pound," is commonly supposed to be worth about fifteen dollars of our currency. The "ten pounds" are designed to represent the various gifts, graces, and means of usefulness which God has bestowed upon his rational creatures. *Occupy till I come*] That is, *do business with it*—endeavour, by trading, to increase it. The word refers to the investment of money in traffic or merchandise. This conduct of the nobleman is in unison with a custom which formerly prevailed extensively in the East, and still does to some extent, of intrusting servants, and even slaves, with money to trade with: the proceeds of which were rendered to the master, and rewards by him bestowed on the most diligent and successful traders, according to their several merit.

Verse 14. *His citizens hated him*] By "citizens" we

15 And it came to pass, that, when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

are to understand his subjects. From this it would seem that the nobleman did not claim a kingdom to which he had no right:—the inhabitants already owed him submission. *Sent a messenger after him, saying, &c.*] Namely, to the court whither he had repaired for the confirmation of his title. Expositors generally are of opinion that here, again, our Lord refers to the case of Archelaus, against whose confirmation in the regal power the Jews protested, and actually sent a large deputation to Rome, to solicit Augustus not to confer on him the sovereignty: but in which petition they failed. It is possible that Christ did intend thus to illustrate his own rejection by the Jews; but it is also probable that this feature of the narrative is merely given by way of ornament, or for a better filling up of the parable. Be that as it may, the application is obvious. Our Lord evidently adverts to the obstinacy of the Jews in refusing to acknowledge him the Messiah. And do not those persons who now perversely refuse, or culpably neglect, to submit their hearts to the domination of Christ, equally say, in fact, We will not have this man to rule over us? And will they not as inevitably expose themselves to his serious displeasure, as did those to the anger of the king? O think of these things!

Verse 15. *When he was returned*] In the application of the parable, the return of the nobleman to his own country is probably designed to represent the “second coming” of Christ to judge the world. *Having received, &c.*] Having been confirmed in his claim to the kingdom. *He*

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

commanded these servants to be called, &c.] The “servants” are supposed to denote the professed followers of Christ. We are not to imagine that our great Master is in anywise ignorant of the improvement or misimprovement, by his “servants,” of their various gift or graces, or that he needs to “call them” to be made acquainted therewith: such phraseology is used, here and elsewhere, to impress our minds more clearly and deeply with the fact that God knows us as fully as though each should give a full and strict account of himself, and that his decisions will be in harmony with that perfect knowledge.

Verses 16–19. *Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds*] That is, by successful investment in trade, the original amount intrusted to this servant had been so increased that he had now ten times as much. *Have thou authority over ten cities*] There is here allusion to the custom formerly prevalent in the East, of assigning the government and revenues of a certain number of cities or towns as a reward to a meritorious officer. Thus Artaxerxes assigned to Themistocles *two cities*, or as some say, *five*. The servant is termed “good” because he had been diligent in prosecuting his master’s interests. *Be thou over five cities*] As before, to have the rule of, and revenue derived from, the five cities. The doctrine inculcated in these different decisions is, that the rewards of saints in eternity will be proportionate to their capabilities of enjoy-

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is thy pound*, which I have kept laid up in a napkin :

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man ; thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

ment, and their faithfulness and usefulness while in their probationary state.

Verses 20, 21. *Another came, saying, &c.*] This servant seems to be designed to represent a slothful, inactive follower of Christ—for it is not said that he *perverted* his lord's property, but merely that he neglected to improve it. *Here is thy pound, which I have kept in a napkin*] A "napkin" is, with us, a small towel ; the original is said to import a linen cloth. "From the rabbinical writers it appears that such were sometimes used to wrap money in, and lay it by."—*Bloomfield*. By this statement the servant means to be understood as saying that he had not *wasted* his lord's money, nor thrown it carelessly aside, but had been *very careful* to preserve it :—so much so, that he had taken the pains to tie it up, and put it in a safe place ; and now he returned that which had been intrusted to him. So many professing Christians, possessed of learning, and various means and degrees of usefulness, suffer those talents to lie unemployed. How much good might such persons do, if, for instance, instead of lounging away the hours of the sacred day, they were perseveringly and zealously to engage in the instruction of the children belonging to the sabbath school, and thus realize the blessedness of being instrumental in "turning many to righteousness." So far, however, are persons who thus bury their talent in a napkin from exerting an extensively

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow :

beneficial influence on the church or on the world, that for all the service they are of to Christianity, they might almost as well not have existed, and the most suitable epitaph for their tombstone would be,

"They lived—and died."

I feared thee, because thou art austere] "Austere," means *harsh, uncompromising*. This servant seems to have been wanting in noble emulation, and to have been the subject of slavish fear : hence, instead of obeying his lord's command, to "occupy," or *trade with*, the pound, in order to make more money, he carefully preserves it ; apparently fearing to engage in traffic, lest he should prove unsuccessful, and thereby incur his lord's displeasure. *Thou takest up that thou layedst not down*] That is, appropriated to his own use that to which he had no right. This the servant urges as an *additional* reason for his conduct. He considered his master a *gripping* and *unjust* man, in appropriating to himself the proceeds of the honest and successful labour of his servants ; and in requiring of them more than he had a right to claim. So many professing Christians of the present day think it hard that they should be required to deny themselves, and continually seek the promotion, not of their own earthly delights, but of God's glory and the good of their fellow beings. To such we would say, in the language of Mr. Baxter, "Unprofitableness and omission of duty is condemnable unfaithfulness in us who are but stewards and servants. To do no harm is fit praise for a stone, not a man."

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Verses 22, 23. *Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee*] That is, by thine own words—thine own declaration. *Thou knewest that I was, &c.*] This is not to be understood as an admission that the lord *was* austere and unjust; but simply a hypothetical supposition; as though he had said, "Now supposing that I am an austere man," &c.: thus leading to the condemnation of the idle servant, even on his own assumptions. *Wherefore gavest not thou my money into the bank, &c.*] The word here rendered "bank" denotes, "1st. a table; 2d. a money table or counter; on which the money changers did their business. But as those counters were, no doubt, provided with desks or drawers, for the deposit of money, so the word came to mean, 3d. a place for the investment of money, just as our 'bank' originally denoted only a counter."—*Bloomfield*. *That I might have required—usury* By "usury," here, we are simply to understand proper and lawful interest, not what we now term "usury," or unjust and extortionate interest, which is contrary to law.

