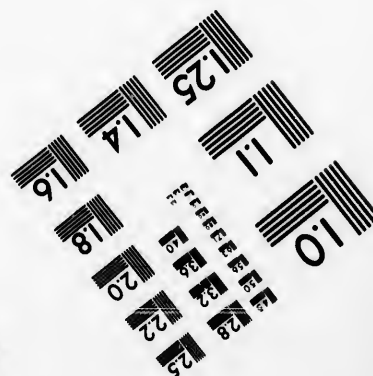
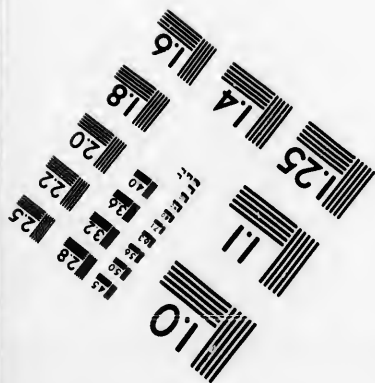
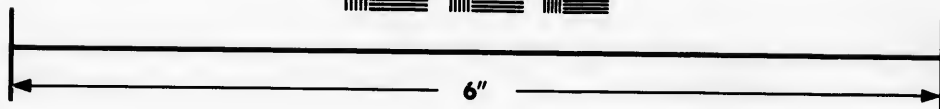
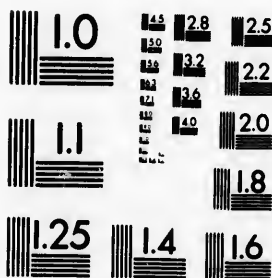


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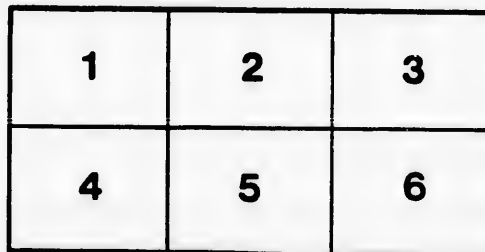
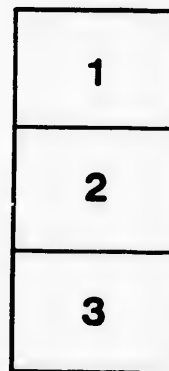
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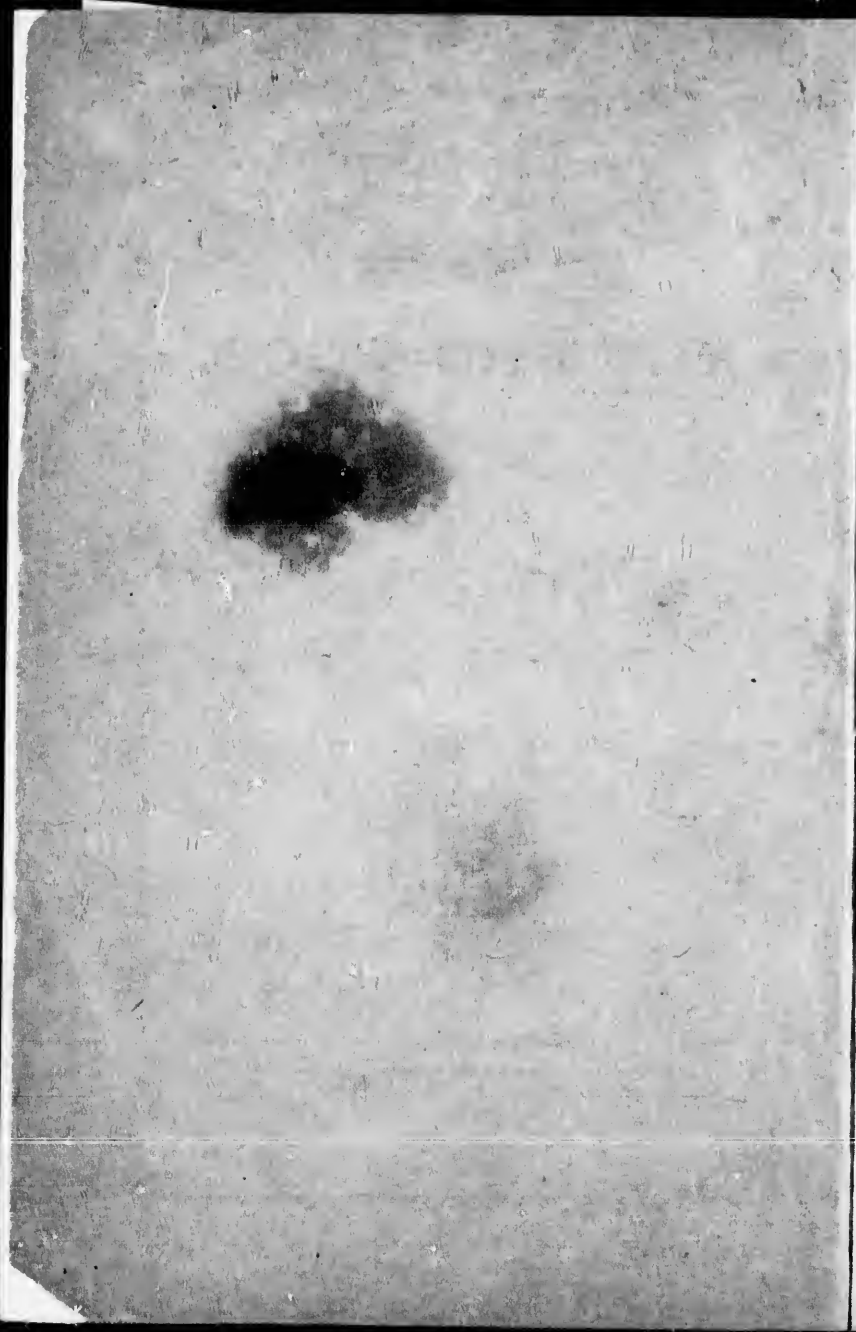
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BY THE
REV. JOHN THOMPSON,
OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, SARNIA.



SARNIA:
THE AMATEUR PRESS.

1882.



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CHRIST,
THE TEACHER
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BY THE
REV. JOHN THOMPSON,
OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, SARNIA.



SARNIA:
THE AMATEUR PRESS.

1882.

TO THE
SESSION AND CONGREGATION

OF

**ANDREW'S CHURCH,
SARNIA,**

My true Yoke-fellows who labor with me in the Gospel,

These Pages are Dedicated as a

CHRISTMAS GIFT,

And Memorial of sweet Counsel together, and with the Prayer
for increased usefulness in future years,—by

THE PASTOR.

Sarnia, Christmas, 1882.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following brief chapters on CHRIST'S character as a TEACHER, are published with the hope that they may prove helpful to those who, in sincerity of heart, have come to learn of Him who can lead them into all truth.

Our aim in the following pages has not been fullness of discussion, even of that particular aspect of Christ's work under review. A full discussion of such a subject is an impossibility, for it partakes of the infinite, and will be a subject of study through eternal ages. We have merely dwelt on a few salient points of a theme of permanent and profound interest to the Church. Our purpose is gained if any may be led by what is here written, to a more exalted conception of, and firmer trust in both the TEACHER and his LESSONS.

"Never man spake like this man," was a judgment forced from those who once heard him: we form the same judgment of him still, notwithstanding the many who have since spoken, and gained an audience among men. "We know that thou art a teacher sent from God," said Nicodemns, "for no man could do these miracles which thou doest, unless God were with him." The Church to-day is still of the same opinion. Every other teacher comes in time to be criticized, and even superseded; every other master has his place filled by a successor, but Christendom still sits with loving obedience at the feet of Him who is meek and lowly, to learn from Him the words of eternal life.

CHRIST,

The Teacher Sent from God.

CHAPTER I.

Christ, the Teacher : His Character.

“And He went forth again by the sea side, and all the multitude resorted unto Him, and He taught them.”

THE character and work of the Lord Jesus Christ may be considered under various aspects, for in his mission to the world there is a manifold wisdom. His chief and special characteristic is as a PRINCE and a SAVIOUR, who came to redeem man from the power of sin and death. He is also set forth in the Gospel as an *example* to his people—the perfect pattern of what their lives should be. But he is a *Teacher* also, who came to teach the people knowledge, to instruct them in the will of God, and by his Spirit to lead them into all the truth. *Teaching* was one of his prominent functions ; he was recognised by all in this character : “Thou art a teacher sent from God.”—John iii., 3. His enemies said of him, “He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.”—Luke xxiii., 5. While the Evangelists, in recording his life, affirm that Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom.”—Matt. iv., 23. As he passed from village to village, and from place to place, his auditors became more numerous. His teaching was so much

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talked about, and took such a firm hold of men's minds that great multitudes crowded around him from every quarter, and as he was wont he taught them. "Early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them." —John viii., 2.

