

St Petersburg  
Kranskoi  
[np]  
THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD  
VOL. III  
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

By  
Charlotte M. Mason

LONDON  
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. L<sup>TD</sup>  
GERRARD STREET, W.  
1909

[np]

The rights of translation and of reproduction are reserved

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.  
At the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh

[p v]

## PREFACE

*(Critic and Author: a Dialogue)*

*Cr.* Forgive my dulness that I fail to see  
The work's intention;—if a single plot  
On the vast sphere of thought and fact it stakes,  
Hedges about, bring under ordered tilth.  
Is it a Life of Christ? A hundred men  
Have writ in whole or part the Life of lives:  
All are rejected, falling short as they must  
Of that surpassing fitness marks the *Four*.

*Au.* E'en so, falls to the lot of every man  
To restate for himself, on his own plan,  
That which we name the Gospel: not his Creed—  
Restatement there shall curious vapours breed!—  
Far other work is his, as, line by line,  
His mind absorbs the history divine,  
Figures each scene, weighs well each pregnant word  
Let fall in sequence due by the Good Lord  
Who came, our WISDOM, down to teach mankind  
The WAY, the END, the waymarks each shall find

[p vi]

For every step of the road. Wise men of Greece,  
Those Eastern sages, too, taught,—Man's increase  
In wisdom for the ordering of his days—  
His righteous first pursuit and all his praise:

He came not to destroy what these had taught;  
But rather to enforce that Wisdom, wrought  
By ways and words of God in mind of men:  
No easy lesson this; once and again,  
“Now, have ye understood?” the TEACHER cries:—  
And we, so slow of heart to realise  
That there is aught a child may not perceive,  
Or more than fool is able to believe!  
High sounding teaching our vain minds demand,  
Nor know at all—we do not understand!

*Cr.* I see; you would unfold what might be named  
Christian Philosophy if full-proclaimed;  
Your heifer, friend, has been in many a plough!

*Au.* You hit my purpose partly, I avow;  
But the *Method* of the Master seems to me  
Too subtle-wise for any man to see  
But who hath deeply pondered in his heart;  
For see, Christ’s teaching is no separate part,  
A sermon here, there miracle, event—  
Or Birth in Bethlehem, or how He went  
Afoot through all their hamlets doing good,  
Healing all sickness, giving men their food;  
And all in casual wise, occasion-moved:  
There is, I take it, tho’ scarce fully proved

[p vii]

The fact, yet evidence the Saviour meant,  
Say, single sheet by sheet, to unfold His intent  
As men should show capacity to meet  
His thought with thought reciprocal; we know  
No words of teaching any further go  
Than the measure of his mind who hears that word:  
This limitation to His work, our Lord  
Accepts all graciously, and lays His plan  
To catch the ear, mind, heart of every man,  
Arrested to attention by some sign  
In this mechanic-world of life divine.  
So all His works, as pictures, illustrate  
Utt’rances mystic, opening mysteries great;  
And every teaching fits with all the rest;  
And all’s profound, progressive, asks our best—  
The eager student’s utmost labouring zeal  
To comprehend, to know, to inly feel:—  
Thus, diligent, He teaches; now by law,  
By fable now, or miracle, will draw  
Men to consider. Ever on one theme  
His teaching labours; Word and Work ’twould seem  
Are used t’elaborate some truth divine  
Till, lo, at last, His hidden meanings shine  
Revealed to men, no more to be obscured,  
Although the disciples only are assured.  
That lesson taught, another cognate theme

The Lord pursues with patient skill supreme

[p viii]

Till that be comprehended, if by few—

The Twelve, perchance; through months doth He pursue

With many variants—sayings, acts and ways,

A single theme, shall fructify our days:

Thus, in the months this volume would include,

Teaching about THE KINGDOM is pursued

By our dear Lord, through miracle and tale,

Example cited, what may best avail

To win men's thoughts from emulous greed and strife

To that must be sole business of their life!

*Cr.* I see your point of view; men would attend

Schools of the sages, days, months, years on end,—

Their sole concern to master, thought by thought,

Philosophy with aids to living fraught;

This you demand for Christ?

*Au.* Aye, this and more;

For who as He God's image can restore?

*Cr.* But you forget the temper of our days;

Never had Christ more lavish generous praise;

That He, the ideal Man, not one denies;

Starlike, serene, doth still His image rise

Above the troubled waters: but, see you,

The line of argument you must pursue

Demands a certitude we don't possess:

The Son of Man we're ready to confess—

Not we, Confessors in the ancient sense

[p ix]

Imperill'd life and limb!—yet are we sure,

His loveliness must long as time endure:

But all His several words, those wonders, signs—

The Critic, look you, is abroad; divines,

Here, textual error by a method sure;

There, chronicle will not the tests endure

Science applies to that she can receive:

Now, face the matter squarely; how believe

That "Gospel truth" our wisest hold in doubt?

Nay, that we clear the Christ from all the rout

Of controversial issues is our praise!

*Au.* But what a Christ is He on Whom your gaze

With sentimental rapture fix ye! See,

Those Pharisees, more logical than ye!