Verses 24–26. *Take from him the pound*] As a punishment for his neglecting to improve it. We know not that any doctrine should be based on this; but if there should be, it would be to this effect, that those who neglect to

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

improve their privileges, will be dealt with as though they had *misimproved* them. *Unto every one which hath shall be given*] Meaning, that every one that hath *improved*, or *used well*, the gifts, graces, &c., conferred on him, shall meet with a proportionate reward. *It may be, too*, that the passage implies that such as make the most of their means of usefulness shall have increased opportunities of doing good conferred on them. *From him that hath not, &c.*] That has not so improved, shall lose, probably his present privileges, certainly his future reward.

Verses 27, 28. *Those mine enemies—slay them before my face*] A custom not unusual with the despotic governors of the East: where human life is less respected than with us. By this cruel treatment of captured enemies our Lord probably designs to intimate the fearful destruction which will come upon the impenitent and unbelieving in the day of his wrath. 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. *When he had thus spoken, he went before, &c.*] Resumed his journey toward Jerusalem, apparently leading the way.

LESSON XXX. [Date; A. D. 29.]

The Resurrection of Lazarus.

JOHN xi. 17-54.

THEN, when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already.

NOTES ON JOHN xi. 17-54.

Verse 17. *When Jesus came*] When he arrived at Bethany, or rather, in its immediate vicinity; for our Lord seems to have met Martha beyond the walls, (verse 30,) probably not far from the burying ground of the family. The sepulchres of the Jews were always outside their cities and towns, with the exception of the tombs of the kings of Judah, which were within the city of David. *He (Lazarus) had lain in the grave four days*] Meaning, probably, that this was the fourth day since his burial. It is not unlikely that Lazarus died on the very day on which the intelligence of his sickness reached Jesus, or at the farthest, early on the day following: (verse 14:) and that in accordance with the custom of the country, he was soon afterward committed to the tomb—probably on the day on which he died. (Compare verses 17 and 39.) From the sixth verse it appears that our Lord remained at the place where he received the tidings of Lazarus's illness until the second day thereafter. This was probably in the neighbourhood of Bethabara, (John x. 40,) which is supposed to have been distant from Jerusalem about two days' journey. Now if Jesus set out for Bethany on the second day after the receipt of the message from the beloved sisters, and consumed rather more than two days on the route, he would arrive at Bethany on the fifth day after the receipt of the news, when the dead man would

18 (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.)

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was

have been, as is probably the import of the text, three full days and part of a fourth in the grave.

Verse 18. *Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem*] This fact is, perhaps, introduced to account for the coming of so many persons, apparently residents of Jerusalem, to "comfort the sisters." See verse 19. *About fifteen furlongs off*] Robinson states the Greek stadia, or furlong, to be equal to two hundred one and a half English yards, which would make the distance between Jerusalem and Bethany rather less than a mile and three-quarters.

Verse 19. *Many of the Jews came, &c.*] Visits of condolence, on occasions of death, were usual among the Jews, and continued to be paid for seven days after the interment of the deceased. As these visits were reckoned by them among "acts of mercy," and were deemed very meritorious, the visitors were usually numerous—few omitting this mark of attention who had the slightest acquaintance with the deceased, or with the family to which he belonged.—*Grotius—Pictorial Bible.* The conduct of the Jews, in this instance, is worthy of imitation, for, as an old writer pointedly remarks, "it is some kind of ease to sorrow to have many partners; as a burden is lightened by many shoulders. Yea, the very presence of friends abates grief." No wonder, then, that the gospel, the distinguishing trait of which is benevolence, should enjoin upon its receivers to sympathize with and comfort persons in affliction. Rom. xii. 15; James i. 27.

Verse 20. *Then Martha, &c.*] The affairs of the family

coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

appear to have been chiefly intrusted to Martha, (collate Luke x. 40,) she being, probably, the elder of the two sisters, and of a more active disposition than Mary. It is probable that she first heard of our Lord's approach, and that without informing her sister she went immediately out to meet him. It is suggested that Martha did this as a mark of peculiar honour, the greatest evidence of respect which could be paid to an expected guest being to meet him on the road. See Genesis xviii. 2, 3; xix. 1; xxiv. 29; xxix. 13. *Mary sat still in the house*] Probably on the ground, that being the usual position of mourners in the East. (Job ii. 8; Psa. cxxxvii. 1; Isa. xlvi. 1; Ezek. viii. 14.) The word "*still*" is not in the original, and had better not have been inserted in the translation, as it weakens the force of the passage.

Verses 21, 22. *Lord, if thou hadst been here, &c.*] Martha may be here supposed to intimate her belief that had Jesus been present at the sick-couch of Lazarus, the love he bore the family would have induced him miraculously to restore her dear brother to health. But, although confident both of her Lord's ability and willingness to deliver the victim even from the embrace of death, if present at the scene of suffering, she seems to have doubted whether he were capable of exerting the like power when at a distance, notwithstanding her probable acquaintance with the circumstances attending the cure of the nobleman's son. See John iv. 49-53. Her faith was therefore imperfect. *But I know that even now, &c.*] Thus indirectly

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

and modestly suggesting that were Jesus to ask of God the restoration of her brother's life, the request would be granted. It would seem from this that Martha had not a true conception of Christ's character: she indeed regarded him as possessed of immense influence—that he could prevail with the Almighty, so as to obtain of him whatsoever he should desire—but seems not to have known that in the person of her beloved Master dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead." The humility of our Saviour is strikingly exhibited in the carefulness with which he veiled his more glorious nature—not allowing, save in very few instances, even glimpses of the hidden splendour to be revealed; so that *the IMMANUEL—the God with us*—generally appeared but as "the man of sorrows."

Verse 23. *Thy brother shall rise again*] Referring, doubtless, to the miracle he was about to perform, and implying that Lazarus should rise *directly*. Jesus here, as it were, puts a petition into her mouth: as though he had said, "Thou believest God will grant whatsoever I shall ask; wilt thou that I ask the life of thy brother?—Thy brother shall rise." Martha, however, did not clearly understand him to speak of an immediate revivification.

Verse 24. *I know he shall rise at the last day*] So, indeed, will all the dead. By this language Martha would seem not only to express her belief in the doctrine of a general resurrection, and consequently of the rising again of her brother, whether he were at present restored to life or not, but also to intimate a degree of uncertainty, as though she were not sure that she rightly comprehended the import of our Lord's words, and therefore desired

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou

fuller information. A vague idea that Jesus *intended* something more than his words expressed probably occupied her mind, and awakened anxious curiosity.