To emphasize this part of his work, he is frequently called *Master*, or *Teacher*, while no term is more frequently applied to his followers than the word *disciples*, or scholars. He himself says, "Come, learn of me." We are warranted, therefore, in considering him as a *teacher* sent from God, as well as an *atonement* for sin, or an *example* to his people, though these are but different parts of the one work given him to do,—“to bring his many sons into glory.”

HIS CHARACTER AS A TEACHER.

“And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.”—Matt. vii., 28, 29.

What a skillful, constant teacher the Master was, using every opportunity and incident to bring truth home to the heart and conscience of his hearers. Though it is only a small part of all he uttered that has been preserved to us in the Gospels, yet what a store of truth is recorded there! How rich the moral precepts he lays down! What a light is thrown across all duty by his *Sermon on the Mount*! What a revelation he gives us of the Father's mercy and love! Christ's teaching, like his example, was perfect, and his lessons had many characteristics peculiar to himself, for no man ever *taught* like this man. He poured forth, from the fountains of his own holy life, and spake

to the people from that Divine fullness which is peculiarly his own, as "The Wisdom of God." He was himself the treasury from which he drew, and he communicated from the storehouse of his own unsearchable riches. Throughout the web of his discourses the double thread of his humanity and divinity is to be traced. He at once spake as a man, and yet no man ever spake as this man. All who heard him noticed that his teaching differed from that of all others; they had never heard anything like it before. But how did he teach? Or in what way did his instructions differ from other teachers, marking him out distinctly as "THE TEACHER sent from God"?

I.—NEGATIVELY.—"*He taught them. . . . not as the Scribes.*"

The Scribes occupied a prominent place in those days, and were the authorized expounders of Scripture, especially the *Law of Moses*. Originally they were a noble race of men, who became a distinct order about the return from the captivity. They furnish an illustration of what has often happened in the Church, when vital godliness is at a low ebb. Every spiritual purpose is then forgotten, while the rite continues for its own sake. The technical remains, long after the real has vanished. So these Scribes dwelt on the letter, and ignored the spirit of the law; they pursued the shadow, and despised the substance; they clung to the ritual, and ignored the real; they worshipped the dead carcass, and trampled on the living soul. Such teaching had neither freshness nor force in it; it moved along the cold narrow lines of precedent; what it lacked in originality and fire, it made up by dogmatic iteration. Not a fringe of their phylacteries must be ruffled; not one unholy finger must be put on their tradi-

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tions, not one whisper must be breathed against their meaningless observances, but they could break all the ten commandments of the law and be blameless. Their teaching had become pedantic, technical, trivial, shallow, heartless. All was stately, formal, cold. They had squeezed out the substance for the sake of the husks. They threw away the kernel to keep the shell, and had made the law of God of none effect through their traditions. In their zeal for tithing mint, anise, cumin, etc., they omitted all the weightier matters. They had learned to strain out gnats, and swallow camels. Full of quibbles and contemptible technicalities, they spent their time in drawing miserable distinctions between swearing by the temple, and swearing by the *gold* of the temple. They were thus, in their spiritual blindness, binding heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laying them on men's shoulders ; but they themselves would not touch them with one of their fingers. What a character is given them by our Lord ! his scathing words reveal what manner of men they were. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat ; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do ; but do not ye after their works : for they say and do not. For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders ; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men ; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi."—Matt. xxiii., 2—7.

These Scribes have their successors in the Church of to-day ; men who are ready to barter all the doctrines of the Gospel for the sake of their traditions, and make compromises with morality itself, to find room for their crochets and quibbles. There are those who are eager to unchurch the best part of Christendom for a fiction ; some who even revile Christ to his face, and preach damnable heresies ; yet because certain hands have been laid upon them in ordination, they claim to be the true successors of the Apostles, and the only lawful ministers of the Apostolic Church ; while they brand as a schismatic a man who has been ordained, like Timothy, by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, though he may have preached the Gospel with power and blessing, to the saving of thousands, with the demonstration of the Spirit ! To such men the lies and heresies of Rome are nothing in comparison to the enormity of preaching without the sanction of an Episcopal bishop. There are men also in the Church, —fit successors to the Scribes,—who think far more of *water* than of the *blood* of Jesus, for they will unchurch those who have been washed in the one, and receive those who have been only dipped in the other ; men more Judaic than the Jews, and more dogmatic even than the Scribes !

But are not some of our own congregations and Church Courts often witnesses to just such men,—as pedantic, technical, and drivelling as ever the Scribes were ? men who think far more of a *pin* than a *pillar* in the temple of God ! who can split a hair, but can never see the cable it hangs on ! fighting for principles, debating questions, lifting up their testimony, and growing angry over matters as unsubstantial as the foam of the sea, and which

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concern the real life of the Church no more than the gossamer which the child chases as it flits past him? A history of many of our congregational quarrels and church troubles would be a good commentary on the spirit of the Scribes. It is humiliating to think of the little trifles that become occasions of offence, and over which many of our congregations break up, and good men grow angry. Any one who has listened to an Appeal case in some of our Church Courts, knows well how precious time is occupied with these petty, contemptible quarrels, while the great questions of the Church's needs are crowded out. When will men lose their pedantry and pettiness in the great overflowing floods of the Church's life and work? When will the real, and practical, and spiritual, displace the superficial and technical?

How different from all this, and how much grander was the teaching of Christ! It breathed the amplitude of the heavens under which it was uttered, and not the stifled air of the synagogue. In passing from his lessons to what we sometimes hear taught in the narrow, bigoted sectarian shibboleths of certain congregations, is like passing from the grandeur of Solomon's Temple, or even the glories of the summer sky, to a beggar's hovel, amid refuse and dirt. His words were germinal, and covered the whole ground of life and duty; they were as seed planted in the soil of the heart, to bud, and blossom, and bear fruit through the ages. His teaching pierced even to the dividing of soul and spirit; it touched the very core, and laid all bare in the light of eternal truth and righteousness. If ever words were spoken on earth by human lips, of world-wide significance, they were the wholesome words of Jesus

Christ, who spake as never man spake. They come as the sunshine around the roots of our deepest convictions and noblest aspirations. As the morning light his words caused all things to be seen in their true proportions and relations, while they have purified the atmosphere of centuries. His teaching subverts the false sentiments and maxims of humanity; the sermon preached from the hill-top by the carpenter from Nazareth, to the group of peasants, fishermen and mechanics, is by universal judgment regarded as the noblest utterances of the earth. It contains no commendation on what the world eagerly seeks—its pleasures, fame, riches, honor or rank; but rather on what it dreads—poverty, sorrow, persecution, humility, for those things that are esteemed among men are an abomination in the sight of God. The world's wisest men have marvelled at a vision so fair as the one held up by our Lord in his Sermon on the Mount; they have been fascinated by the conception it contains of man's moral and spiritual life. The Great Teacher gives utterance to truths that have entered the thoughts of all civilized peoples, and been regarded as living principles, sacred and current forever, as axiomatic truths, common alike to believer and unbeliever. Words so child-like, so simple and artless, spoken by the lips of a poor Nazarene, brought up in the narrowest of all national bigotries, spoken, too, by a man who had never learned letters, and yet the foundation of all morality for all time. Such an intellectual and moral phenomenon can be accounted for only in one way,—**HE WAS THE TEACHER SENT FROM GOD, AND CAME INTO THE WORLD AS THE WISDOM OF GOD.**

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II. AFFIRMATIVELY.—*He taught as one having authority.* “*The Son of Man has power on earth.*” “*His word was with power.*”

The intense personal conviction of eternal truth ever rested upon him. He uttered the verities of God, and therefore spake with authority, and not as the Scribes. The Scribes appealed to their traditions, to the authority of others, while Jesus always appealed to his own. “*I say unto you,*” and spoke as one who had a right to the empire of the heart of every man; and even when he quotes the Bible, he does so as one who stands above it, and who puts his own seal upon it. All the prophets had said, “*Thus saith the Lord,*” but Jesus says, “*I say unto you,*” and as he commands men to repent, to believe, to come to him, he seeks no certificate for his authority but his own. He lays down the foundation of eternal principles with all the self-consciousness of God, and with all the familiar loving intercourse of a brother. Unlike any other prophet who preceded him, following in the wake of no other teacher, he was the substance of his own revelation, the fullness of the Gospel which he preached, the interpretation of his own symbols, the substance of a shadow that had long covered the dispensations of God, the bright and morning star for whose rising faith had long waited through the dim outlines of prophecy. He put himself above the law, above the priesthood, above the whole Jewish economy. “*There is one here greater than the temple.*” How intense was his personality that he might stand alone as “*The teacher sent from God,*” distinctive in all his utterances as the One in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He never hesitates to assert his own su-

premacv, and put himself in opposition to the Scribes and learned doctors whom he denounced as blind leaders of the blind. In his Sermon on the Mount he repeatedly confronts them, and turns their miserable interpretations of the Law of Moses upside down. Read Matt. v., 21, 22; 27, 28; 31, 32; 33, 34, etc. And the Master continues, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." How his words inspire action, and breathe around life the sweet atmosphere of a garden of spices—the aroma of the king's own presence! Here the Law and the Prophets, long remaining as an unblossomed branch of spring buds, now, under the light he sheds upon them, crop out into flower and fruit. His words are so full of hope, full of cheering assurances, full of faith in God, till the distance between our Father and ourselves, is bridged by him who is the *Way*, and who assures our hearts of the Fatherhood of God.