"Blasphemest thou!" they cry when HE employs

Attributes of the Almighty: a man enjoys

Twofold prerogative in these liberal days,—

To doubt, deny, still voluble in praise!

Trifling inaccuracies—these but prove

Men wrote those things that they had learnt to love:

Hear four men tell what happened in the street

This very day,—how do their tales compete

For credence? Not because they are agreed,  
But, this man tells the tale with better heed  
To what is possible! Now, here we fail;  
Just here our usual methods won't avail!  
Nothing is "probable" where HE is concerned;  
Our art of reasoning must be all unlearned:

[p x]

Suppose, Dimension Fourth, that ancient quest,  
Sudden disclosed itself to seeker blest;—  
What errors would men make! How hard to wrest  
Their thought from the old measures, length and height  
And ponderosity,—confined them quite,  
Set bounds to speculation! It is plain,  
That new conditions, measures, must obtain;  
The new Dimension,—its own standard, test;  
All things thenceforth are meted at behest  
Of the new basic fundamental laws  
Inherent in that absolute new-found cause!  
Changes so vast in measures, values, all  
That constitutes the worth of life, befall  
The man who sees THE LORD; knows Him, indeed,  
The single MEASURE which shall not mislead  
That man would try the truth, for TRUTH is He,  
Sole standard of the truth needs must He be;  
To try His words and acts by any rule  
Obtains without Himself, is as if fool  
Should measure miles in quart-pots, yards in scales!  
"Behold, I make a new thing!" What avails  
Each petty test, pedantic, when the vast  
Of Personality Divine goes past  
Our dazzled eyes? No other help is brought;—  
We must *see Christ* ere poor scale of our thought  
Apply to His dimensions, infinite,  
The VERY GOD amongst us! We may write

[p xi]

The breadth and length of miracle and word,  
Then only, when we measure by the Lord.

*Cr.* I see; you would reverse the usual way;  
First, know the Unknown; that learned, why, thought may play  
About the records, measuring them by trained  
Conception of their Subject;—how obtained?

*Au.* Straight plunge we in dimension all unknown!  
"New Birth," the Master calls it, who alone  
Could speak of that He knew.

*Cr.* And by what sign  
Shall one discern in himself this life divine?

*Au.* To answer were to say in single word  
All, in three crowded years the disciples heard  
From the lips of the Master.

*Cr.* This, disclose;  
How may a man be certain that he knows?

*Au.* Perhaps, by this; a new dimension straight  
Reveals itself in him; he walks elate,  
Enlarged, unlimited; with passions, powers,  
For which no scope he found in th' slow dull hours  
Of all his former life! Constraining love,  
A pent-up passion, shall his doings move:  
A tremulous lover goes he, quick to grieve  
O'er wrong he does to love; apt to believe  
And linger tenderly o'er every word,  
Precious as pearl, hath fallen from his Lord:  
Ambition, power and place? All these the man  
Finds in his Master's service; petty span  
[p xii]  
Of personal issues, projects, holds him not;—  
In joy of THE KINGDOM all himself's forgot!  
And see what scope is his—the round world, all,  
Shall at his Master's footstool one day fall;  
And his to advance that End, by tool or pen,—  
Or aught brings solacement or strength to men!

*Cr.* The allurements of such prospect, I confess;  
Of life for his living, every man goes less;  
He prods him with the spur of this and that  
Desire, ambition,—soon, he ambles flat;  
Like stranded fish, he gasps for fuller life  
Than comes with children, power, or wealth, or wife:  
I own our need; but doubt is in the air:  
Has so-called Higher Criticism no share  
In furthering the issue all desire?

*Au.* Is it not, too, of God? The purging fire  
Shall fine the Word itself; but surer, He,  
Than record of the word; by Him, we see  
If any saying be indeed divine,—  
So shall His glory through the letter shine!

*Cr.* Allowing for the argument's sake your view,  
Still your first allegation must be true,  
Each man must ponder for himself to know:  
Then what is gained, when into verse you throw  
The tale we own inimitable; word,  
The like of which by men hath not been heard?

*Au.* Never rude Crucifix by roadside set  
But doth, in some poor heart, new thoughts beget  
[p xiii]

Of Jesus, Lover of mankind and Lord!  
May it not be that every sincere word,  
Rough-carven, poor, unworthy though it be,  
Is not without appeal to them who see  
That here is one in simpleness would show  
That fragment of the Truth 'tis his to *know*?  
And, look you, thought breeds thought; whoever thinks  
And drops his thought in word, where that word sinks,  
New thought springs up, created by impact

Of thought on mind laid open; to react  
In ampler juster thought; increase we thus,  
To measure of that Stature set for us!

“He that unto God’s kingdom comes  
Must enter by His door.”

RICHARD BAXTER.

