

Ver. 23. *If thine eye be evil.*]—‘be diseased.’—If the spirit of a man become enslaved to the love of wealth, its view of every thing is coloured thereby. If the spirit of a man free itself—as it may, by the aids which the religion of our Lord supplies—from this and other evil passions, its view of all things becomes more correct—more in harmony with the plans of God.

—*If the light which is in thee be darkness.*] What a man prides himself on as a special point of distinction between himself and other men is often a grievous error. Such errors are naturally very difficult to be got rid of.

Ver. 24. *Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*] It is impossible for a man to be wrapped up in the love of wealth for the mere wealth’s sake, and at the same time to do his duty to God and his fellow-creatures, as a member of the Church founded by our Lord.—Mammon is a personification of the whole idea of exclusive devotedness to worldly gain.—It is a Syriac word signifying “gain.”

Ver. 25. *Take no thought for your life.*] Anxious distracting thought is meant.

—*Is not the life more than meat?*] ‘Hath God given you life? He will not withhold a lesser boon—a perception of the means whereby you may obtain a supply for its sustenance.—Hath God clothed your spirit with a body—and that too so exquisitely formed? He will not deny you the power of procuring that wherewith it shall be shielded from harm.’

Ver. 26. *Your heavenly Father feedeth them.*] Not miraculously—but by giving them instincts, and by furnishing materials which those instincts urge them to search for and to use.—Even so the members of Christ’s Church are to expect the supply of their wants—not supernaturally—but through the legitimate exercise of the intellectual and corporeal gifts with which God has entrusted them.

Ver. 27. *Can add one cubit to his stature.*] Let a man take ever so much anxious distracting thought, he cannot add one day more to the sum of his days.—The word translated “stature” in the language in which St. Matthew writes, refers to a man’s age, rather than to his height.

Ver. 28. *The lilies of the field.*] ‘Common wild flowers.’—A species of crocus called the *Amaryllis lutea*, abundant in Palestine, is supposed to be referred to.

Ver. 29. *Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*] Solomon as he sat on that throne to which “there was not the like made in any kingdom,” 2 Chron. ix. 19., was not so exquisitely adorned as one of these wild flowers.—The examination of the structure of flowers by means of a powerful microscope fills the mind with admiration of the infinite perfection of the handywork of God.

Ver. 30. *The grass of the field.*]—‘The wild vegetation around us.’

—*Which to day is and to morrow is cast into the oven.*]—‘Which is seen flourishing to-day—but ere night is cut down and withered,—and to-morrow is reduced to ashes in the oven.’—Portable earthenware and metal ovens were used, in which thin cakes, when wanted, were very quickly baked.

—*O ye of little faith!*] ‘Ye who reflect but little on Him whose workmanship ye are, and who consequently repose but little confidence in Him and His arrangements in the economy of the world.’

Ver. 31. *Therefore take no thought.*] The word which St. Matthew uses denotes distracting anxious thought—thought that will not permit the mind to apply itself with effect to any subject but that which occasions the anxiety.—The teaching of our Lord, when rightly understood, nowhere justifies recklessness in worldly matters. It introduces into the pursuits of men just that correcting element, which enables them to use rightly the things which God supplies to them on earth.—The words of Holy Scripture are to be taken—not in an isolated way—but in combination with the context—i. e. the chapter or book where the words occur,—and as limited by other declarations.

Ver. 32. *After all these things do the Gentiles seek.*] “Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die”—was virtually if not literally a maxim among the heathen—as it is among those who, within the pale of the Church, lead an animal life, disbelieving the immortality and accountability of man.