What a revolution of sentiment, as well as a stirring up of opposition these words would cause! What a ferment this teaching would produce among the Scribes and

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Pharisees ! This carpenter, this young untaught Nazarene, who had never learned letters, presuming to put his authority against their's ! He belonged to none of the Schools of Philosophy, had sat at the feet of no teacher, who had no social standing, and no official dignity ; and yet he had the hardihood to come and instruct the doctors of the law in the great city ! The more earnest among them were astonished at his doctrine, it was so unlike anything ever heard before. There was no labored argument, no doubtful disputation, or formulated doctrinal statement. He deals with the simplest and most obvious religious and moral duties, and always spake in the simplest and most artless manner, with such quiet conscious dignity. An earthly teacher, conscious of his partial knowledge and liability to err, wishes to correct his opinions, especially if these have been hastily given ; and more particularly in extempore speech he cannot have the exactness of formal preparation ; he is often taken at a disadvantage, and compelled to revise his opinions. But the Great Teacher never claims any such right, though he often speaks without the possibility of any previous preparation. He never modifies his previously expressed opinions ; he never protects himself by any saving clause ; his former and later judgments are ever in harmony. In all his conflicts and controversies, he is never forced to give up his position, for he was the *Truth*, and had the words of eternal life. The philosophers search after truth, but as they push their speculations with fervent enquiry, they often fall into error ; hence the ebb and flow of philosophic opinion. But Christ Jesus makes a revelation of eternal truth, his declarations are not only clear but final, and he speaks with the consci-

ous authority of one who reveals the Father, and who, as the *Ancient of Days*, knew all that the Father Himself doeth. "Heaven and earth may pass away, but my words shall never pass away." This carpenter's son taught them with authority, and with what self-satisfaction he speaks of "*These sayings of mine*"! He even forecasts a day when he would sit on a throne of universal judgment, and decide the solemn allotments of all nations gathered before him.

III. HIS SEEMING EGOTISM.—"*These sayings of mine.*" "*I that speak unto thee am He.*"

With some men, their egotism is a great blemish, but with Christ it is the very blossom and beauty of his teaching. We rejoice in the egotism of the Apostle Paul, who was full of the spirit of his Master, and witnessed unto the truth. "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me,*" &c. . . . "*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,*" &c. . . . "*Do I now persuade men, or do I seek to please men, for if I yet pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ,*" &c., &c. You could gather out the personal pronouns from his writings by the score, yet we love to see them all there. But the egotism of Christ is something very different from this. The Great Teacher made *himself* the centre of all he said. From him went out the healing virtue upon the touch of faith, which was to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people. He was the Gospel which he preached. He proclaimed himself in his life and death, the hope of the world, and the only Saviour from its sins,—"*The Lamb of God,*" upon whom the

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perishing were to look and be saved. With what conscious power and grace he uses the word *I*!—blessed *ego*, the unfailing source of this world's healing streams.

Never before had any teacher put forth any such claim to supremacy over the conscience and life, and demanded to occupy such a central position: "I am the bread of life, let the hungry eat and live: I am the living water, let the thirsty come and drink freely: I am the light of the world, before the brightness of whose rising the darkness shall soon be found no more at all: I am the good shepherd, I give eternal life to my sheep, no one can pluck them out of my hands: I am the way, the truth, the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me: I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to me: I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: before Abraham was I am: all power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." It was asked of him, "By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?" And he answers by the works he did and the words he spoke. He shows them *the great power of God*. Is it a storm on the sea? He needs only say, "Peace, be still!" and suddenly there is a calm. Does the grave hold the remains of the beloved brother? He cries, "Lazarus, come forth!" "Hold thy peace, and come out of him!" and the evil spirit is cast out. "I will, be thou clean!" and the most virulent disease is removed. "Fill the water-pots," and his mother says to the servants, "Do whatever he commands you!" "The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins,—thy sins be forgiven thee!" "The Son of Man shall appear in his glory, with

all his holy angels with him, and then all that are in their graves shall hear his voice," &c.

This is but a sample of his uniform way of preaching and making himself the substance of all he proclaimed. He is not only true, but *the Truth*; not only light, but *the Light*. He knows all the burdens that men bear, and must bear till the end of time, and declares that he is both able and willing to grant relief. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Whatever man's immortal spirit needs, he claims to supply, for in him all fullness dwells. What an attitude of supremacy towards all things he asserted and assumed, even claiming a oneness with God,—“I and my Father are one.” “Ye are from beneath, I am from above,”—undauntedly facing all the light of philosophy, and the combined wisdom of ages, and with boldness asserting that a greater than Solomon was there; making his own person essential to every man's salvation: “Without me ye can do nothing.” Laying his hand with heavenly majesty upon the dearest and tenderest affections of life, and claiming supremacy even there,—“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” How imperial his sovereignty, while his utterances are the conscious verities of God, and decide the destinies of the ages. Conscious of his royalty, he lays his hand on the glories of the Godhead, and claims them as his own. And as the end drew near, he taught with a growing intensity, that in him alone were the words of eternal life, the life and the light of men. “Abide in me; without me ye can do nothing; I am the vine, ye are the branches; as the

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branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." Such egotism would be insufferable in man, but it is sublime in the God-man, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. As a devout disciple once said, as he meditated upon some of his great and precious promises: "It becomes him well to praise himself." No wonder that when the multitudes heard these sayings of his, they were astonished at his doctrine, and said one to another, as in little groups they journeyed homeward, "He does not teach like the Scribes; this man teaches with authority." We search in vain for a parallel among the philosophers, poets, lawgivers, and wise men of the world. The Nazarene who had never learned letters, stands alone in his own class, with none to take rank with him, and by his *teaching*, as by everything else, was declared to be the Son of God with power. He was at once the altar, the sacrifice, the priest, the propitiation and the propitiated, all in one—the *Man* CHRIST JESUS, who is GOD over all, blessed forever.

CHAPTER II.

The Substance of His Teaching.

"Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ." "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

They marvelled at his doctrines, for they were full of the deep things of God. Some speak as if it would have added both to the interest and value of the Bible, had it been a hand-book of *Science* as well as of *Faith*; and if the Great Teacher had been commissioned by God to discourse on *the Laws of Nature*, as well as unfold the principles of the *Moral Law*, it would have been of unspeak-

able moment, and added an additional charm to all his sayings. All this arises from a mistaken view of man's needs, and of the nature of the work given him to do. The burden of his message was not *secular*, but *spiritual* knowledge. He came not as a divider of inheritances, but to break the bread of life to hungry souls ; not to teach Science, but to open up the way to the Father. He looked not at the *temporal*, but always at the *eternal* side of things, urging the people not to occupy their whole time with the questions, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, wherewithal shall we be clothed?" but to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Not so much the *seen* as the *unseen* realities chiefly occupy him, and form the burden of his lessons. Not earthly but heavenly things form the substance of his weighty utterances. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you—the true bread that came down from heaven ; for what shall it profit a man though he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul."

He who was the Wisdom of God could have anticipated all the discoveries of modern science. As One who knew all that the Father himself doeth, he could have antedated all the labors of a Copernicus, a Columbus, a Faraday, a Newton, and all the wise men of the ages who have since enriched the world by their labors. If such had been his purpose he could have disclosed all the secrets of this world. He who created the worlds knew all their hidden treasures, and could have explained their latent forces—the strata of Geology, the laws and principles of Astronomy, or the mechanism of the Universe. He

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could have lectured as Tyndall cannot on the laws of light and electricity, for they were all his own works, made to fulfil his pleasure. The Ancient of Days could have unfolded the varied and wonderful story of human history and the transformations through which Society has passed from the beginning, bringing the hidden things of darkness to light, had this formed a part of his mission. He who alone knows what is in man could have expounded the true principles of mental philosophy, and saved much verbal disputation; or he might have left text-books on the various sciences, and foreshadowed the whole range of future discovery. But from all this he turns away, leaving it to man's own research and discovery, with which he was to enrich his own life, through patient labour. And it was necessary, in the nature of things, that man should be thus left to construct a pathway for himself into the secrets of nature, in order that his fragmentary knowledge might be built up into science. While the Great Teacher in his lessons dwells on the things of God and Eternity, unfolding the scheme of redeeming grace, drawing the converging lines of Revelation to himself as their bright focus,—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He came to reveal the Father, and restore the fact of God's Fatherhood to man, and give it a central place of power over man's life. He came to be a light in this world's great darkness, the life and the light of men. Some modern teachers would fain substitute *aesthetics* for religion, *literature* and *science* for doctrine, *culture* for righteousness and truth; but in this they subvert the right ways of the Lord, who came into the world to save sinners, and impart the culture of holiness of heart. "To

this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one who is of the truth heareth my voice."—John xviii. 37.