[pp xv - xvii]

[Table of Contents]

[p xviii]

[p xix]

[List of Illustrations]

[p xx]

[p xxi]

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I  
THE HOLY INFANCY

*ANGELS and prophets long had searched in vain  
Those mysteries, now, for wayfarers writ plain:*

*How Christ was born in Bethlehem of pure Maid,  
How to three kings His Rising was displayed:*

*How holy Simeon blessed Him and foretold  
His Mother’s grief, He, sacrificed and sold.*

*How out of Egypt did God call His Son  
That all the prophets figured might be done.*

*How, simple Child, He dwelt in Galilee  
That simple folk His light might daily see.*

*How to Jerusalem in His twelfth year  
He went, before Jehovah to appear:*

*How there He shed His light, a duteous Boy,  
To keep the law His errand, not destroy.*

[p xxii]

*How eighteen years of meek submission then  
Prepared Him for His labours amongst men.*

*How He went out to John to be baptised,  
And John in Him a greater recognised.*

*How in the wilderness for Forty Days  
He bare assaults of Satan. Give we praise!*

*How in Caná He made the water wine,  
That men should see of life in Him a sign.*

*How in Jerusalem quick drave He forth  
The traders and their wares—of how small worth!*

*How journeying north to Galilee once more,  
He sate and taught that Woman heavenly lore.*

*How all the men came out who heard His fame,  
And, SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, did Him proclaim.*

*These things have we considered as we might,  
And hence would meekly follow in His light.*

[p xxiii]

## CONTENTS OF VOLUME II HIS DOMINION

*CHRIST healed the rich man's son: the man believed;  
"God is a spirit," the lesson he received.*

*He preaches to His own; mad hate they bring,—  
Would from steep brow of hill the Saviour fling!*

*People who sat in darkness saw great light  
Whose brightness baffled unaccustomed sight:*

*Those fishers four on Sea of Galilee  
The fishers of the Lord were called to be:*

*At Capernaum Christ preached: the people heard,  
And knew Authority was in His word.*

*Vile spirit bade He forth in that same hour,  
And all men recognised an unknown Power.*

*Peter's wife's mother, raised from fevered bed—  
By hand that raised her would thenceforth be led.*

[p xxiv]

*"At even ere the sun was set," they came  
To Him for healing, sick and blind and lame.*

*Then wearied, He, a great while before day,  
Went out to desert place that He might pray.*

*The folk of Galilee would make Him King;  
He knows how little worth the praise they bring.*

*Weary with preaching, Christ bade put to sea;—  
Behold, a wondrous draught, the fishers' fee!*

*A leper cried, Thou canst,—wilt make me clean?  
I will, saith Christ; healed, who had leprous been!*

*Levi took customs' dues by the seaside,  
And when the Master called, he straight replied.*

*His Jews rejected for hypocrisy;  
Too skilled in subterfuge, what hope have we?*

*Man at Bethesda's pool so long had lain—  
The Lord who healed him to betray was fain!*

*Christ taught,—the Father and the Son were One  
In words They spake, in all works They had done.*

*On the Son the royal crown of judgment set;—  
He learned the ways of men, nor would forget:*

[p xxv]

*In Him was Life; and all the souls that live  
Draw breath from Him, to Him their praises give.*

*The Law, the prophets, witness; to each heart,  
The Father testifies, and shows his part.*

*Thy Jews condemned, grant us, good Lord, to heed—  
Unstable in our faith, slack in our deed!*

*Christ walked in cornfield on the Sabbath day,  
And set men free from bondage whilst they pray.*

*He instantly the withered hand restores,  
And, grieved, the Rulers' faithlessness deplores.*

*Once more to fair Genesareth He came,  
And multitudes drew nigh, with love aflame.*

*Our Founder chose the Twelve, and laid them, sure  
Stones to sustain that Church which shall endure.*

*He charged them; told them, how the poor are blest;  
How persecutions should their lives molest:*

*Taught them the brother-secret; how to give;*



*How with all men as brothers they should live.*

*Of blind man led by blind man, cupboard's store,  
Of building House of Faith, He told them more:*

*[p xxvi]*

*And then He climbed the Mount that all might hear,—  
That multitude had come from far and near:*

*"Blessèd are they that mourn," He told the sad;—  
With promise of the Father's care made glad.*

*Chaste must they be and kind and guard their speech;—  
For God's own holiness is in man's reach.*

*He taught men how to give their alms, to pray;  
And all their anxious fears to put away.*

*Behold, the Church He founded on that day  
Received those Institutes should guide her Way.*

*The people heard, and hardly understood,  
But knew the Word He spake was very good;*

*Perceived Authority in every word  
And fain would bear due fruit of that they'd heard.*

BOOK I  
OF TAKING THE KINGDOM

*[p 3]*  
THE  
SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

I

*The centurion's servant healed*

St. Luke vii. 1-10.  
St. Matthew viii. 5-13.

Six days the Father worked—and, lo, the world!  
The Almighty rested on the Seventh day.  
Work comparable for processes begun,  
For magnitude of issues, deep design,  
Had Christ the Son wrought on that blessèd day  
When He called forth His Church, and—it was good,  
That new creation, now to have a name  
And blessedest uses for the sons of men!

