

II. BABES AND WEARY COMFORT-ED. (25—30.) Knowledge of God hid from wise, *i.e.* intelligent, such as Scribes and Pharisees; could not see Christ's truth (St. John ix. 41); remained in ignorance.

1. *Christ believed in* by "babes" and ignorant. Examples:—

Children who shouted "Hosanna!" (xxi. 15.)

Common people heard Him gladly. Ignorant fishermen became disciples. (Acts iv. 13.)

2. *Christ has all power* from His Father. Power over angels (Heb. i. 4), winds and waves (xiv. 24), etc.

3. *Christ gives rest to heavy-laden*, by forgiving sin, *e.g.* sick of the palsy; to *weary* with disease, *e.g.* man at Pool of Bethesda thirty-eight years (St. John v. 8), to mourners as Martha and Mary. (St. John xi.)

III. OBSERVANCE OF SABBATH. (xii. 1—21.) 1. *Works of necessity*. Ears of corn plucked and eaten, as allowed by law of Moses. (Deut. xxiii. 25.) Pharisees object because is doing work. Christ's answer based (a) *on precedents*—

David's eating shewbread. (1 Sam. xxi. 6.)

Priests doing work of sacrificing.

(b) *On law of necessity*, superior to positive precepts.

(c) *On law of charity*, greater than all law.

(d) *On His sanction* Who made the Sabbath.

2. *Works of mercy*. Law of charity further enforced—

(a) *By analogy*—a man is better than a sheep.

(b) *By miracle* of healing man with withered hand.

Thus the Sabbath was made for man—his rest, comfort, etc.—not man for Sabbath, to be a burden.

NO. 22. PHARISEES' PLOTS AND BLASPHEMIES. SIGNS.

To read—St. Matthew xii. 14—50.

I. PLOTS. (14—21.) Why do Pharisees seek His destruction? Because of His upsetting their teaching. Christ withdraws—His time not yet come. But people follow Him in crowds—all healed. Because—

(a) He must fulfil prophecy.

(b) He is God's servant—to do His will.

(c) He must show God's justice to all nations.

(d) He must not break the weak by harshness.

(e) He must fan the flame of the conscience.

(f) His name shall be tower of strength. (i. 21.)

II. BLASPHEMIES. 1. *Against Christ*. (22—30.) Blind and dumb man healed. Power of giving sight and speech specially foretold. (Isa. xxxv. 5.) People ascribe His power to descent from David; Pharisees to power of devil. How did Christ answer?

1. Satan would not destroy his own kingdom.

2. Power of casting out evil spirits been of old given by God, *e.g.* David and Saul. (1 Sam. xvi. 23.)

Christ, therefore, will destroy power of devil—first his goods, *i.e.* disease and pain, effects of sin, and finally devil himself. (Rev. xx. 10.)

3. *Against the Holy Ghost*. (31—37.) Solemn warning. Sin against Christ may be forgiven if repented of, but one particular sin unpardonable (1 John v. 16), viz., wilful opposition to work of Holy Ghost—wilful infidelity.

St. Peter spoke against Christ and was forgiven.

St. Paul blasphemed Christ, but obtained mercy.

Jews rejected Holy Ghost (Acts vii. 51), were lost.