Hence the burden of his message was *sin* and *grace*: sin reigning unto death, and grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life: Man's ruin, and God's method of recovery: the sinner and the Saviour having personal dealings with each other. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." Occasionally he gathers all the gracious promises into one grand formula, expressive of the essence of the Gospel, viz; "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." But whenever he spake, words of wisdom dropped from his lips. such as the philosophers of earth never uttered. Words so genuinely true, so far-reaching, so searching and revealing, had never been uttered by mere human lips. There is nothing in all the literature of the earth to compare with the Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of God," &c. . . . "Ye are the salt of the earth." . . . "Ye are the light of the world." . . . "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is heaven." . . . "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." . . . "No man can serve two masters." . . . "Ye shall know them by their fruits," &c., &c.,—words as germinal and fresh as when first spoken. Or take his farewell discourse, and what a solemn and tender farewell it is! "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told

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you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also."—John xiv., 1—3. This adieu, as Divine as it is tender,—this farewell gleam of the Sun of Righteousness, tearfully smiling ere he "plunged into the dark thunder-clouds waiting to receive him,—these parting counsels of a Saviour beneath the cross,—how is it possible to translate into our weak words, or transfer to our coarse canvas? From the opening utterance, "Let not your heart be troubled," down to that unprecedented prayer in which the Great High Priest allowed disciples once to overhear such intercession as he still offers within the veil, the whole is fitter to be pondered in the still seclusion of a communion eve, or read over in the house of mourning, or whispered in the ear of the pilgrim on the banks of Jordan, than made the subject of our hard analytic handling."—HAM. III., p. 419. These words, spoken in the very holy of holies of our Lord's life, the love hours of Christ which he spent with his disciples ere he suffered, have brought comfort to millions of souls. Yet how easily and naturally they come from him, without effort or previous meditation, without studying in the schools of human thought. We are not surprised at the question being asked, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, never having studied letters"? He stands up in his little boat at the water's edge, or among the sorrowing company at the grave, or in loving converse with his chosen disciples, or in earnest conversation with the woman at the well, and on every occasion he pours forth words of Divine wisdom, and of world-wide significance. His sayings have such profound meaning as

all the combined wisdom of human philosophy never could produce, as he brings life and immortality to light through the Gospel. "Once Jesus opens his lips, the page is illumined with colours of fairest poetry, enlivened with most exquisite apologue, radiant with keenest truth; the lilies of the field beam out in beauty eternally fresh; the company of virgins, wise and foolish, advance with their lamps; or Dives and Lazarus link heaven, earth, and hell together in their profoundest relations, in one or two magnificent strokes of dramatic imagery,—and truths which, after thousands of years, are the guiding stars of spiritual civilization, break upon the intellectual vision."—BAYNE, p. 77. But who can paint the rainbow, who can beautify the blossoms of June, or analyze its breath? So the words and teaching of Christ are so full, so rich with a Divine charm, that the Holy Spirit alone can open the treasures and pour their grace into our hearts.

The people were expecting an earthly king, who would break the Roman yoke off their necks, a king coming in all the military pomp of victory, clothed in earthly splendor, and restoring Israel to her temporal greatness and glory. They were fondly dreaming of the proud positions which they expected to occupy in this kingdom, where their ambition would find ample scope, as they sat on the right hand and on the left of regal honour. But the king's manifesto takes them all by surprise, when he gives them this new revelation of beatitudes. "Blessed are the pure in heart": "Blessed are the merciful": "Blessed are the meek": "Blessed are the poor in spirit": "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake," &c. — How different the kind of blessedness from what

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they were expecting, while the kingdom he came to set up was a kingdom of peace and righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and not of worldly display. The world says, Blessed is that rich man who can spend as much money as he pleases ; blessed is the man whose worldly plans all succeed ; blessed is the man of influence who can help himself ; blessed are they who have ample leisure ; blessed are the learned, the great, the titled nobility ; blessed is the king whose sceptre sways millions of his fellows. But how different are Christ's ideas of blessedness from the world's ! The Teacher from God reverses the common judgment, and says, Blessed are the poor, the hungry, the meek, the mourners, the persecuted ; because he has a different stand-point of vision, and judges of life in a different way. He is in the minority, the world outvotes him, but his judgment is according to truth. Man's honour and blessedness do not consist in what is outward and adventitious, not in the gratification of pride, or the satisfying of worldly ambition. Our wealth and honour consist not in what we get or have, but in what we *become* and *are* in God's sight, and through his reign of grace in our hearts. Instead of gratifying their expectations, and ministering to their vanity, he points to the true riches that perish not with the using, and speaks of another king, another kingdom, and another kind of royalty than what their foolish dreams embraced,—the royalty of meekness, the riches of poverty, the beatitude of sorrow and persecution for righteousness' sake.

CHAPTER III.

Christ's Methods as a Teacher.

"Never Man spake like this Man."—John vii., 46.

All who heard him knew that he differed from every other teacher; that both his lessons and ways of presenting them were peculiarly his own. Whether his teaching was good or bad, right or wrong, his auditors may not always have been prepared to say, but of one thing they were certain, it was at least different. "Never man spake like this man." Like other auditors, his hearers passed criticisms on him and his way of teaching. They were unanimous in their belief that it was not like the method of the Scribes, and one point of difference was the conscious authority with which he enforced his doctrines: it caused astonishment.

1. *He is not systematic in his teaching. He does not arrange and classify his truths*, for he did not teach as the systematic theologian, setting forth his doctrines in logical order, and showing the relation of one truth to another, for the Bible is not a text-book of systematic theology. Some have imagined that the perfections of God would lead him to reveal his truths in scientific order, and the obvious lack of this in the Bible has been made an evidence against its Divine origin. But surely God might do in *Grace*, what he actually has done in *Nature*,—scatter his truths broadcast throughout its pages with no reference to systematic order, as he has scattered the flowers of the field all the hill-sides over, and all the valleys through, in rich profusion, so that in the same meadow or moor, or mossy bank, flowers and grasses of all kinds may be seen side by side in sweet forgetfulness of their several class

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distinctions. Or let the untaught eye examine the stars, and no system appears, all seems brilliant confusion; so with the rocks and strata of the earth, thrown together in seeming disorder. Or take any section of a dell, or forest, or field, and you have merely the impression of a richness and beauty carpeting the whole; you may revel amid the blushing beauty of summer, but systems or families of plants or trees never occur to your mind. But let the trained eye of Science examine, and it will at once gather order and system out of this seeming confusion.

So our Saviour, in his teaching by his Sermon on the Mount, and through all those sayings of his, scattered his truths and doctrines, his precepts and promises broad-cast, as he scattered the flowers that grow in such rich profusion at our feet. But as in the works of Nature, so in the Bible, all is constructed to elicit enquiry and call forth man's earnest study. The teaching of Christ makes a demand on our reflection, on our honesty of heart in interpretation, and in order to reach the higher lessons and feed on the richer food of the word we must compare spiritual things with spiritual, and fit truth to its corresponding truth, as the anatomist fits bone to bone to build up man's frame. There is a beautiful harmony and system of doctrine in the Bible, and in the teaching of Christ, as there is system and order in nature, though in neither case does that appear on the surface, and is the reward of devout study. What the Great Teacher says at any one time has a necessary relation and connection with all he had said before, and is the complement of it. There is an order and growth in which truth unfolds itself as the oak unfolds from the acorn, and all lovers of the truth should

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make it their earnest study to ascertain what that order is. Hence the value of *Catechisms* and *Confessions of Faith* as aids. Though Christ always spoke as the occasion required, and in artless, natural language, with no reference to systematic order or logical fullness, yet his words must be the basis of all true *systems* of religious thinking. All our theology must rest on his teaching, even as his works contain all the principles and laws with which the men of science can possibly deal; and as their function is solely as *interpreters* of Nature, so the systematic theologian can only be an interpreter of the word of God. In one sense Christ is profoundly systematic, but as it has been said, "His system is the natural meandering of the river, not the artificial course of the canal. To the student of Nature there is more system in a cedar of Lebanon than in the temple of Solomon." For the one is made up of dead artificial parts, while the other has the unity of a living organism. His words have their unity in the controlling purpose that runs through them, the life-blood of one grand idea which reveals itself to the devout student—the idea of God in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

2. *His teachings were always timely, and with a holy purpose behind his words.* "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." The Master's words were always fitly spoken, for his lessons were born of the occasion, and reflected the surrounding wants and circumstances of his auditors, as the crystal pools reflect the overhanging heavens, and the fringes of grass that grow by their margin. To the woman who came to draw water at the well, he speaks of the living water that would satisfy the thirst of the soul. To those who follow him to be

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 He comforts the sorrowing, humbles the proud, confirms
 the feeble, rebukes the Pharisee, and leads the penitent by
 the hand, never breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching
 the smoking flax. As he taught the people, the Master
 always had some great end in view,—an end of practical,
 blessed purpose. He never preached for the sake of his
 Sermon,—its beauty or grace of diction. He never at-
 tempts to polish a sentence in order that his hearers might
 admire the rhetoric. He never elaborated a "*Stone*
Miracle" for lecturing purposes through the country, nor
 got up some eloquent discourse to catch the popular ear
 and be called to one of the leading churches. His lan-
 guage is the language of the common people; its familiar,
 homely, unstudied utterances go direct to the heart, as an
 arrow strikes its mark; and you look in vain for ornate,
 rhetorical sentences, brilliant flights of oratory, or learned
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 kind, earnest, loving, familiar friend, bent on pressing sav-
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 He spake to the universal heart of man; hence the com-
 mon people heard him gladly. His words had a human-
 ness that inspired hope and courage, and brought them
 home to men's business and bosoms.