Verse 25, *I am the resurrection*] Meaning, by a common figure of the *effect* for the *cause*, that he was the author of the resurrection. In the same manner Jesus Christ is said, 1 Cor. i. 30, to be "made unto us *wisdom*, and *righteousness*, [or justification,] and *sanctification*, and *redemption*;" that is, the source of these blessings. By thus declaring himself to be the author of the resurrection from the dead, our Lord seems to intimate that as he shall at some time raise *all* the dead, so he can and will now raise Lazarus to life. *And the life*] The "life" to which special reference is here had, appears from the context to be spiritual and eternal life. "We have here," says Dr. Jortin, "in a few words, the summary of the gospel. Jesus is the *resurrection* to all those believers who are departed hence in the Lord; and he is the *life* to those who are still upon earth; and he will finally be the resurrection and the life to them both."—*Bloomfield*. *Though he were dead*] Rather, "though he die."—*Wesley*—*Holden* *Shall live*] Namely, a life of endless felicity in heaven.

Verse 26. *Whosoever believeth—shall never die*] That is, shall not die eternally; but after suffering temporal death, be admitted to the enjoyment of immortality. In this immortality the whole person of the believer will share, body as well as soul. 1 Cor. xv. 51–53.

Verse 27. *I believe thou art the Christ, &c.*] That is,

art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

the Messiah. These words are evidently spoken in answer to our Lord's question recorded in the preceding verse; and are to be understood as conveying both the assurance of her belief that Jesus was the Messiah, and her entire conviction that all he now said was true, though she might not fully comprehend his meaning. *The Son of God, &c.*] A title frequently employed to designate "the Christ." Martha quotes, in the ardour of her feelings, the three titles most commonly given to the long looked-for Messiah. *Which should come, &c.*] Rather, *who is to come*, or, *who cometh*: that is, whom the Scriptures say is to come. For a similar use of language, see Matt. xi. 4.

Verse 28. *She went her way, &c.*] Namely, to the house, for the purpose of acquainting her sister with Christ's arrival and desire to see her, leaving Jesus "in the place where she met him." Ver. 30. Our Lord probably directed Martha to do this, for on reaching home she says to Mary, "The Master—calleth for thee." "The time was," remarks Bishop Hall, "when she would have called off her sister from the feet of that divine Master to attend the household occasions: now she runs to fetch her out of the house to the feet of Christ." *Secretly*] Privately; so that the company did not hear her. This may have been done to avoid excitement; and if, as is probable, our Lord had directed Martha to call her sister privately, the circumstance furnishes another instance of the unostentatious manner in which he delighted to per-

29 As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews

form his stupendous works. "The Master" (or teacher) seems to have been the appellation by which Jesus was familiarly spoken of among the disciples, and we occasionally read of his designating himself by the same term. See Matt. xxvi. 18; John xiii. 13.

Verses 29-31. *Arose quickly and came, &c.*] Accompanied, probably, by her sister. See verse 39. *She goeth unto the grave to weep there*] The company would naturally suppose this, inasmuch as it was, and still is, a very general practice in the East for female relatives to repair daily, during the "days of mourning," to the graves of their departed friends, and make their lamentations there. After the expiration of those days, though such visits continue to be paid, they are at longer intervals.

Verse 32. *Mary—fell down at his feet*] Weeping bitterly. Verse 33. "Both the sisters met Christ, though not both in one posture. She that before *sat* at the feet of Jesus, (Luke x. 39,) now *falls* at his feet," a position expressive, probably, of earnest supplication for help, as well as of deep feeling.

Verses 33, 34. *He groaned in the spirit*] The word rendered "groaned" is said to denote *violent agitation*, from whatever cause: and was in this case excited by witness-

also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

ing the distress of Mary. "In the spirit," means *in mind*. See Acts xix. 21, where it is said, "Paul purposed in spirit,"—meaning it was *in his mind* to act as there stated. It is not probable that our Lord made any audible sound, but that he was internally agitated by deep emotion. *Was troubled*] Was affected by grief. Perhaps the expression also imports that his countenance exhibited signs of sorrow. The original, it is said, will well bear such an interpretation. *Where have ye laid him?*] That is, where is he buried? Jesus did not ask this question because he was ignorant, for he knew perfectly well where the body of Lazarus lay entombed: his reason for the inquiry probably was, that the spectators might, under cover of showing the way to the tomb, be the more certainly brought to witness the miracle he was about to perform.

Verse 35. *Jesus wept*] Although this verse is (as frequently remarked) the shortest in the Bible, its brief contents are exceedingly important and full of interest. The passage proves the adorable Redeemer to be also the compassionate and sympathizing friend—one "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." It is therefore fraught with strong consolation to those who are sorrowing from bereavements, because it is a proof that this most natural expression of grief is not inconsistent with supreme love to God, or a hearty acquiescence in, and submission to, his dispensations, however afflictive. Sorrow at the death of friends is not merely *sufferable*,—it is *right*; and as a suitable expression of strong affection religion does not

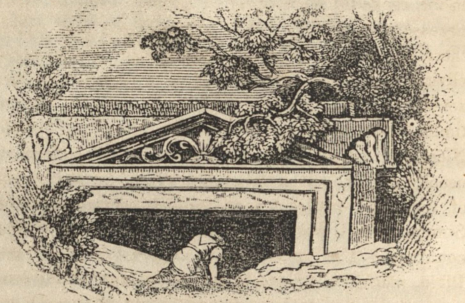
36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!
 37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died.

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

condemn it. All that religion does in the case is to temper and chasten grief; to teach the afflicted to mourn without murmuring, and to bring the soul, made tender by grief, to find calmness and peace in God. Three instances of our Saviour's weeping are recorded in the Scriptures: first, on the present occasion; second, on lamenting over Jerusalem; (Luke xix. 41;) third, at the agony in the garden of Gethsemane. (Heb. v. 7.)

Verses 36, 37. *Behold how he loved him, &c.*] A very natural conclusion from his deep emotion. *Opened the eyes of the blind, &c.*] Referring, probably, to the case of the man born blind, whom Jesus, at the previous feast of tabernacles, had cured at Jerusalem. See John ix. 1-7. Is it not rather strange that these Jews should so readily admit the miraculous bestowment of sight on this blind man—one who was an entire stranger to Jesus—and yet not manifest any expectation of the performance of some equally astonishing work in behalf of this afflicted family, “whom Jesus loved?”

