

gather men into the Church, and train them there as Christians.—This promise to Peter and Andrew, that they should be gatherers of men into the Church, was made after the occurrence of the miraculous draught of fishes, when the former, terrified at the proof exhibited therein that God was working so near him, exclaimed to our Lord—“Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”—Luke v. 8.

Ver. 20. *They straightway left their nets.*] After conferences held with our Lord, they quickly made up their minds to relinquish their occupation, and join the little band which was beginning to accompany him, believing him to be the Messiah.—There had been intercourse between our Lord and Peter and Andrew, before this their direct call to follow him as immediate attendants. We learn from St. John (i. 40), that both brothers had been disciples of John the Baptist, and that Andrew was the means of bringing Peter into the presence of our Lord.

Ver. 21. *James the son of Zebedee.*] This was James the Greater, or Elder,—afterwards slain by Herod, grandson of Herod the Great. James the Less, or Younger—also surnamed “the Just,”—another Apostle,—was the son of Alphæus, of the family of Mary, the mother of our Lord.—The latter is believed to have been the author of the Epistle of St. James, in the new Testament.

Ver. 23. *teaching in their synagogues.*] The word “synagogue” properly means “an assembly,” or “collection of People.” But at length it came to mean “the place of assemblage.”—So “Ecclesia,” or “Church,” is properly an “Assemblage;” but in common language, it signifies also “the place of assemblage.”—Each synagogue was made somewhat to resemble the great Temple at Jerusalem, just as the ordinary Churches in a Christian diocese now are arranged to a certain extent after the pattern of the cathedral, which is supposed to be the mother-church from which they have sprung. Indeed there appears to have been the same relation between the synagogues and the Temple at Jerusalem, as there is in every Christian Diocese between the various parochial churches and the great cathedral where the

bishop of the diocese generally sits. The Christian system has been a transcript, on a world-wide scale, of the Jewish system, which embraced but one diocese, so to speak.—The service in the synagogues was according to a set form, consisting of nineteen prayers or collects: after these came the reading and exposition of the Law and the Prophets. The exposition was made by one of the official ministers of the synagogue; or by any person whom they might invite to address the congregation. Thus our Lord and His Apostles were often permitted to teach the people in the synagogues.

—*the Gospel of the kingdom.*] The glad tidings of the new dispensation or Church, wherein, by the free grace of God, it is made possible for all men to be saved.

—*healing all manner of sickness.*] All evil in the world arises from the fact, that the human race is a fallen race. Our Lord shewed by his healing bodily disease, that he had power over all evil; that he was the Redeemer of the human race from the effects of their fall.

Ver. 24. *throughout all Syria.*]—“Syria” is an abridgment of “Assyria,” derived from Ashur, mentioned in Genesis x. 11.—Syria, at the time referred to by St. Matthew, was bounded on the east by the Euphrates, and a portion of Arabia; north by Mount Taurus; west by the Mediterranean; and south by Arabia.

—*those which were possessed with devils.*] Our Lord was He who was to bruise the serpent’s head.—Extraordinary visible influence was permitted to be exercised by demons (here called devils) or evil spirits, over the souls and bodies of men, during the time of our Lord’s sojourn on the earth, and for some time afterwards; in order that it might be evidently seen that He had perfect power over spiritual, as well as over physical or bodily evil; and that we, witnessing His victories, might put our whole trust in Him in Him in our resistance to evil within ourselves and in the world.

Ver. 25. *Decapolis.* The name signifies “Ten cities.” The ten cities referred to, situated principally on the east side of the River Jordan, were Scythopolis, Philadelphia,