A man outworn with giving all he has,  
Or wealth, or thought, or love, or what he has,  
Falls emptied, as sky-vessel drained of air;  
And, quick, new ministrants are set to work  
To lift him, prostrate; with new hopes, inflate:  
The Father of us all graced His own Son,  
[p 4]  
Begotten of Him ere the worlds were made,  
E'en as He graces any o'er-spent soul;  
But, for the Son had wrought a vaster thought  
Into expression than a man might work,  
There was conferred on Him more perfect gift,  
And adequate, than comes to any man.  
Christ sought once more the city of His choice;  
There, waited Him the elders of the Jews  
Who ruled in synagogue: a plea they brought  
And earnestly they urged for sake of him,  
The Gentile friend who loved them and had built  
For them their synagogue: man of clear mind,  
This Roman soldier,—captain stationed there,  
In garrison at Capernaum,—not of those  
Who let men's notions, practices, beliefs,  
Pass him all unconcerned: he would fain know  
What meaneth this or that, why do ye thus;—  
Answer, heart-searching brought: God of the Jews,  
Jehovah,—more than Cæsar, than all gods:  
All spirit forces His, to bid or chide;  
All must subserve His will Who all has made:  
Well, then, for him to honour this great God,  
Almighty, with his substance, kindly care  
For the Jews, His chosen people!

Aware was he

Of thing new-manifest in Capernaum;  
Claim to authority, could any weigh  
More certainly than he, who Cæsar's right  
[p 5]  
Supported here in province far removed?  
But, Cæsar,—his the power that comes of place,  
Another Cæsar should hold equal sway;—  
This prophet of the Jews, supremacy  
He wielded as a man swings his right arm  
In labour of his choosing. Power of God  
Was his, to do or to refrain; reveal,  
Keep hid: did God indeed impart *Himself*,  
His sole authority? Or, was this—GOD?  
That righteous man, of trained integrity,  
Found much to ponder in the common talk  
Of Jesus, filled the mouths of all the folk.

Calamity o'ertook this good man's house;  
A servant whom he loved,—perhaps, who knows?

A foster-brother, with him from the breast,  
And holding charge of all things for his lord,—  
Lay in his house now at the point of death  
And grievously tormented, palsy-struck:  
Watching his servant's anguish, all his thoughts  
Turned whither they had turned for many a day:  
Authority was present in the world,  
Could bid, not men alone, all ministers  
Of health or sickness, happiness or grief,—  
Authority supreme: but how approach  
This uncrowned Potentate? A Roman, he,  
With what plea might he move this princely Jew?  
Clothed with humility as good men be,  
[p 6]

E'en when they sit controlling subject race,  
This noble Roman sought his friends' good word;  
And they, the Jewish elders, came to Christ  
And praised their friend: "Worthy is he," they say,  
"That Thou shouldst do this for him, for our sake!"  
And, Jesus, "I will come and heal the man;"  
And He went with them, ever prompt to hear  
The prayer of friend for friend. Elate, the Jews  
Went with Him in their midst, right glad to serve  
The man who them had served, nor arrogant  
Had shown him to them, subject.

He alone,  
This Roman soldier, saw beyond the seeming,  
Perceived immeasurable condescension  
Of Him upon the road to his poor house!  
Intolerable to him that One so great  
Should serve his servant, take a step to please!  
So, friends he sends to the approaching Christ;—  
"Lord, trouble not Thyself," their eager word  
From him, "Not worthy I, that Thou shouldst come  
Beneath my roof; not worthy thought myself  
To come to Thee and pray my servant's life:  
Why shouldst Thou come to heal? But speak the word,  
And lo, my servant shall be well. I know  
How one with servants bids and is obeyed;

Photo, Hanfstaengl  
CHRIST AND THE CENTURION  
Paolo Veronese

[p 7]  
I am a man under authority—  
The thing which I am bidden, that I do;  
And under me are soldiers; Go, I say,  
To this one, and he goeth; Come, to that,  
And on the word, he comes: Do this, I bid  
My servant, and he does it. Lord, I know

How biddeth he who hath authority  
And how his servants hasten on his hest;  
Health is Thy servant, health and very life!  
But bid them and they run at Thy command!”

When Jesus heard these words He turned Him round,  
Marvelling at greatness of the gift this man  
Had laid at His feet: and to the multitude  
Who followed, saith He, “Verily, I say,  
No, not in Israel have I found such faith!”  
Faith, great in comprehension! Many proofs  
Of faith hath Israel offered; see the Twelve,  
How they left all and followed Him; how John  
Knew Him the Lamb of God that taketh away  
The sins of all the world; but here, a man,  
Doth more than love, serve, follow to the end;  
Doth more than see the Hope of Israel,  
Fulfilment of all promise! What, say they,  
What more is left for any to believe?  
Giving his heart, what further can man do?  
Yea, verily, there is a greater faith,  
Begot not solely of a nation’s hope  
Fulfilled for loving hearts: this faith is much:  
[p 8]

But, single-eyed intelligence to see  
With seraph keenness, how, if God be all,  
All things that come and go in human life  
Must at His bidding come, go at His word:  
To see, that if One speak the Word of God,  
E’en to forgive men’s sins, then, of a truth,  
Not to another giveth God His power  
And He who doth these things—the Son of God!  
The faith to compass this is fit reward  
Of that integrity which worthy thoughts  
Concerning all things worthy entertains:  
Such an one sees the truth, and seeing, loves,  
Frankly embraces, and tenacious, holds!