Verse 38. *It was a cave*] An evidence, according to Jahn, that the family of Lazarus were in easy circumstances; for that the comparatively wealthy only had rock sepulchres. “In the mountainous countries of southern Palestine,” says the Pictorial Bible, “there are abundance of natural caves in the rocks, which might be easily formed into commodious sepulchral vaults; and where such natural caves were wanting, sepulchres were hewn



INTERIOR OF A ROCK SEPULCHRE.

in the rocks for such families as were able to incur the necessary expense." The arrangement and extent of these caves varied with circumstances. Those in the declivity of a mountain [or hill] were usually cut in horizontality. The roofs were generally arched, and sometimes, in the more spacious vaults, supported by pillars. Niches, or recesses about six or seven feet deep, were usually cut into the sides of the vault, for the reception of the dead bodies; each corpse occupying a niche. Similar tombs were also frequent in the neighbouring countries. The opposite cuts, copied from the Pictorial Bible, will give the young reader an idea of the exterior appearance, and interior arrangements of these "houses of silence." The first is a representation of the "tomb of the kings of Judah," lying about a mile to the northwest of the present city of Jerusalem, and of which Maundrell remarks, "the place discovers so great expense, both of labour and treasure, that we may well suppose it to have been the work of kings." The road down to the tombs is cut in the rock, and the entrance is by a large door, also cut in the rock.—*Richardson*. The west end seems to have been ornamented with the greatest care; and there appears the mouth of a cavern twelve yards wide, exhibiting over the entrance an architrave, with a beautifully sculptured frieze.—*Clarke*. *A stone lay upon it*] Rather, "*lay against it.*" It will be recollected that our Lord's tomb was closed in a similar manner. See *Matt. xxvii. 60*. Bloomfield says the stone used for this purpose was called "the roller." Formerly, however, heavy stone doors were occasionally used to secure the sepulchres from depredation, as is evident from the remains of several such at the "tombs of the kings," above referred to.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been *dead* four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, said I not unto thee, that if

Verse 39. *Take away the stone, &c.*] These words were probably addressed to some of the friends who had "followed Mary;" and may have been designed still further to prevent any supposition of fraud in the transaction, by giving them the positive evidence of their own senses that their entombed friend was not only dead, but the subject of corruption. *By this time he stinketh*] These words do not appear to have been urged so much with the design of turning Jesus from his object, as to let him know the *real state* of the body. It is the opinion of some eminent expositors that Martha's remark was founded on recent actual inspection; for it appears from the writings of the rabbies, that for three days after interment the Jews used to visit the vaults of the dead, in order to see whether there were any favourable change. Besides, there can be but little doubt that in so warm a climate as Palestine, the progress of decomposition would be very rapid, and that, therefore, Martha's remark was correct. *He hath been dead four days*] There is nothing in the original of this clause answering to the word "dead," which (as the kind of type shows) was added by our translators, apparently to make the sentence complete. The literal rendering would be, "He hath been four days,"—meaning, probably, four days in the grave. "The expression," says Campbell, "is abrupt and elliptical; a manner extremely natural to those in grief."

Verse 40. *Said I not, &c.*] Alluding, perhaps, to some particular remarks in his prior conversation with Martha, which the evangelist has not recorded. *See the glory of*

thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God!

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his eyes*, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

God] Meaning, probably, a glorious display of the power of God. And assuredly the raising of Lazarus from the dead was, humanly speaking, the most signal manifestation of divine authority which our Lord exhibited while on earth. Even the skeptic Spinoza avows, that if he could be persuaded of the truth of the miracle, he would destroy his own system and embrace Christianity. No wonder, then, that its enemies have used every exertion to destroy the credibility of so stupendous a miracle. Their efforts, however, have ever been unsuccessful.

Verses 41, 42. *Jesus lifted up his eyes*] An expression denoting fervency in religious worship: of which "the lifting up of the eyes" is a very natural and expressive accompaniment. We presume that our Lord had earnestly desired this opportunity of making a signal display of his power and goodness; and that in the act of worship just noticed, he breathed out, in grateful thanksgiving, his praises that his desire had been gratified, accompanied, doubtless, with ardent longings that the people might receive the testimony to his divinity that the miracle offered, and believe on him for his work's sake. *Thou hast heard me*] Meaning, hast heard with favour—hast granted me my wish. A frequent mode of speech in the Scriptures. See 1 John v. 14, 15. *Because of the people—I said it*] The word "it" is probably to be understood of the prayer or thanksgiving just alluded to. Our

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and

Lord's reason for departing, in this instance, from his usual course, and thus publicly acknowledging God, he himself gives—it was “because of the people”—that is, for their benefit, that they might truly be convinced “that God had sent him.” His *apparent* inferiority is occasioned by his speaking in his complex character as Mediator.

Verse 43. *He cried with a loud voice, &c.*] Perhaps that all who were present might distinctly hear the authoritative command, and when they saw it obeyed, be the more readily induced to acknowledge that the resurrection was effected by Christ's power. It is suggested, too, by some, that our Lord may have spoken in a “loud voice,” to prevent any suspicion of charm or incantation. He would thus be manifestly opposed to the ancient magicians, who seem to have performed their pretended wonders by whisperings and mutterings. See Isa. viii. 19. *Lazarus, come forth*] “And he that was dead came forth.” The power of raising the dead is the highest power of which we can conceive, creation, perhaps, excepted. The heathen deemed it to be an impossibility. It implies, not merely giving life to the deceased body, but the recalling the departed soul, and reuniting it with the body.—*Barnes*. If the body of Lazarus had really become putrefied, as would appear both from Martha's statement and the nature of the case, we may be sure that our Lord would not only stay the progress of corruption, but also restore the body to health, and so render it capable of enjoying life.

Verse 44. *He—came forth, bound, &c.*] From this it would appear that the Jewish mode of preparing the

foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

bodies of the dead for the sepulchre was nearly the same as still exists in western Asia. No coffin being used, the corpse is carefully and closely wrapped and swathed. The body being extended at full length, and the arms laid straight by the sides, a long piece of cotton or linen cloth is rolled round the body, until the whole is enveloped, and every part covered with several folds of the cloth. The ends are then tightly sewed, to keep the whole compact, or else a narrow bandage is wound over the whole. The corpse, when thus enfolded, retains the outline of the human form, as represented in the annexed cut. *His face was bound in a napkin*] The “napkin”



The mode of enfoldng the dead in grave clothes.

was a separate piece of cloth; and, like the larger wrapper, was probably cotton or linen. Some commentators suppose that the “napkin” was merely wound round the head, as was customary with the Egyptians, leaving the face uncovered. The editor of the Pictorial Bible, however, is of opinion that the whole face was covered, and asserts such to be still the prevailing custom in those parts, as well as throughout the East generally.

