

regarded as a lamp, which receives material light ; and it is compared with the spiritual eye, which receives spiritual life, illuminating the inner personality" (Anderson). *The whole body* ; the whole inner personality, which is flooded with light through the spiritual eye. *How great . . . that darkness* ; because the spiritual eye, which ought to give light, gives none. *Single* ; "free from distortion," that is, by avarice and hence "generous." "Liberality" in Rom. 12 : 8 ; 2 Cor. 8 : 2 ; 9 : 11, 13 is, literally, "singleness," as, indeed, it is translated in Eph. 6 : 5 ; Col. 3 : 22. Plummer remarks that "the spiritual eye may be distorted and darkened in other ways than by avarice,—by prejudice or superstition." Amongst the Jews a good eye signified a generous soul, and an evil eye a grasping and grudging one (see Deut. 15 : 9 ; Prov. 23 : 6 ; 28 : 22). *Evil* ; "distorted," and hence "niggardly."

III. The Cure for Care, 24-34.

V. 24. *Can serve* ; be the slave of. The absolute subjection of the slave must be taken into account. *Two masters*. "The two masters are the treasure on earth and the treasure in heaven." One or other of these will be the man's owner, having absolute control over him, so that all other claims are completely shut out. *Hate . . . love*. When two claim the slave, his heart can be devoted to only one. *Hold . . . despise*. Where there is no personal preference, the slave will, for other reasons, attach himself to one master or the other. *Mammon* ; a Syrian word meaning "wealth." It is here personified and represented as the rival of God. Be it observed, "it is not the possession of wealth, but slavery to it, which is incompatible with allegiance to God."

V. 25. *Therefore* ; since it is impossible to serve the two masters, lay aside care for worldly riches and devote your affections and energies to God. *Take no thought* ; Rev. Ver., "be not anxious," thrice repeated (see vs. 31, 34). It is not foresight and provision that is forbidden, but the anxiety that distracts and distresses. *The life more than meat*. The greatest gifts of life come from God ; we had nothing to do with its bestowal. Will he not also give the lesser gift of necessary food (compare Rom. 8 : 32) ? Why,

then, should we be anxious ?

V. 26. *Behold the fowls* ; flying about the group on the hillside with free, careless movements. *They sow not*. The birds provide for the future, and search for their food ; but they do not produce it. God does that for them. *Your heavenly Father* ; to the birds only a Providence ; to you a Father. *Much better* ; as God's children, standing much higher in his loving care than the mere creatures.

V. 27. *One cubit* ; the distance from the elbow joint to the tip of the middle finger, reckoned 1½ feet. *Stature*. The Greek word may mean either "stature" or "age." Here the best meaning is "age." No one tries to extend his height, but, rather, the length of his life. But God fixes this, just as he provides food.

Vs. 28-30. *Consider the lilies* ; perhaps the red anemone, which grows under thorn bushes, or a general name for all flowers of the lily species. *How they grow* ; how wonderful their growth is. *Toil not* ; like men laboring hard in the fields. *Neither . . . spin* ; like women in the home. *Solomon in all his glory*. See 1 Kgs., ch. 10. *Not . . . like one of these*. The lilies, trusting to God for their array, surpassed, in their beauty, the great king. *The grass*. Compared with God's children, even the loveliest lilies are like mere grass. *Cast into the oven*. The grass, withered by the burning desert wind, was used as fuel. The oven was a round earthen vessel, narrow at the top, within which the fuel was placed, the cakes to be baked being placed on the sides. *O ye of little faith* ; a tender rebuke,—half reproach, half pity. "Faith" here means trust in God as Father.

Vs. 31, 32. *Therefore* ; pointing back to v. 25. *The Gentiles* (the heathen) *seek*. In v. 7 of the lesson chapter, the vain manner of heathen prayer is referred to ; here the reference is to the things they ask for,—material goods. These verses teach that the spirit that finds the chief good in life in material things is heathenish, not the spirit of true religion.

V. 33. *Seek ye first* ; making it the ruling aim in every action. Luke (see Luke 12 : 31) leaves out "first." Material things are