There is a deep lesson here for Ministers of the Gos-

pel, for one of the great practical heresies of the day is preaching for the sake of the sermon, and not, like Jesus, being a witness unto the truth, and preaching for the sake of the souls of the men and women who wait on our ministry; getting up little pieces of Mosaic curiosities of workmanship for the admiration of our auditors. And when all our glittering sayings have been carefully culled, and brought together like sham jewelry, it makes a big show, and some foolish people are deceived into purchasing it. But we must never regard our sermons as works of art, things to be admired for their own sake; a sermon is a sword to be prized for the execution it does on behalf of truth and righteousness. Many preachers remind us of lads who take the rifle into their hands for the first time with no specific purpose; they blaze away without any aim and hit the nothing they intended. But like the Master, every preacher of the Word must seek to gain gracious power over men's lives, that by the Spirit's blessing the image of Christ may be inwrought, and our hearers transformed to the world by the renewing of their minds, and conformed to his own perfect pattern.

3. *His illustrations were drawn from Nature, and the obvious facts and experiences of life.* "Consider the lilies of the field." "He spake many things to them in parables." We have our favourite authors, who through their writings have thrown a charm over many a scene. In the light of their genius everything they touch bears an interest not its own. As the sunbeam touching the storm-cloud transforms its cold watery vapour into the very picture of heaven, and paints upon its dark bosom the colours of the rainbow, so the genius of a Burns, a

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Shakspeare, or a Scott, has glorified many a common scene. Hugh Miller could write about a granite boulder in such a way as makes all his readers long to see that very stone ; and thus the little incidents on which they touch live in the memory of a whole nation. Many a river or mountain rill, the hill-top or summer dell, a grassy bank or rocky cave, the forest glade or autumn woods, have all a halo thrown around them.

So Jesus also delighted in nature, and has linked many a Divine lesson to some common scene or incident, till the earth is lifted up into the beauty of heaven, and has its hard, every-day features glorified in the light of the Sun of Righteousness. Yet he does not dwell on the scenes of nature, its mountains and rivers, and fields and flowers, its starry lamps or the fleecy fullness of the summer cloud, as the mere poet describes them. While he admires nature and sees in its resplendent glories his own handiwork, yet he always speaks as one whose eyes had been accustomed to look on far fairer scenes, and in all its wide magnificence he beheld but the dim reflections of a glory he had with the Father before the world was ; still all that bulks largest in the mind of the poet, was to him the foreshadowings of a grandeur that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. This world, in its marvellous compass of beauty, was but one ray of that eternal weight of glory. Jesus saw his Father's glory in the olive-slopes that lay brightening to the sun, and in the waving cedar-forests of Lebanon. He recognised his Father's hand in the lilies and grass of the field. The air, richly laden with the perfume of the pomegranate blossom, was the myrrh from his Father's garments ; the starry brilliancy of the oriental sky

was a ray from his throne. As he walked by the way-side, every singing bird was a token of his Father's care ; the soft summer winds was the whisper of his voice. All the world was his oratory, a temple consecrated to God's glory. Philosophers have their favourite places of resort ; scientists have their schools and halls of learning ; an ascetic piety has consecrated certain places and buildings to the worship of God ; but Jesus went about doing good, and his presence made every place holy ground. Whether on hill or in valley, in wilderness or garden, in the temple or by the sea-shore, whether in the humble village or crowded city, or standing in the boat by the water's edge, anywhere, in short, through the wide world, is equally near his Father, and he would consecrate all to the Father's glory. With him the God of *Grace* was also the God of *Nature*, and he saw and honoured his Father in his *works*, as he honoured him in his *word*. The one Bible was to him written in two volumes,—the volume of *Nature* and the volume of *Revelation*. It was God's world, and he used it as a book of symbols to read the word by ; hence he preached largely by parables. He drew familiar pictures from the one, to unfold the riches of the other. His discourses are not abstract reasonings, but living pictures, not lengthened logical dissertations, but short, apt, familiar illustrations from the every-day life and common experiences of the world. Lift up your eyes and see the fields white with the harvest ; and as he sat one day and gazed down the green valley leading to Jerusalem, he saw a lovely picture painted on the evening clouds, and it was mirrored in his teaching as it was in the crystal waters of Galilee. "When it is evening ye say fair weather, for the

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sky is red, and in the morning, foul weather for the sky is red and lowering." It was early Spring ; a man is hard by sowing his seed, and Jesus draws from the incident an important lesson. "The kingdom of God is as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."—Mark, iv., 26–29. His teaching was coloured by surrounding nature, and he drew his lessons from her ample store, till as in a June day, the earth and air, the hills and trees, the birds, and the flowers of the field are bathed in the glory of his presence, and honoured as illustrations in his teaching. The kingdom of heaven is like *leaven* : The kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea : The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field : The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed : or, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man seeking goodly pearls, &c., &c. He laid all nature under tribute. The way men hear the word is illustrated by the parable of the sower ; the work of the Spirit by the wind blowing where it listeth. We have the parable of the woman sweeping the house : the man seeking the lost sheep : the prodigal son : the two debtors : the sheep and the goats : the ten virgins : the talents : the labourers in the field : the Pharisee and Publican : the marriage feast : the good shepherd : the rich man and Lazarus : the good Samaritan, with many another lesson taught in the same matchless way. "All these things

spake Jesus in parables, and without a parable he spake nothing to them : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." "A method of instruction so rare, so stimulating, so full of interest,—a method which, in its unapproachable beauty and finish, stands unrivalled in the annals of human speech,—would doubtless tend to increase beyond measure the crowds that thronged to listen."—FARRAR'S LIFE OF CHRIST, p. 152.

4. *His teaching was characterized by a union of simplicity of speech, and profound spiritual significance.* "My speech shall distil as the dew." "The common people heard him gladly." How simple and easily understood by all who desired to know the truth ; he never spake but the most unlettered knew the import of his words, up to the full measure that he desired them to be known, for his sayings were obvious alike to the peasant and the philosopher. He spoke to the feeblest understanding, and yet his words when simplest, were full of the deep things of God, and contained the inexhaustible riches of his grace. His hearers soon perceived that his words were fuller than they imagined, and filled out with a richer meaning with the deepening experiences of the life. Like a well of crystal water, they could gaze into them without seeing the bottom ; another and another meaning came out of them according as the heart was prepared to read it. Like the five loaves seemingly not sufficient to feed a few, yet found ample to satisfy the whole multitude ; so his simplest words have in them the fullness of the Godhead, while each truth he uttered has its echo in eternity, and eternity alone will

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reveal their significance. Jesus never spoke in the learned phrases of the schools ; he never quotes from Plato, or Aristotle, or Virgil, or any of the teachers of philosophy ; his wisdom and his words are all his own. Nor did the Great Teacher ever do what some ministers complain of being compelled to do, viz. : condescend to the intellectual level of their hearers, greatly exercised because they have no opportunity for displaying their learning, their hearers being illiterate. Jesus stood among his hearers, and used homely comparisons, and familiar illustrations drawn from the life and manners of the common people who heard him gladly. The message he bore was designed for all classes, hence he spoke to the universal heart, and through this channel of common, familiar, everyday speech, there flowed the riches of Divine grace into the hearts of the people. "Yet how exquisitely and freshly simple is the actual language of Christ compared with all other teaching that has ever gained the ear of the world ! There is no science in it, no art, no pomp of demonstration, no carefulness of toil, no trick of rhetoricians, no wisdom of the schools. Straight as an arrow to the mark, his precepts pierce to the very depths of the soul and spirit. All is short, clear, precise, full of holiness, full of the common images of daily life. There is scarcely a scene or object familiar to the Galilee of that day, which Jesus did not use as a moral illustration of some glorious promise or moral law. He spake of green fields and springing flowers, and the budding of vernal trees ; of the red and lowering sky ; of sunrise and sunset ; of wind and rain ; of night and storm ; of clouds and lightning ; of stream and river ; of stars and lamps ; of honey and salt ; of quivering bulrushes and burning weeds ; of

rent garments and bursting wineskins ; of eggs and serpents ; of pearls and pieces of money ; of nets and fish. Wine and wheat ; corn and oil ; stewards and gardeners ; labourers and employers ; kings and shepherds ; travellers and fathers of families ; courtiers in soft clothing, and brides in nuptial robes,—all these are found in his discourses. He knew all life, and had gazed on it with a kindly, as well as a kingly glance. He could sympathise with its joys, no less than he could heal its sorrows : and the eyes that were so often suffused with tears as they saw the sufferings of earth's mourners beside the bed of death, had shone also with a kindlier glow as they watched the games of earth's happy little ones in the green fields and busy streets.”—FARRAR'S LIFE OF CHRIST, p. 126.