Verses 45, 46. *Many of the Jews—believed*] Being convinced by this miracle that Jesus was indeed the Son

46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

of God. *But some went to the Pharisees, &c.*] The evangelist has not informed us what the motive was which prompted these men to inform the Pharisees of what had taken place; we may therefore judge for ourselves. Some commentators have charitably supposed that it might have been with the design of convincing them of their error in persecuting Jesus: but the fact that the evangelist places the conduct of these informers in opposition to that of the "many who believed," almost inevitably leads to the conclusion that they were influenced by the far less worthy motive of a desire to injure Christ.

Verse 47. *Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council*] A "council," is a body of men convened for the purpose of consulting on any measure. The term "chief priests" is supposed to include the present high priest, those persons who had filled the office of high priest, and the heads of the several courses, or families, of priests. The "Pharisees" alluded to, are probably such of the sect as were members of the sanhedrim; a meeting of which body is perhaps here referred to. *What do we?]* Meaning, "What are we to do?" The teachings and miracles of Jesus had strongly disposed the common people to admit his claim to the Messiahship; and the council were now apparently convened, as guardians of the religion of the country, to adopt measures to counteract this growing impression, and to effect the destruction of our Lord, whom they affected to believe an

48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

impostor. *This man doeth many miracles*] Thus they admitted the reality of his miracles: why, then, did they not yield to this evidence of the truth of his mission, and receive him as the Messiah? We can assign no other reason than that they had determined to consider him a "deceiver," and to bar their hearts against that honest conviction which would have resulted in their reception of him as the Messiah.

Verse 48. *If we let him alone*] Meaning, if he be permitted to go on in his work of teaching the people and performing miracles. *All men will believe, &c.*] That is, the mass of the Jewish people will receive him as the Messiah. *The Romans shall come and take away, &c.*] The Jews were at this time subject to the Roman government, having been brought under the sway of that nation some years before by Pompey the Great. They had, however, been treated with uncommon lenity, and were continued, to a great extent, in the enjoyment of their own laws and religious usages. The idea advanced here seems to be, that if Jesus were left undisturbed, he would be likely soon to place himself at the head of his constantly increasing followers, and raise a rebellion: the consequences of which would be fatal to the Jews, as the Romans would easily defeat the insurgents, and would probably destroy the nation. Although these counsellors thus foolishly apprehended danger from our Lord's growing popularity, they do not appear to have been prepared to propose any severe measures against him, being sensible that they had no show of justice to sustain them in any violent measures. To them, apparently, Caiaphas

49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

replies in the verse following. The word rendered "place," in this verse, is by some supposed to refer to the temple; but Bloomfield denies its applicability in that sense, and interprets the term of the city of Jerusalem. To "take away," is equivalent to *destroy*.

Verses 49, 50. *One of them*] One of the "council"—Caiaphas. *High priest that same year*] Which office he had now held several years, having been appointed to the dignity before Pontius Pilate began his administration, and continued in it by that officer. *Ye know nothing, &c.*] A remark designed, apparently, as a reproof of the previous speakers, for their timidity: as though he had said, "Ye manifest your ignorance, in state craft, by weakly hesitating to do what ye see is *expedient*. Is it not better that one man should suffer, even if innocent, than that the whole nation should be ruined?" The minds of Caiaphas and of the other speakers were evidently warped by the erroneous supposition that Jesus, in claiming to be the Messiah, must be expected to form a temporal kingdom in opposition to the Roman power. *It is expedient for us that one man should die, &c.*] Here the high-priest appears to be the unprincipled politician. He supposed that if Jesus were removed, all danger of revolt would be at an end, and therefore hesitates not to advise his murder, although the danger to the state was merely imaginary. We are not to suppose that there is in this language any reference to the vicarious atonement of Christ.

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

53 Then, from that day forth, they took counsel together for to put him to death.

Verses 51, 52. *This spake he not of himself*] Meaning, "not of himself *merely*;" for the suggestion was in remarkable accordance with the divine purpose. Caiaphas, however, aimed only at the temporal salvation of his country by the sacrifice of a really innocent, though presumed guilty, man: God meant the words to be prophetic of the spiritual and eternal salvation, not of one nation barely, but of the believing in "every kindred, and nation, and tongue, under heaven," by the sacrifice of one "in whom there was no guile." It is by no means likely that Caiaphas understood the full import of his own words. *Prophesied that Jesus, &c.*] "Prophesied" here probably means *predicted* or *foretold*. He unwittingly delivered a prophecy, as the event fully proved. *The children of God, &c.*] Meaning all the faithful believers in Christ, who are "gathered into one" church through the one Mediator and Head. These are here called "the children of God" by anticipation, in order to show His gracious design that they should become such.

Verses 53, 54. *Took counsel, &c.*] They resolved on his death, and began to devise means to accomplish their end. *Jesus walked therefore no more openly, &c.*] In consequence of his knowledge of the evil intentions of the rulers, he abstained, for a season, from mixing in public—at least, from appearing publicly in Jerusalem. "Walked no more," means *did not appear*. *Went unto a country*

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

near to the wilderness] It is not certain what wilderness is meant—perhaps the one lying between Jerusalem and Jericho. *To a city called Ephraim*] The location of this city has been considerably disputed. It is, however, probably the same which the Jewish writers call “Ephraim in the valley,” to distinguish it from another place of the same name, called “Ephraim in the mount.” It is, by the Jews, indicated as the same Ephraim which is mentioned 2 Chron. xiii. 19; and as its name occurs there in connection with that of Bethel, with which, also, the Jewish writers connect their “Ephraim in the valley,” it would seem more than probable that it was in the tribe of Benjamin, and not very remote from Bethel. It is supposed to have been a small and rather obscure town, and therefore the more favourable to that retirement which Jesus now sought. Eusebius places it eight miles from Jerusalem, which agrees well with the supposition that it was near Bethel, which is about eleven English miles north of the metropolis.

“When Jesus quitted Jerusalem, to retire to Ephraim, the family of Lazarus might have left its vicinity also; for, after his resurrection, the safety of Lazarus would have been as much endangered by a personal continuance in Bethany, as our Lord’s. And this conjecture, I think, is so far confirmed by the course of the subsequent history that, from John xii. 9–11, we may safely conclude Lazarus had not been in the neighbourhood, any more than Jesus, since the time of that miracle, until they both reappeared there, six days before the last passover.”—*Gresswell*.

LESSON XXXI. [Date, A. D. 29.]

Approach of the Passover—Christ arrives at Bethany, where he is anointed by Mary, the sister of Lazarus.—
Matt. xxvi. 6–13; Mark xiv. 3–9; John xi. 55–xii. 11.

JOHN xi. 55–xii. 11.

AND the Jews’ passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

NOTES ON JOHN xi. 55–xii. 11.