“This Roman presageth a mighty host,  
Men of just mind, thronging from east and west,  
With faith like his: tho’ not of the kingdom, they  
With Abraham, his son, and his son’s son  
Shall sit in heavenly places; while true sons,  
Woe worth the day! outcast shall find themselves,  
In darkness, where is weeping and dismay,  
Because they had not faith to know the hour  
Of visitation by the Son of man!”  
We may not let things pass, nor understand,  
Nor ask ourselves if God be in the world,  
Nor what He meaneth by the signs He sends:  
Who scans his heart in this wise, he hath faith,

And, lo, to faith, the promises!

[p 9]

Meanwhile,

The Centurion, following his friends, drew nigh;  
The Lord discerned him, spake the word he craved,—  
“Thou, blessèd, go thy way; as thou believ’dst,  
So be it done to thee!” Nor questioned he,  
But found within his house—the sick man whole:  
And more than life of friend gat he that day;  
To faith was added love; *he knew the Lord!*

All faith is graced of God; there be degrees;  
Their “great” and “little” faith men brought to Christ,  
An offering in their hand, and all, He took;  
But not with equal favour; how should men  
Else know gift most acceptable to God?  
According to his insight is man’s faith;  
In measure of his faith, he gives his love,  
And ample service issues from great love.

[p 10]

II

*“Increase our faith”—The disciple*

A CORD there is which heaven doth use to bind  
Two lives in one;—with such considerate care  
In fixing each to each, that thus they grow,  
The two, one higher being: the strength of each  
So strengthen’d is; the beauty, beautified;  
While the thin places in each character,  
Pieced and sustain’d by strong parts in the other,  
Do safely so endure the wear of life.  
Nor doth this hold for closest bond alone,  
But for the casual commerce of an hour  
’Twixt thee and any other by the way.

Of three bright differing strands this cord is spun:  
Two, from a heavenly wheel, are straight run out;  
While from his substance man the third doth fetch,  
Just as some spider draws wherewith to make  
Her web from her own body: yet is this  
A heavenly product like the other twain,  
But diff’ring from them, in that from the first  
’Twas lodgèd in man’s bosom;—or less or more,  
According to the will that draws upon’t.

[p 11]

This ’tis his part to take and wind with those  
In triune strength invincible. Should he fail,  
Or draw with niggard or uncertain hand,  
The other two, still running out to seek

Full measure of this third wherewith to twine,  
Knotted and tangled grow, and fret the lives  
With many a let and hindrance they had else  
Bound in fair symmetry and entire strength:  
Knowledge and love and faith,—of these is spun  
That threefold cord not to be broken soon.

No bidding of the will may summon love,  
And not of duly noted acts and words  
Comes the perception of another's being:  
As little of ourselves are these, as moods  
Of gloom and gladness born of changes wrought  
In the quick face of nature.

Too much we think  
To rule ourselves, the while our Author holds  
Our spirits all responsive 'neath His touch,  
And plays upon them with His winds and light  
And subtle influences in the air,  
And mystic sympathies with men and things,—  
All in our eyes too light for passing thought—  
Which yet do mould us into that we are.  
But though our bliss or woe come not of us,  
Receptive power is lodged in every breast;  
All may reject or take, and this it is  
That rules the differing pitch of human lives:  
Think'st thou thy puny faith shall God exceed?

[p 12]

Or, niggard, canst believe enough in man?  
Open thy being wide—it shall be filled;  
Suspicious guard all inlets,—sadly prove  
The aching famine of an unfed heart!  
According to thy faith, the friend thou know'st,  
According to thy faith, shall prove thy God!

[p 13]

III

*The raising of the widow's son*

St. Luke vii. 11-17.

A SORROWFUL procession filled the way  
As Jesus came to Nain—with multitude,  
Disciples and chance following;—those came  
Adown the street to city gate, and sounds,  
Mourning and lamentation, rose to God  
To plead with Him for piteous woes of men,  
Women left desolate with none to fend,  
None tenderly to cherish. She, poor soul,  
That widow in their midst, appealed to all,  
Neighbours and kinsfolk, by her utter loss;

What was there left, her strong young son laid low  
On bier they bore before her? Widow, she,  
With none to get her bread and none to love!  
So they all mourned with her, kindly folk,  
Whose utmost was to lift a cry to God:  
But HE was very far; the youth was dead;  
Would the great God do ought for a dead man  
Should comfort weeping mother?

As they neared,

The mourners and their burden, city gate,—  
Wherefrom the dead pass out to burial

[p 14]

In place remoter from the homes of men,—  
Behold, another multitude drew near,  
And, by the city gate, the two crowds met:  
Pity was not so far from that sad soul,  
The desolate Mother; God was not removed;  
HE had compassion on her; bade them stand,  
Who bare the bier; and the poor mother bade,  
“Weep not!” Strangely arrested, stayed her tears,  
E’en as do ours when He bids cease to weep.  
And, He, the LORD, drew nigh and touched the bier,—  
(With touch, held hope, for who would lightly touch  
The defiling dead?) In sudden awe they wait,  
The breathless multitude, nor know for what,  
But omen they perceived—portending, sure,  
Awful event, cognition unconceived,—  
Checked pulse, stopped breath, of all the waiting crowd!