Alas ! how much preaching done in his name, and ostensibly on his behalf, has perverted the simplicity and purity of his words ; and instead of opening up, has often sealed the fountain of living water. What a profound, practical lesson we have here for ministers of the Gospel, whose work it is to open up the Scriptures, and make disclosures of the hidden treasures of his grace. Ministers must learn to be more practical, more simple, more natural, and come nearer to the hearts of the people, and speak so that every one may hear in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. As Jesus was everywhere and always a witness unto the truth, so must ministers learn to preach him, and to lift up the Son of Man as the only object of faith, so that no man may be seen but Jesus only.

5. *He carried the morality of an action from the outward act, to the hidden motive or secret purpose that prompted it.* “Son, give me thine heart.” “Thou desirest

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truth in the inward parts." Man looks on the outward appearance ; it is all he can possibly judge by ; but God looks on the heart, and judges of us by its moral condition. Human law takes notice only of what is actually committed, and punishes the criminal who has carried his secret purpose into an actual crime. But the algebraic symbols of life are often misinterpreted, and the innocent are punished while the guilty escape. There is much hypocrisy in the world, a washing of the outside of the cup, and leaving the inside full of abominations. Many make a plausible appearance, whose hearts are as a cage of unclean birds. But our Lord's judgments are according to truth, and are founded on what men actually *are*, and not on what they are *reported to be*. He knows what is in man, and when men come asking questions, and making a fair show in the flesh, we find him tearing off the mask, exposing the hypocrisy, and replying not to the question asked, but to the motive that lay behind the question, while he demands truth in the inward parts. For example, take *the law of murder*, as explained by Christ. What is murder according to his teaching ? Not the actual taking of life : it is not the shot fired, the poison given, the stroke of the club, or the thrust of the knife. But murder consists in the deadly hate and murderous purpose lurking in a man's heart, though the actual crime, the actual taking of life, be not accomplished. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill ; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment : But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."—Matt. v. 21, 22. So also with the *law of adul-*

tery. Many break the Seventh Commandment who never commit the actual deed. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."—v. 28. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies," &c.: these are the things that defile the man, and not eating with unwashed hands. According to Christ, the heart is the seat of all moral feeling and action, and by its moral condition are men judged. We need not wonder that the Master claims the heart for himself: "Give me thine heart." Keep it with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life; and when this impure fountain has been cleansed, the whole life will thereby be changed. The external action is merely a sign; both the evil and the good flow from the heart. He sees the sin of adultery in a glance, and the purity he requires is that of the soul. When Christ comes and dwells in our heart by faith, and sheds abroad the love of God, the heart then becomes the home of those graces and fruits of the Spirit that the believer brings forth,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. All our works of faith done for the Master; our loving deeds, all that is brightest and best in man's life and destiny, flows from the same deep fountain—a cleansed heart:

"Oh for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free;
A heart that always feels Thy blood,
So freely shed for me."

"Thus radical is the Great Teacher's method: his school the world's true and everlasting seminary. Precepts he transfigures into principles, statutes into charac-

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ter, rules into life. Himself the true Lawgiver on the true Sinai, he transcribes the Ten Commandments from tablets of stone, writing them on tablets of heart. And so he rears an internal Sinai, whose quakings shall shake the very foundations of the soul, startling the dullest conscience, and preluding the thunder peals of the Judgment Day."

6. *Notice also the wise, gracious liberty he allows his disciples.*—"The liberty of the sons of God." He grants them the liberty of the sons of God, and would not have them to be in bondage to any man. Sometimes good men mistake their own fancies and whims for a Divine commandment ; their own wishes for the Master's enactment. They would load the Church with Rules and Regulations, and make tests of membership, binding and grievous, where Christ has left the conscience free. He did not dwell on *petty details*, but on *great dominant principles* to rule the heart and life ; he does not even insist so much on what we are *to do*, as on what we are *to be*. Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect ; "Be ye holy for I am holy." He lays the law of God very tenderly, but very solemnly upon the conscience, and insists on a whole-hearted, loyal service ; on loving the Lord with all our heart, and strength, and mind, and when the heart has been given to God and cleansed from secret faults, the daily conduct will not systematically deny him. The Scribes and Pharisees made religious life a routine, a ceremony, full of technical rites and observances, full of details, of rules and rubrics, which the Master swept all away, that he might insist on what they had forgotten—righteousness, truth, judgment, mercy ! His sayings embody the great

principles of moral action, but he leaves the application to specific cases to the enlightened conscience that is in earnest regarding duty. The pharisaic details or jesuitical regulations in which some delight, are not the most natural or healthy guide; the devout loving heart is a law to itself. Specific rules of conduct are given only in few instances; he is more anxious to plant the right spirit and motive in the heart, out of which all morality springs. What a contrast between his teaching and theirs! He does not discuss the externals and indicate in what kind of a building we are to meet and worship; he says nothing about either the colour or shape of the garments of his priests who are to serve at the altar. He says nothing on the frequency with which the Lord's Supper should be observed; how much bread to use, or the quantity of water necessary to make baptism valid. He does not tell his disciples how often they must come to church; how often they must pray; he only cautions against making long prayers, (and it would have been well if we had not forgotten the caution). No scale is given to measure Christian benevolence: he does not reckon our liberality by the number of dollars given, but by the ability to give. He leaves all this to a loyal, loving heart which he seeks to fill with his love and grace, and stimulates us by the thought of his own bounty. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Some people imagine that if they could only know these little regulations, they would then be able to solve the whole problem of the Christian life by observing them; forgetting that "the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." On the dry, technical, mechanical side of

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petty regulation, all is left free and open as the summer
 sunshine, to be regulated by a life hid with Christ in God.
 All our acts of worship must be determined by a tender
 conscience and a loving heart that rejoices in the truth,
 and feels the constraining power of Christ's love ; and
 men must not impose their restrictions where the Lord has
 left no law. There are many subjects on which we think
 the Master should have spoken ; at least things on which
 we wish he had spoken. As mysteries crowd in upon us,
 much information seems to be withheld that we suppose
 would have been very instructive and helpful. The Mas-
 ter has often kept silent when we long to hear his voice.
 He has concealed with a sacred veil many things we long
 to gaze upon. He has caused us to walk in darkness with
 respect to much which idle curiosity and foolish wonder
 eagerly desire to know. But in all this he has done well ;
 his silence teaches us, rebukes our presumption, exercises
 our faith, and restrains an idle curiosity. In what he has
 concealed from us as well as in what he has taught, he has
 shown alike his wisdom and his love.

7. *His patience in teaching.* "The Lord direct your
 hearts into the love of God and the patience of Jesus Christ."
 What patience he exercised in his teaching, and how long
 he endured the contradiction of sinners, when impulsive,
 sinful men would have called down fire from heaven to
 consume those who wish stood them. Christ neither makes
 light of sin, nor does he show vindictiveness to the sinner,
 or become discouraged. It is more in sorrow than in an-
 ger he is compelled to ask, "Are ye yet without un-
 derstanding? How is it that ye do not understand? O,
 how of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

But he does not give up his work in disgust, he can begin his labour over again, and preach his sermons a second time with all long-suffering. See how he waited with, and talked to the two disciples as they went out from the city to Emmaus. We grudge our time, we grudge our talents, and often think that both are thrown away, but Jesus could wait long and spend the greater part of his first resurrection day talking with two obscure men, and gained his purpose when he had made their hearts burn within them. How earnestly he laboured for one soul, and spake some of his sweetest words when none heard him but some obscure, despised creature! One soul was worthy of his care and effort, and may well be worthy of ours, for from the salvation of one soul may evolve issues that are world-wide, and themes of praise for the ages to come. Convert one soul and it may lead to the conversion of a nation. What results have followed the labours of the Apostles hence our Lord never grudged the time spent in teaching them during those three wonderful, busy years of his earthly ministry. Their training was the germ from which the Church was to spring, the very pivot on which her future fortunes were to turn, hence the anxiety he showed in teaching them. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he set forth judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law."