Verse 55. *The Jews’ passover was nigh*] For the Scriptural account of the institution of this feast, and the mode of its celebration, see Exod. xii. 3–43; Lev. xxiii. 4; Num. ix. 1–3; xxviii. 16, &c.; Deut. xvi. 1–8: also, the notes on Luke ii. 41, &c., vol. i., p. 145. The phrase, “the Jews’ passover,” shows that John wrote his gospel more especially for the use of persons who were not intimately acquainted with the peculiar usages of that nation. *To purify themselves*] To “purify” is to cleanse from some stain or pollution. These persons were ceremonially defiled, and therefore not at liberty to join in the public religious services of the season, or to eat the passover, until freed from the legal impurity under which they had laboured. Num. ix. 9–11. The “purification” was effected by compliance with certain prescribed rites, as washings, sacrifices, fastings, prayers, &c. The time occupied in these ceremonial observances is said to have been from one to eight days, and so numerous were the people requiring purification, that a large concourse usually assembled at Jerusalem some days prior to the great feasts, and especially so, before the passover.—*Bloomfield, Holden, &c.*

56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him.

Chap. xii. 1. Then Jesus, six days before the passover,

Verse 56. *Then sought they for Jesus*] That is, such of the populace as had come up from the country parts, sought him. Why they should have expected him to be at Jerusalem at that time we know not, for the feast-day had not yet arrived. *What think ye, that he will not come?*] Meaning, Is it your opinion (as it certainly is mine) that he will not come? Perhaps the passage would be clearer if pointed as Campbell and many others suggest: "What think ye? That he will not come?"

Verse 57. *The chief priests—had given commandment, &c.*] As it is unreasonable to suppose that the civil authority would make public their reason for desiring to know where Jesus now was, the words "that they might take him," must be understood to be John's exposition of their design, not a part of the "commandment." Yet, though the rulers should not avow their intent, the people might shrewdly guess what their motive was. This they seem to have done, and therefore express their doubts as to Christ's being at the feast, evidently supposing that he, too, was acquainted with the designs of his enemies.

Chap. xii. 1. *Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany*] As the passover was commanded to be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, it is highly probable that our Lord arrived at Bethany on the eighth of that month; it being customary, in reckoning the time intervening between two events, to count it as

came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served:

inclusive of the one, but exclusive of the other, extreme. The day of the crucifixion was unquestionably the sixth day of the week, or our Friday; if so, the sixth day before that event, on which our Lord is here said to have arrived at Bethany, (exclusive of the day of crucifixion,) would be Saturday. It may be urged against this view that Saturday would be the Jewish sabbath; and that it is by no means probable that Jesus would travel on that day. In reply, it is observed by Greswell that the Jews began and ended their day at sunset; that the passover, that year, fell on the fifth of April, and that consequently the date of Christ's arrival at Bethany would be March 30, when there would be twilight for at least an hour after sunset; and that if our Saviour had passed the sabbath at any place within some three or four miles of Bethany, he might easily have reached that village after the close of the sabbath, yet in ample time to partake of the evening meal with the family by whom he was entertained: a view which the subsequent narrative strongly corroborates. *Where Lazarus was, &c.*] Meaning, probably, the usual residence of Lazarus. From Matt. xxvi. 6, and Mark xiv. 3, it appears that Jesus was entertained in the house of "Simon the leper;"—that is, who *had been* a leper, and who, it would seem, continued to be distinguished by this adjunct. It is highly probable that Simon had been cured of his leprosy by our Lord.

Verse 2. *There they made him a supper*] This fact strengthens the suggestion above made, that Jesus did not arrive at Bethany until late. The ordinary time of the evening meal among the Jews is stated by Jahn to have

but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard,

been six or seven o'clock; and it is not unlikely that the repast was delayed, on the close of the sacred day, until a later hour, as the Jews were prohibited cooking on the sabbath, (Exod. xxxv. 3,) and would, probably, make no preparation for this meal until after the sun had set, when they would be at liberty to perform their usual work.

Martha served] From this fact it is plausibly conjectured by some critics that Simon and Martha were intimately connected—probably husband and wife: and that the healing of Simon, on some former occasion, may have led to the intimate acquaintance and tender affection which subsisted between this interesting family and our adorable Saviour. *Lazarus sat at table, &c.*] Partaking of the entertainment. This shows that his resurrection was no illusion; inasmuch as he manifestly possessed and exercised the usual functions of animal life.

Verse 3. *Then took Mary ointment—and anointed the feet of Jesus, &c.*] Some commentators are of opinion that the New Testament furnishes three distinct notices of anointings of our Lord's person: namely, that mentioned Luke vii. 37, 38, which seems to have taken place in the neighbourhood of Nain; the one now narrated; and one recorded Matt. xxvi, 6, &c., and Mark xiv. 3, &c. The compiler is, however, of opinion that Matthew, Mark, and John, refer to one and the same event, and that consequently the Scriptures note but two of these anointings of our Saviour. Those commentators who hold to a third anointing, contend that this anointing by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is to be distinguished from the anointing noticed by Matthew and Mark, (Matt. xxvi. 6, &c., Mark

very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

xiv. 3, &c.) for the following reasons:—That John clearly places the anointing he mentions six days before the passover, Matthew and Mark seem to intimate that the one they notice was but two days before the passover. The supper spoken of by John appears to have been given in the house of Lazarus, that detailed by the other evangelists is expressly stated to have been in the house of Simon the leper. In Matthew and Mark it is stated that the ointment was poured on the *head* of Jesus, while John says it was his *feet* that were anointed; neither Matthew nor Mark give the name of the anointer, simply saying it was “a woman,” as though she were a stranger, whereas John explicitly declares the anointing he mentions to have been performed by “Mary,” apparently meaning the well-known sister of Lazarus; John says, that the circumstance he narrates, called forth the censure of Judas, neither Matthew nor Mark mention Judas, but say that “the disciples,” or “some of them,” found fault. These seeming discrepancies may, however, be easily reconciled, and the accounts almost demonstrated to refer to one and the same event. As to the *time*, it will be observed, that neither Matthew nor Mark mention any specific time—they simply say the anointing was at Bethany. True, their narrative would *seem*, at first sight, to imply that the transaction took place some time between the passover and the second day prior,—but they do not expressly say so: and it is well known that neither of these evangelists is careful to preserve chronological order. There is here, therefore, nothing contrary to John. As to the dwelling in which the entertainment was given, it should be recol-