Where, Death, thy victory? HE spake the word—  
“Arise, young man, I say!”—And, lo, the ear,  
Passed out of hearing of all mortal speech  
To silence unimagined of the Dead,  
Was not beyond the call of this one Voice:  
“The Dead shall hear,” He had said, and this dead man  
Heard, and forthwith obeyed; arose and spake!

[p 15]

Mother and son forgot by folk who heard,  
An instant awful thought struck them to heart—  
Should they not die? Had they not all their Dead?  
Lo, here is One who holds the keys of Death,  
Unlocks the dreadful door and summons back  
One gone for evermore from wonted ways!  
And each one in his heart,—I too shall die;  
Within hearing of His voice shall I remain?  
Terror of Death was chased from every heart  
At thought of human speech to reach him there,  
In uncongenial kingdom of the Dead!  
No more as yet, but what a hope were here!  
Continuance, friendly offices and help,—  
If these, beyond the Grave, why fear to die?

With awe they gazed on Him who spake the word  
That called the dead to Life: new hope was born,  
And all their hope, embodied in that MAN  
Whose tones immediate reached to those unknown,  
“Remote, unfriended” regions of the Dead!  
Nay, reached with word of Life! The Dead can live,  
And this MAN hath the keys of Life and Death!  
One kingdom they, an easy way between;  
And, if One rule the twain—why fear to die?

Thus Christ restored the widow’s son to life  
And dropped a seed should grow in many hearts  
[p 16]  
Though none brought faith or prayer to woo His deed:  
The dead, can they have faith? Grief hath no room;  
And all the crowd had pity, but not faith;  
The Lord of His sweet bounty gave them that,  
Conditions other gifts; now, had they faith.  
What of the young man? He must follow, sure,  
That Saviour who had called him from the dead?  
Christ gave him to his mother: once again  
She had a man from the Lord; at first, a babe,  
And now the strong young son who wrought for her!  
Was ever mother thankful like to this?  
Was ever mother joyful as was she?  
City of Nain had witness in its midst  
Should yet proclaim the Name of Him who spake,  
And, lo, the dead man rose and was alive!  
He, the young man, what questionings of him;  
What wonder and desire searched his heart,—  
The Dead, did they in truth go on with life,  
E’en as did he? And, dead and living both,  
Had they one Master, able to command  
Them, whither they should go, what they should do?

More than their own concerns of death and life,  
The people thought upon the Lord, and feared:  
“Behold,” said they, “a prophet, in our midst  
[p 17]  
Has risen to us, unworthy, praised be God!”  
All through Judæa the great news was spread  
By tongues of those who saw and those who heard,  
And all men knew,—God, come among His folk!  
[p 18]

IV

*John Baptist a prisoner*

St. Luke iii. 19, 20.



WHERE now is John—  
Round whom in wilderness  
The eager people press,  
Confessing sin with tears  
And overwhelming fears;  
Who bade them put away  
Their sin against the day,  
That great day of the Lord  
Of which he brought them word:—  
“Repent, and be baptized,  
Else, rotten, be excised  
From the Branch!”  
Now, where is John, who knew  
Messias, in that Jew  
Came to him at the pool,—  
Would follow, meek, the rule  
Good for all men, and prayed  
Baptism of John, dismayed;  
And he baptized the Lord  
At His so gracious word!—  
Where now is John who in a man  
As other men, was graced to scan

Photo, Bruckmann  
JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PRISON  
Giotto

[p 19]  
Lineaments of the Lamb,  
Sent by the great “I AM,”  
Descended from His throne  
The whole world to atone,  
In sacrificial blood,  
With the all-loving God!  
Where, John, who bore that witness true  
And fearless spake the truth he knew?

In desert still he dwelt;  
But, bound, no longer felt  
Winds of the waste blow free;  
No more his eye might see  
Least thing that moved at large  
To far horizon’s marge;  
Shut in by fortress walls,  
His soaring spirit falls;  
He doubts and is dismayed;—  
“By what then is delayed  
The coming of our King  
Who shall salvation bring?  
Is He indeed the Coming One,  
And I, here, languishing alone?”

Ah me, that Prophet's faith should fail  
When doubt and dreariness assail!  
[p 20]

V

*The message of John*

St. Luke vii. 17-24.

St. Matthew xi. 2-6.