8. *Christ's tender compassion and tact are manifested throughout all his dealings.* "The meekness and gentleness of Jesus Christ." How readily he introduced himself to speak of the grand truths of his Kingdom, e. g. : As the two disciples talked together of all that had happened, Jesus himself drew near and went with them and took up

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their conversation in such an easy natural way. "What
 manner of conversation is this that ye have," &c. And for
 the rest of the journey the three were deeply absorbed
 in what seemed to concern all alike. We have another in-
 stance in his conversation with the woman at the well ;
 with what tact he introduced the subject of the living wa-
 ter ; and with what tenderness he comforts Martha and
 Mary concerning their brother. When he saw the mul-
 titudes he was moved with compassion toward them, sur-
 rounded as they were with so many dangers, they had so
 many hidden, secret woes ; so many concealed burdens ;
 it sent a thrill through him, and he brooded over their
 trouble as a mother over her sick child. The afflicted,
 the broken hearted, the despairing, drew near to him
 for sympathy ; and how his heart melted within him over
 the ignorant, and those who were out of the way, while
 to his disciples he revealed his truth as they were able to
 bear it. The rays of the Sun of Righteousness, as they
 shone forth from him, do not hurt the most delicate eye
 on which they fall, but rather in that clear light the eye
 learns to see the King in his beauty. To let out the full
 blaze of light that was in him would scorch the tender
 plants that grow in his garden. He will disclose himself
 in the full tide of his glorious revelation, to those who are
 prepared to look upon his face ; but to those who can on-
 ly see men as trees walking, he comes as the twilight, with
 the gentle radiance of the morning. He even shines
 through the clouds with which it is his glory to conceal a
 thing, and he will make his doctrine drop as the rain, and
 his speech distil as the dew. He will not break the bruised
 reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till he has brought

judgment unto victory. He has to rebuke his disciples who want him to call down fire from heaven to destroy the people—"Ye know not what spirit ye are of; I did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Her accusers wanted the woman stoned whom they brought into his presence, but his tender dealings inspired her with hope. "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." What a blending of meekness and majesty in that look, what power and pathos in his words to melt and subdue his audience. In his presence their icy indifference melted away like snow under a June sun, while he throws around them a moral magnetism which they cannot resist. He stooped to the lowly to lift them up; grace was poured into his lips, and what gracious words proceeded out of them. How gentle, and tender, and loving, as he ministered to the sons and daughters of sorrow. As the little children lay in his arms, and looked up into his countenance, it was as full of tender love as a mother's. As he fondled them he was engaged in congenial work, for was it not written of him, "He will gather the lambs in his bosom." He even weeps with those who weep, he talks and reasons with Martha, but he gives Mary his tears. "When he saw Mary weeping, and the Jews who were with her weeping," it was too much for him, and after the manner of man, he broke down and wept also. Even today he still pleads, "Come, learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls." "These two hands, one strong with stern holiness, the other gentle with sympathy, untwist the cords that bind the soul, and set it free to be itself."

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nity, standing on the majesty of office, and overawing the people; a great man to be looked at only from a distance. No, the multitudes crowded him and pressed upon him, eager for a word or a look. Even the little children felt quite at home as they lay in his arms! His greatness was the greatness of manhood, the greatness of goodness, the dignity of character, the power of a pure and holy life. What an example he furnishes to all teachers and preachers of the word, and what a rebuke to all insolence of office, of artificial assumed dignity, to all narrowness, pride, and vulgar show. *The wisdom from above is first gentle, easy to be entreated.*

CHAPTER IV.

The Philosophy of His Method.

"The Wisdom of God." "He needed not that any should teach Him."

There is no rhetorical order, or progressive development in his method; it has not the elaborated arguments of the lecture-room; his sayings are rather as pearls strung together into the chain of his Divine wisdom. Their unity is seen in their purpose, one life-blood pulses through it. But if there is no formal logic in his method or systematic arrangement and sequence of thought, we find something more convincing than the artificial rules of logic; he uses the logic of conviction, the proof of intuition, and in a sentence cuts up all objection by the roots.

1. We have an instance in the way he strikes at the root of pride and ambition, and teaches a lesson of humility. The disciples have come troubling him with the question, "Who of us is to be the greatest in the Kingdom?"

The Master, like other teachers, might have used an elaborate argument to show the folly and sin of pride, and with beautiful word painting he might have set forth the adornments with which humility enriches the character, but he adopts another method much more effective. He takes a towel and basin of water and washes the feet of all the disciples, and after he has got through his task he asks them "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Lord and Master, and ye say well, for so I am; if I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought to wash one another's feet." The disciples might have forgotten the elaborate argument as they did forget many of his other precious words, but they never forgot this lesson; the pictorial representation of humility lived in the memory and heart throughout life, and the colors of the picture would deepen and come out more distinctly as time passed. They must have felt rebuked as they thought of him, now on the throne of his glory, head over all things, once engaged in the menial office of washing their feet while they were troubling his last hours with the question, "Who of us is to be greatest?" And from all we can learn, they never seem to have asked that same foolish question of him again. The common sentiment among mankind has been that he alone is to be esteemed the greatest who makes himself the most prominent in position, in power, in wealth and influence among his fellows, but Christ's ideas of greatness and man's are different. With him greatness was wholly a moral and spiritual quality. On one occasion the question is put to him, "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" and a good deal of discussion had occurred on the question of priority

ave used an elation of pride, and have set forth the character, effective. He washes the feet of though his task he me to you? You, for so I am; if ed your feet, ye disciples might they did forget they never forgot of humility lived, and the colors more distinctly rebuked as they glory, head over office of washing last hours with t?" And from asked that same mon sentiment to be esteemed prominent in po-among his fel-man's are differ-moral and spiri-n is put to him, n?" and a good tion of priority

among the twelve. Especially had there been such a dispute on their way back from Cæsarea Philippi; and when they got home he asked them what they had been disputing about by the way. They all felt ashamed and kept silence. Then Jesus looks round and sees a little child, probably at play, full of light-heartedness ere the dreams of ambition have been awakened in his bosom; a child who would rather have his top and ball than a kingdom or a sceptre, and he sets that child in the midst of them all and says, "Here is a type of true greatness; in that child's docility, trustfulness, sincerity, and self-forgetfulness you have your model. "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as a little child," &c. "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of God." Thus with one stroke he cuts up selfishness and false ambition by the roots, and shows that true greatness must be modeled after a heavenly pattern.

2. *Prayer*—"Lord teach us to pray." "He continued all night in prayer to God." His teaching in regard to prayer is another proof that he appealed to something higher than the rules of formal logic, viz., the intuition of the human mind and heart. His prayers seem to have impressed the disciples even more than his preaching; they had often seen and heard both. True, when he was preaching he spake as never man spake, for his words were full of the wisdom and grace of God. But in prayer it was a holy, blessed, unbroken communion, his soul resting and delighting in God! It seemed so like heaven and the unbroken intercourse of our Father's house. As he lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed, the disciples felt that it

was as no other man had ever prayed. No wonder that they came at the close of one of his prayers, and asked, "*Lord, teach us to pray*"; and his instructions here, like all his other lessons, are matchless. He said: When ye pray, do not be as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; don't make long prayers, and think you will be heard for your much speaking; don't pray at the street corners, to be seen of men; make no parade about it; prayer is far too sacred and personal for display. When ye pray enter into your closet, and shut to the door, and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who seeth in secret will reward you openly. When you pray, realize it as a child speaking to its mother, entwining its helplessness in fondest affection; or a son making a request of a father in filial trust. Don't make a task of it, a burden, a routine; but say, "*Our Father who art in heaven,*" etc. And thus he gives them the Lord's prayer, which the Church has used for centuries, and has worn it upon her breast as the brightest jewel of all her heavenly treasures. It is a prayer equally fitted for all men in all conditions of spiritual growth. Our little children are taught to use it and know its meaning; while our wisest and greatest philosophers can use nothing grander or more expressive of the soul's desires. How spiritual and lofty; how comprehensive, yet brief and simple! What lips but his own could have uttered it! "*Our Father who art in heaven.*" We too often make a task of our prayers; a routine to be gone through with as we wash and dress, as mechanical in the one case as in the other. Romanists make a penance of it; it is imposed upon them as a punishment; so many prayers to be said, for so many sins committed. Even

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with the devout, it is at best only a technical thing, full of formality and stiffness. But Christ Jesus makes it speaking to our Father, and telling him our wants, our fears, our hopes, our cares, our sins. Prayer, according to Christ, is coming to God, our Father, in every time of need ; not even so much speaking to him in *words*, as the soul learning to lean on him, thirsting for him ; living in his presence, and cultivating a lowly, devout, trustful attitude of mind and heart.