lected that it is nowhere *said* to have been in the house of Lazarus: and indeed there is an incidental statement made by John which goes far to show that Lazarus *was not* the real master of the house—namely, that “Lazarus was one of them that sat at table;” for surely no one in speaking of a feast, would deem it necessary to say, of the master of the house, “that he sat at table” with his guests. Now on the supposition above given, that Simon was a relative—perhaps the husband of Martha—the seeming difficulty vanishes, and a reason is presented why the evangelists should use language in which there would otherwise be no propriety—namely, that Lazarus was *not* the master: he, however, may have been, and probably was, an inmate of the family. In reply to the more important distinction, that Matthew and Mark state the ointment to have been poured on the “head,” John on the “feet,” of our Saviour, it may be observed, that it was a universal custom in the East to anoint the head, (see Psa. xxiii. 5; Eccles. ix. 8; Matt. vi. 17; Luke vii. 46,) and it is therefore strongly inferable that Mary *did pour* the ointment on the *head*, as well as on the *feet*, of Jesus, though John has seen fit to mention only the more extraordinary anointing of the feet; 1st. Because it was uncommon; and 2dly. To supply the omission of the preceding evangelists. The silence of Matthew and Mark respecting the name of the anointer may be accounted for on the supposition that its open declaration might have exposed her to the malice and vengeance of the Jews, whereas John, who wrote his account after the destruction of Jerusalem, and probably after the death of Mary, could have no such motive for secrecy. A similar reason is assigned for the silence of the first three evangelists respecting the resurrection of Lazarus. As to the objec-

tion, that in the account of John, Judas only is mentioned as finding fault with the anointing, while Matthew and Mark intimate the dissatisfaction to have been more general, we have but to suppose that Judas was bold and open in the expression of his sentiments, while the others were reserved and mild, and the accounts perfectly accord. Additional reasons in favour of supposing Matthew, Mark, and John, to refer to the same transaction are, 1st. The extreme improbability of Christ being twice anointed the same week, in the same village; and 2d. The fact that the disciples would hardly dare, after being rebuked for censuring the unction on the sixth day before the passover, again to express dissatisfaction on its repetition, supposing it to have been repeated, two days before that event. “There is no great weight,” observes Bloomfield, “in the allegation of discrepancies between the two stories; while their *points of agreement* are so remarkable that they cannot well be regarded as two different transactions; but have every appearance of being two statements, by two different witnesses, of the same transaction.”

Ointment of spikenard, &c.) “Spikenard” is mentioned in Solomon’s Song, i. 12; iv. 13, 14; Mark xiv. 3; and John xii. 3; and also by several heathen writers. Little was known with certainty respecting it, except that it was an Indian production, very costly, and highly esteemed for odoriferous qualities, until about forty years ago, when Sir William Jones, who was then in India, turned his attention to the subject, and published the result of his inquiries in the “Asiatic Researches.” It is now pretty generally admitted that Sir William has proved the “nard” of the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, to be the same as the *sumbul-hindee*, or Indian

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sumbul of the Persians, and the *jatamansi* of the Hindoos. Additional evidence has been furnished by the in-



The Jatamansi, or Indian Spikenard.

vestigations of Dr. Royle, who has also given an accurate representation of the plant.

The *jatamansi* is a perennial species of valerian, growing on the Himalayan mountains, whence it is brought, in large quantities, and distributed over every part of In-

dia. The lower part of the stems, several of which are clustered together on one root, is covered with hairlike fibres, so as to resemble in appearance the tail of an ermine. This hairy portion of the plant, which is about three or four inches in length, is broken off from the root, and dried in the sun, or by artificial heat. Dr. Roxburgh, writing in India, says, this "is clearly the Indian spikenard of our shops; but whether the *nardus* of the ancients or not, I leave to better judges to determine; however, I believe few will doubt it, after having read Sir William Jones' dissertations thereon."

According to Dr. Russell, the spikenard is still carried over the desert to Syria, where it is used, in substance, mixed with other perfumes, and worn in small bags, or in the form of essence, and kept in little boxes or phials, like *attar* of roses.

The "ointment of spikenard, very precious," with which Mary anointed our Saviour, was probably the *attar*, or essential oil, of the plant. Whatever it was, it was certainly a "very costly" preparation, the quantity that was used on the occasion being valued at "three hundred pence," or Roman denarii, equal to about forty dollars of our money.

Sir William Jones is of opinion, however, that the *nardum* of the Romans not only signified the essential oil of the plant from which it was denominated, but was also a generic word applied to Indian essences in general, taking its name from that ingredient which had, or was commonly thought to have, the most exquisite scent: all of these were very costly, and most of them being sold by the Indians to the Persians and Arabs, from whom, in the time of Augustus, they were received by the Syrians and Romans, they must have been extremely dear at Je-

4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

rusalem and at Rome.* *Anointed the feet of Jesus, &c.*] And as appears from Matthew and Mark, his head also. The custom of anointing distinguished, or highly honoured guests, at feasts, is of ancient date, and was by no means peculiar to the Jews. The Jewish rabbins, and other public teachers, are said to have been opposed to the practice of anointing with fragrant unguents, as tending too much to luxuriousness and effeminaty. Matthew and Mark state this "anointing" to have been performed while Jesus "sat at meat." For an illustration, showing how this might be done, see vol. ii., page 124. Matthew and Mark inform us that the ointment was contained in an "alabaster box," or more properly, vase, and Mark further adds, that in order to get at the contents, "the woman brake the box." From this it would seem that the vessel containing the spikenard was closely sealed, to prevent the evaporation of the odour, and that Mary either broke off this seal, or more probably, the end of the neck of the vase. "Alabaster" is a species of marble, and was frequently manufactured into beautiful receptacles for perfumery, and the like. *The house was filled with the odour*] A figurative mode of expressing the extreme fragrance of the essence.

Verses 4, 5. *Judas Iscariot*] One of the twelve apostles.

* This account of the spikenard has been compiled from Sir William Jones' two papers on the subject, in *Asiatic Researches*, vol. ii. pp. 405-417; vol. iv. pp. 97-107; Dr. Roxburgh's *Botanical Observations on the Spikenard*, in the same work, vol. iv. pp. 433-6; and the *Pictorial Bible*, Mark xiv. 3.

5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

He is supposed to have been named "Iscariot," or the man of Kerioth, from the town of that name, in the tribe of Judah, of which he is thought to have been a native. *Which should betray him*] Rather, who would betray him; which he did a few days afterward. *Why was not this sold—and given to the poor*] Meaning the proceeds given "to the poor." This Judas said, "not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief," (ver. 6,) though probably not commonly known as such at the time; and if the ointment had been sold, as he here suggests, he would have had the opportunity of purloining a portion of the avails. The plausible pretext under which Judas sought to hide his wicked design, had, probably, an evil influence on the minds of some of the other disciples, and led them also to find fault. See Matt. xxvi. 8; Mark xiv. 4. *Three hundred pence*] About forty-five dollars. Mark says, "more than three hundred pence." This was, therefore, an expensive anointing, and strengthens the opinion that the family were somewhat wealthy.