PRISONER in fortress by Dead Sea—  
Whose waters all the living flee,—  
The Baptist, Bedouin in heart,  
Wilderness bred nor having part  
With them who live shut in by walls,  
(Abhorrent lot his soul appals),  
Confined the Baptist lay; his past  
O'er him its shifting shadows cast;  
The shadows only came that day;  
No past so bright, its light may play  
Upon our hours of desolate gloom;  
And John for hope could find no room,  
Or joy, in all his retrospect!  
Not now with gladness might reflect  
On multitudes that came to hear,  
And be baptized ere Christ appear!  
Delusion was it, then, that call  
He thought he answered, yielding all?  
And that dear moment at the Pool,  
He met Messiah,—like a fool  
Had he let hope, fallacious, blind  
Him to the truth? Had his own mind  
Fashioned the Christ he fain would find?  
[p 21]

Disciples came to see him still,  
Allowed of Herod, at their will;  
These told him all the land was filled  
With fame of Jesus; how He willed,  
And, lo, all human ills were cured,—  
The very dead to life restored!  
Perchance they told with asking eye,—  
Would he, their Master, bid them fly,  
Proclaim that this was Christ in truth,  
Or that delusion had in sooth  
Possessed the people's heart? Behold,  
How secret thoughts like flowers unfold,  
And after their own kind make fruit!  
What had the Baptist said should bruit  
His faithless questionings forth to men?  
But, let a thought prevail, and then,

Shouted from housetop, lo, the word  
Scarce by thy secret soul was heard!  
Now, see, occasion at his hand;  
John sends the two with curt demand,—  
“Art Thou indeed Messias, sent,  
Or for another look we?”

Spent

With all the speed they made, the two  
(Had journeyed half the country through),  
All travel-worn and breathless came  
To where Christ was: the blind, the lame,  
The sick, the sad, had gathered there,  
Whose woful state addressed a prayer  
[p 22]

To Him, the Merciful: nor stayed  
John’s messengers, on whom was laid  
Their master’s urgent hest, till He  
From doing good at leisure, be;  
They cried out with insistence rude,  
“John Baptist sent us to Thee,” (crude  
In thought and rough in speech were they),  
“His word, Art He that cometh, say,  
Or for another do we wait?”  
Their petulant speech Christ heard; and straight,  
In that same hour He many healed  
Of sin and sickness, plagues revealed  
In eye of day: and then He spake;—  
“Hence, to your master; with you take  
True tale of that ye’ve seen and heard;  
Lepers are cleansed; deaf, hear the word;  
The blind receive their sight; the dead  
Are raised to life; the poor man hears  
Good News with unaccustomed ears:  
Tell John these signs; he knows to read;  
And add this word:—When occasions breed  
Doubt and disloyalty to Me,  
Who stumbleth not in darkness, he  
Is blessed; and him I name My friend  
Who trusts Me constant to the end!”

The people heard word of reproof  
To Baptist sent: for their behoof  
Christ witnessed of His servant John;—  
Like commendation, who hath won?  
[p 23]

VI

*The Lord testifies of John*

St. Luke vii. 24-35.

St. Matthew xi. 6-19.

“WHAT went ye out to wilderness to see?  
Reed shaken with the wind? A man whose words  
Sway this way, that way, lightly moved by breath  
Of popular favour, will of priests or kings?  
I tell you, nay: This man spake only truth,  
Nor swerved for any fear or any hope;  
Nor spake the facile word should please the crowd!”  
Not unsubstantial reed,—a mighty tree,  
The Baptist stood, to weather every blast;  
His roots deep-seated, forehead raised aloft,  
And arms widespread to shelter multitudes!

“But what then, to behold, did ye come forth?  
Man in soft raiment clothed, whose easy days  
Are delicately nurtured? Such as these  
Dwell not in wilderness, but, in kings’ courts,  
Apparelled gorgeously, they sun themselves!  
I tell you, nay; the man ye went to see  
Was he who no man owed, for all his need  
The wilderness supplied; who took no heed,—  
[p 24]

What shall I eat? what drink? where lie to-night?  
Nor prized his life for any vain delight;  
Whose strivings of the spirit kept him hid  
In wilderness till God should come and bid.  
For what indeed was’t ye went out to see?  
A prophet of the Lord? yea, right were ye;  
Ye knew by every sign a prophet, sent,  
Witness to bear for God; the folk to chide  
For their backsliding ways:  
But John is more!  
Prophets full many have to Israel cried;  
But John is he of whom this word is writ,—  
‘Behold, My messenger before Thy face,  
Thy way before Thee to prepare, I send.’  
The King discerned he, one among a crowd,  
Nor thought him worthy to unloose the shoes  
Of Him, the Coming One! His office, great,  
For great of heart is he, for great work fit;  
I tell you, I who know, that among men  
Of woman born, no greater hath arisen  
Than John the Baptist; see ye honour him!

“Greater than any born of woman is he,  
But there be others, of the Spirit born;  
Wherefore, for all his greatness, mark ye this,—  
One little in the Kingdom is more than he!  
What meaneth this? ye ask, What Kingdom, then?  
God’s Kingdom is in heart of every man

Who yields undoubting fealty to the Son:

[p 25]

Outside are many righteous; none of these,  
Greater than John the Baptist! But, see ye,  
Not John himself could bear continual fret  
Of things not understood, nor doubt at all!  
Blessèd the man who saith, 'Lo, I believe,  
Groping in darkness, yet, do I believe!  
Nor suffereth any cloud to hide the KING.