Of late, many difficulties have been conjured up regarding prayer. Will God hear and answer us? Will not the answer interfere with his established order of nature? Have we any reason to believe that God ever interposes to grant a specific request? Is not everything ordained from the beginning, and cannot be changed by a request preferred by a mere creature? Our Lord does not formally answer any of these philosophic arguments and objections about prayer. He does not go into an elaborate discussion or argument on the question, as many have done since, who pretend to speak in his name. But he puts forth a truth so palpable, so obvious as an every-day experience, a truth that has its home in the intuitions of the heart, that all objections vanish. "What father is there among you, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone, or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?" And he leaves them in the presence of this great truth, which appeals to all that is strongest and purest in every parent's heart, and puts up every objection by the root. The way Christ puts

prayer, it becomes an unspeakable privilege. Its very spirit is seen when your little child comes to you and asks for something ; or with tears in his eyes tells you a wrong he has done, and pleads forgiveness ; or better still, just wishing to be *with* you, and live in your presence in dutiful, loving obedience. You are not afraid that such a spirit as this on the part of your children, will destroy the order, or interfere with the rules of your homes. There is always, in all our homes, a place for requests to be preferred and answered. And we need not doubt that in our Father's home he will take care of its order, while listening to the cry of his children, and answering the prayers of faith. Notwithstanding all that has been said by way of objection to prayer, we still believe, on the authority of Christ, that when we pray to our Father in secret, *our Father who seeth in secret, himself will reward us openly.*

3. His teaching regarding the *Providence* of God is equally convincing, and a further proof that he uses the logic of intuition, the proof of instinct, rather than the elaborate arguments of the Schools. How convincing are his proofs that God is near, and knows, and does all things according to the counsel of his own will. The Master tells us that not even a sparrow is forgotten amid all the multiplicity of his concerns, and that God numbers the very hairs of our head. He makes him to be a God at hand, and not afar off, one who overshadows our present interests with his sure mercies. But to prove all this he does not employ deep, abstruse, theological arguments : the common people might not have understood these. But he points to the green grass spreading before them, to the lilies, so pure, so lovely, as they decked the valleys ; each

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flower and each leaf was a manifest proof of the Father's presence and the Father's care. Yet these are not God's children; they are merely created for the use and delight of his children. "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you who are his children." Such logic as this sends its proofs straight to the heart. Again, he says, "Behold the birds of heaven, they sow not, neither do they spin: they gather into no barns; they are not burdened with care, nor are they full of anxious thoughts or fears for the future; they sing their songs to-day, and let the morrow take thought for the things of itself. Yet these birds even are not God's children; they are merely his creatures. But if God feeds the birds, that neither sow nor reap, that are not his children, how much more will he feed you who are his children"! This is his argument, and is it not a powerful one, and every way calculated to lead us to cast all our care on him that careth for us? Does it not fully warrant the Saviour's own inference, "Wherefore take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

"He is a God of order, and in his counsels every servant of his has his own place and work. He mistakes no facts, overlooks no conditions, miscalculates no results. To the human eye things may appear confused and disor-

dered ; but so it is apparently in nature. What a countless multitude of things go to make up the whole of the material world ! and yet we know that each individual object is ordered by so exact an economy, that not a solitary drop of water is ever wasted, or a withered leaf stripped off by the autumn winds, which does not become the nutriment of some new form of life. Shall we think that God is less exact in grace than in nature ? Why, in every human organization, from the humblest workshop up to the complex organism of human government, how nice a division of labour, how anxious an adaptation of each special gift to its own special work, extend throughout the whole ? Shall God be less wise in the infinite and spiritual, than man in the finite and material ? Shall the family of God be less precisely administered than the family of man ? Shall the government of the world unseen be less perfectly organized than the government of the seen ? He who is most perfect of all in himself, must be most perfect of all in his actings. Object and intention pervade them all. Sight is baffled to trace him as yet, whose ways are in the sea and his footsteps in the deep waters. But faith accepts, even now, as a most certain fact, the minuteness and perfection of that government which will be revealed to knowledge hereafter. It is as if God himself came out of the darkness and made himself visible. Will it not be one of the joys of the better world, to see the veil entirely removed, and to find in the workings of his wisdom, when we see them with the pure vision of the just made perfect themes of praise and admiration for all eternity."—HOMER, LECTICAL LECTURES, p. 176.

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4. We have another illustration of the same thing in that saying of his which has been called "*The Golden Rule*" of conduct between man and man. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." What deep philosophy is in this short utterance, and if it were acted upon, it would change all the kingdoms of this world. Or take his answer to the lawyer who came to puzzle him: "Master, which is the great commandment of the law? And Jesus answered, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Or take his proof of the doctrine of the resurrection, as against the reasoning of the Sadducees, who denied it because they denied the separate existence of the soul. But his position is unanswerable by all who, like the Sadducees, professed to believe Moses. "But that the dead are raised up, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead but of the living; for all live unto him."—Luke xx., 37, 38. Thus we might go through others of "*These sayings of Jesus*," and show what deep philosophy is wrapped up in them all; that he uses in his arguments the proof of conviction, the logic of intuition, and brings his teachings home to the conscience and heart of his hearers by a demonstration that silences all opposition. Even his enemies are driven back confounded. "Shall we pay tribute to Caesar or no? Shall we give or shall we not give?"

They thought they had got him on the horns of a dilemma. He asks to see a penny. Whose superscription does it bear? They answer, Cæsar's. He replies, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. He gives a judgment to guide men in things secular and sacred while the world lasts. It has been affirmed by a leading writer, that this answer is the wisest ever recorded on earth. Equally final was his reply to those who came asking him by what authority he did these things? "I will also ask you one question: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned among themselves, saying, If we shall say, from heaven, he will ask, Why then did ye not believe him? but if we say, Of men; they feared the people, for all counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering, said unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." Such is our Teacher, always so wise, so patient, so considerate, so loving; and he brings us "*Rules from Heaven for life on earth.*" No wonder that the people marvelled at his doctrine, and that when he came down from the mountain the general verdict was, HE TEACHES WITH AUTHORITY!

What a wonderful Sermon, and how manifestly Divine was the Teacher! What other passage in the whole range of literature can equal its brevity and the beauties of its utterances! Its opening beatitudes move the hearts even of the careless, with an impulse and emotion that remind us of the pleasures for evermore at God's right hand, and the fullness of joy that is there. Words at once so plain and profound: "Which of you by taking thought

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can add one cubit to his stature? Behold the fowls of the air! Consider the lilies of the field!" Or what sermon ever preached on earth closes in words of such conscious authority: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be like a man who built his house upon the sand," &c. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock," &c.

The audience felt as under a momentary spell, and revelled in the fascination of the Master's presence; it was to them as a delicious trance, and they were half-sorry when the lesson ended: and even when he came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. His teaching had come to many of them as a new revelation, and they were loath to leave him. As that whole scene passes before the minds' eye, we do not wonder that the people marvelled at his doctrine, for in it they heard God's message of mercy to man. "It was not the hearsay of the elders, nor the quibbles of the Scribes,—it was the voice of the oracle, it was the deliverance of a teacher come from God. No wonder they were astonished, for on that hill-side they had heard a sermon the like of which their fathers did not hear even at Sinai. They had heard a sermon which was to be the text of a new dispensation, and whose fullness of meaning no sage of this world, no seraph of the other, shall ever be able to exhaust. They had heard a lecture on ethics, the symmetry and elevation of which were only surpassed by the speaker's living example. They had heard a lesson as to God's fatherliness and fond interest in his children's affairs, such as no one could speak with authority, save the only begotten Son,

who is in the bosom of the Father, and who on this occasion declared him."—HAM. III., p. 44.

The Great Teacher came to reveal Divine truth ; to show us the Father, and to open up the way of life ; he came to press duty upon man, and make his present life the pathway to the life above. No wonder that the people sometimes marvelled at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, for the lessons he taught were of eternal moment. He came to lead men into the truth, its light, its liberty, its spiritual blessedness ; to teach men to be wise, kind, true, brave, humble, sincere, brotherly, believing and loyal in their hearts to God ; to walk before him unto all pleasing ; to bring forth fruit meet for repentance ; to light our candle and let it shine ; to love our enemies and do good to them who hate us ; in short, to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. Such is our Teacher, and such are his lessons ; we have called ourselves by his name, and profess to be his disciples. Are we loyal to his laws, are we giving embodiment to his instructions in our thoughts, words, and deeds ? Has he put his law in our mind, and written it in our heart ? Is his Spirit directing our hearts into the love of God, and the patience of Christ ? The years that have gone since he taught have not given the lie to one of his sayings. "Many a prominent name has risen and set since then. Many words have been spoken and forgotten ; but never since they were uttered first, have the words of Christ been more earnestly heeded and studied than they are to-day. There are voices that tell us that these words also will pass away, and that the influence of Christ will decay, as has decayed the influence of other teachers. But what

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is to take their place ? They fill a void that must be filled, and which no other words do anything to supply. They are living and mighty still ; and until we see other words likely to be their substitute, we prefer to believe that he spake the sober truth when he said, 'Heaven and earth may pass away, but my words shall never pass away.'—NICOLL'S LIFE OF CHRIST, p. 151.

The teachers of the world are its rulers ; its great men of renown are not its millionaires, its emperors, or men of rank ; its masters are its teachers. The sceptre has long since dropped from the hands of Alexander the Great, but it is still in the hands of Plato, the master who is ruling and dominating men's minds still. So the teaching of Christ must continue to have sway, and roll forward as a gathering wave, till it flood the nations with its glory, and roll its treasures into the ocean of God's infinite love. AND YOU, Ministers of the Gospel, Teachers in our Sabbath Schools, Christian fathers and mothers in your homes, workers for Christ everywhere, forget not that you are co-workers with him in the grandest work on earth, reclaiming the moral wastes of the world, and making it blossom as the rose, till the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the seas.—Even so come, Lord Jesus, COME QUICKLY !



