

11. THEIR RECEPTION. **ii. Inquire who in it is worthy**—*i. e.* sustains a good reputation for piety and hospitality. (Compare Acts 16: 15) They were not to expose themselves to wanton insult, nor lodge with those whose evil lives would cause reflections to be cast upon the guests of such. **And there abide**—In the instructions to the seventy (Luke 10) many of these commands are repeated. They were forbidden to “go from house to house.” “When a stranger arrives in a village or an encampment, the neighbors, one after another, usually invite him to eat with them. There is a strict etiquette about it involving much ostentation and hypocrisy, and a failure in the due observance of such hospitality is frequently resented; and often leads to alienations and feuds amongst neighbors; it also consumes much time, causes distraction of mind, leads to levity, and in many ways counteracts the success of a spiritual mission. On these accounts the evangelists were to avoid these customs. They were sent, not to be honored and feasted, but to call men to repentance, prepare the way of the Lord, and to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. They were, therefore first to seek a becoming habitation to lodge in, and there abide until their work in that city was accomplished.” (Thomson.)

12. And when ye come into the house—*i. e.* the house of him whom you have been told is worthy. The salutation is of course addressed to the household or the person welcoming them as its representative. The usual salutation would be “Peace be to this house,” (Luke 10: 5)

13. Let your peace come upon it—If the family receive the apostles kindly then Christ will bestow upon them the blessings which are implied in the prayer of salutation. The peace of God shall rest upon them. **Let your peace return unto you**—It shall be as if you had never invoked peace upon it. “It is a mode of speaking derived from bestowing a gift. If people were willing to receive it, they derived the benefit from it; if not, then of course the present comes back, or remained in the hands of the giver.” (Barnes.)

14. Shake off the dust of your feet—(See instances in Neh. 5: 13, Luke 9: 52-56; Acts 13: 51, 18: 6.) A sign that they had no fellowship with them, and hence a warning of coming doom, so Mark adds “for a testimony unto them.”

15. The land of Sodom and Gomorrah—(Gen. 13: 13) The inhabitants of the cities

of the plain. This statement rests on the general principle expressed also in Luke 12: 47; Matt 11. 20-24. **In the day of judgment**—Notice that the resurrection of the wicked is assumed. They are not, therefore, annihilated. “Sodom and Gomorrah are often referred to as signal instances of divine vengeance, and as sure proofs that the wicked shall not go unpunished. See 2 Pet. 2: 6; Jude 7.” (Barnes.) These cities had nothing but the example of inconsistent Lot to teach them. Bad as they were, their guilt was less than that of those who had the whole Old Testament and the institutions of religion to instruct and help them. What shall we say of ourselves, in comparison, if we reject Christ?

16 I send you forth—The “I” is emphatic. “It is I who send you into the midst of such dangers. Conduct yourselves, then, in such circumstances, in a manner becoming those who are *my* messengers.” (Meyer.) “But the expression also implies the gracious protection which would attend them,” (Lange.) **As sheep in the midst of wolves**—They were engaged in a mission of love, harmless and inoffensive themselves personally; but those to whom they were sent were animated with an implacable hatred of the truth, and, if not restrained by a higher power, would put an end to them and their mission together. **Wise as serpents and harmless as doves**—“Serpents show great caution and skill in avoiding danger. The Egyptian hieroglyphics use the serpent as the symbol of wisdom. We may understand that they were to be prudent in the recognition of danger, and in the choice of means for opposing or escaping it—in general, as to their behavior in danger. But such prudent regard for self-preservation is very apt to be accompanied, in men as in serpents, with the tricks of low cunning. This is forbidden by the other injunction. This word rendered ‘harmless,’ better ‘simple’ (margin R. V.); signifies, literally, unmixed, and hence pure (as pure gold), uncorrupted, and so, guileless, sincere. They were not to deserve injury, or afford any pretext for it; and were to employ no trickery or other improper means of escaping from danger. They must combine prudence and simplicity. If the dove alone were taken as a model, they might become silly (Hos. 7: 11); if the serpent alone, they would become tricky” (Broadus) “The serpent slips innumerable times from the hands of the pursuer, and the dove does not settle in any unclean place,—it approaches him who is gentle, and will never do harm to the persecutor; its safety lies in flying upward. Lastly, the dove is a symbol of the soul rising in prayer and faith, and ultimately rising above death and the grave.” (Lange.) Read Rom. 16: 19; Eph. 5: 15; Phil. 2: 15.