Verse 6. *Had the bag, and bare, &c.*] The word here rendered "bag" is said to have originally denoted the wooden box in which pipers deposited the mouth-pieces of their instruments. It was thence used to signify any small, portable box or casket, for holding money or other valuables. Its meaning is therefore equivalent to "purse," and Holden thinks had better be so translated. It appears that Judas was intrusted with the charge of the money designed for distribution among the poor, as well

7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone : against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

as with that contributed for the support of Christ and his disciples. Additional proof of this fact is furnished by chap. xiii. 28, 29, where we read that when this same Judas, at the last supper, left the company to go and betray his Lord, some of the disciples thought he had gone to "give something to the poor." The word here translated "bare," sometimes means, to carry away by stealth. That such is its import here is highly probable, from the preceding statement, that Judas was a "thief:"—He "bare away," or stole, a portion of that which was intrusted to his keeping for the expenses of the apostolic family, and for the relief of the poor. The traits of Judas's character here developed are, avarice, dishonesty, and hypocrisy; all which were more fully manifested soon afterward in that shameless betrayal of his Master which has, throughout Christendom, made his name a synonyme for all that is treacherous.

Verse 7. *Let her alone*] From this injunction, as well as from Mark xiv. 5, it appears that the "murmurings" of the disciples had been directed specially against Mary. Jesus, however, defended her conduct, and declared that she had "wrought a good" or approved "work" on him, inasmuch as the act was expressive of the highest affection and reverence. *Against my burying hath she kept this*] We are not to understand our Lord as intimating that Mary had any idea of his decease being near at hand, or that she intended this anointing as a preparation for the tomb; for such was not the case. The expression merely implies, that as it was usual among the Jews to anoint the bodies of deceased friends, prior to interment, so this anointing was a suitable preparation for his burial, and

8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

one which they themselves would have readily performed were he really dead: for which reason they ought not to find fault with Mary. It is worthy of note that this was the only "anointing for burial" he received: for immediately on being taken down from the cross he was laid in the tomb, and though ingredients were afterward prepared for anointing him, he had risen when his friends came to apply them. The reader will excuse our calling his attention to the calm dignity and resignation with which Jesus adverts to his death, although, as he knew the time, so he knew all the circumstances of pain, ignominy, and desertion, by which it would be accompanied.

Verse 8. *The poor always ye have*] "And," adds Mark, "whosoever ye will, ye may do them good." See, also, Deut. xv. 11, 12. *Me ye have not always*] Christ's bodily presence was about to be removed from them, and any kindness designed him should be quickly performed. The good work which is to be done soon or never, ought surely to be attended to before that for the execution of which opportunities are continual. Our Saviour is not to be understood as in any wise freeing his followers from the obligation of "doing good to the poor:" it being one of the more important duties of practical Christianity to minister to the necessities of the distressed, especially if of "the household of faith."

Having thus spoken, our Lord, according to Matthew, (chap. xxvi. 13,) pronounced a high eulogium on the affectionate Mary, saying, "Whosoever this gospel shall be preached, there shall this be told for a memorial of her." By the word "gospel," here, our Lord doubtless means his doctrine or religion; and when he declares that the history

9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there; and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

of this particular event should be made known wheresoever that should be "preached," an intimation is given that a written record of his life, embracing this incident, should also accompany it; for the memory of this transaction could only thus be preserved. From this we may conclude that it was always his intention that a body of sacred writings should accompany the oral proclamation of his doctrine in every place; and that as the inspired writings were not designed to render preaching unnecessary, so the living ministry was never intended to exclude the inspired record.—*Watson*. A "memorial" is a *remembrancer*—something designed to call any particular person or event to mind: and is generally, as here, employed to perpetuate the memory of praiseworthy acts. In the eloquent language of Mr. *Watson*, this act of Mary's "was in truth-an 'everlasting deed,' bound up in the immortality and unchanging endurance of the imperishable record in which it is commemorated, not for her sake only, but to show in how benign and condescending a manner our blessed Lord accepts every thing which is done from an affectionate regard to him as our Teacher and Redeemer, and to honour him in the presence of the world."

Verse 9. *Much people therefore knew he was there*] Namely, at Bethany. "Much people" means many persons. These were, probably, the commonalty, among whom our Lord found many warm friends. The word "therefore," it is said, would have been more correctly, as well as clearly, rendered, *now*; the sentence would

10 But the chief priests consulted that they might kill Lazarus also to death;

11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus.

then read—"Now much people," &c. *And they came—that they might see Lazarus*] Being actuated by a very natural curiosity to see and converse with one who had been raised from the dead, as well as to listen to the instructions of the extraordinary Teacher by whom he had been revived. It is highly probable that this resort to Bethany was on the day following the Saviour's arrival; (our Sunday;) and it is very plausibly suggested by *Greswell* that Jesus remained the whole of that day at Bethany, not visiting Jerusalem until the day following.

Verses 10, 11. *The chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus to death*] We are not informed when they came to this determination; but deem it probable that it was as soon as the information of the numerous visitors to Bethany reached them. It has been already suggested that Lazarus, soon after his resurrection, retired from Bethany to avoid the enmity of the priests and Pharisees, and that he did not return until about the time of our Lord's arrival. This supposition is strengthened by the statement here recorded; for if he had continued at Bethany ever since his resurrection, it is but reasonable to suppose that the sensation among the inhabitants of Jerusalem would have been as great, if not greater, immediately after that miracle, than it now was, after the lapse of so long a time; and that but for his absence the resolution to destroy him would have been sooner formed, and probably executed ere this. *Because by reason of him many went away, &c.*] The words "went away," &c., are understood by *Campbell* and *Bloomfield* to ex-

press the idea that "many of the people *drew off from* or forsook, the instructions and doctrines of the scribes, and attached themselves to Christ. This they are said to have done "by reason of" Lazarus; meaning, in consequence of the evidence which his resurrection furnished to the true Messiahship of Jesus.

The history of our Saviour's earthly existence is now brought down to *within a week of its close*. He had already informed the apostles that the period of his sufferings was at hand; and his deportment, as well as language, conveys to the mind of the reader a conviction of this fact: for he henceforth no longer avoids his enemies, but appears among them with more openness, regularity, and boldness, than he had before done. The consideration of his remaining instructions and acts will form the subject of the fourth volume.

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