"Ye think, to take the Kingdom, easy task;  
That any Jew who knows Messiah come  
Is straightway in the Kingdom when it comes:  
Look you, the Kingdom's not for any man,  
Nor for the Jews, to see it when it comes;  
The Kingdom is among you, nor see ye,  
Because your eyes are sealed. The man who sees  
Looks not for pomp of kings nor any state,  
Nor frets him, as doth John, that shows of power  
Befitting kings are tardy; seeing the King,  
His eyes are lightened; scale of values new  
Orders his thoughts; what was of highest worth,  
E'en praise and gifts of kings, are to him nought;  
And that he cared not for, nor knew it were,  
Lo, that his sole desire and all his praise!  
Shout of a King in midst of his hid life,  
Rule of a King in all his quiet days,  
Service of King at all hours calling him,—  
A man in the Kingdom hath he room for more?

[p 26]

"Joy of the kingdom is exceeding great;  
But never happy State but hath its foes,  
Hind'ring who would come in. Kingdom of God  
Is not for th' easy man: in other States,  
The man would prosper labours day and night,  
Pushes his cause, pleases, and serves and waits  
On him who grace dispenseth, the crowned head!  
The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence  
From days of John till now; who hath eyes to see,  
He pusheth strenuous in; the violent man  
Taketh his heaven by force! 'Wherein,' say ye,  
'Shall men use violence in this hidden life?  
Nay, we are ready to take arms for Thee  
And drive the Roman hence! What more wouldst have?'

"But I would have you fight another war  
With other foes at the gate—such foe as John,  
Much honoured, well-beloved, hath quailed before!  
Ye shall not doubt, though all men disbelieve,  
Ye shall not fear, though earth's foundations shake,—  
Ye, who are of the Kingdom! Keep ye faith

Though all the world beleaguer you with doubts  
And terrors manifold; full violent be  
To seize and hold in face of all assaults  
The goods of the Kingdom ye have eyes to see!

[p 27]

“I tell you no new thing: the prophets all,  
The Law ye hold by, witnessed until John,  
These things I tell you; greater, he, than all!  
Till John, the truth, an ever-gath’ring stream  
Rolled with increasing volume down the years,  
Each prophet adding that word told to him:  
But John—he saw fulfilment! ‘Lo,’ he said,  
‘The Lamb of God that taketh all men’s sins!’  
Ye wait Elijah, as the prophet saith?  
Will ye receive it? The word hath been fulfilled,  
And John, the Elijah of expectancy!  
He that hath ears to hear, now let him hear.”

The people praised God who had given John—  
Of whom were they baptized. Who have done well  
Are ready to do better; glad, they heard  
While Jesus spake of John; the Pharisees,  
And they who taught the Law, would none of him;  
That first rejection forced them still reject  
Christ’s word of the Kingdom violently attacked;  
City should be beleaguered four-score years,  
Should many hundred years be trenched about—  
New generations coming to th’ assault  
With arms each of its age; behoves who keep,  
Attack, defend, provision as they may;  
But sit at ease? Not for a single day!  
The violent keep the City; strong ones take;  
The siege is without truce; Watchman, awake!

[p 28]

The Lord beheld the crowd and knew their mind:  
With fickle malice, praise they John, to blame  
Jesus the Christ; or praise Christ to defame  
The ways of John: “To what then are they like,  
Men of this age, whereunto shall I liken  
Their moods unstable, their ill-ordered thoughts?  
Like children are they in the market-place  
Calling, each row to each, Ye will not play!  
We piped to you, and, lo, ye would not dance!  
We mourned to you, ye did not weep in turn!”  
(Good that He watched the children at their play,  
Our Lord so tender-sweet with little ones:)  
“So is your mind, ye men of Israel!  
For John the Baptist came, eating no bread  
(The common food of men), nor drinking wine;  
A man whom none might blame for any grace  
He did his flesh: ye say, A devil hath he!

The Son of man is come; He eats and drinks,  
As all men eat and drink; no separate life,  
But common life of men ye see Him live:  
Behold, say ye, man, gluttonous, given to wine!  
Nor pause to speak the truth or know the truth:  
Fickle opinion sways you,—floating light  
As thistledown o'er every gathered crowd,  
Tending this way or that at breath of each!  
'Then, Which is right,' say ye, 'hard life, denied  
By a man's will of every common ease  
That falls in his way as berries to the birds,  
[p 29]

Or his, who, like a bird, takes and goes on,  
Nourished for flight and stirred to gracious song?'  
Nay, both are right, nor any rule of life  
Shall ease you of your labour of free choice!  
Whatso a man doth well, that is well done;  
Who walketh lowly with his God shall act  
As his own heart doth move; for, justified  
Is Wisdom of her children—this and that!"  
[p 30]

VII

*The disciple dreams that he seeks instruction*

*One night I dreamed I asked things of the Lord  
And straight He answered me.*

DISCIPLE

MASTER, forgive Thy rash presumptuous one,  
But in me is no rest if any word  
Spoken by Thee sound harshly in men's ear!

THE MASTER

What troubleth thee?

DISCIPLE

Thy word concerning John:  
Thou know'st he watched for Thee, with cryings strong  
Besought God for Thy kingdom, taught all men  
They must repent, prepare them for the Lord;  
And on that day Thou camest, lo, he knew!  
Proclaimed Thee, Lamb of God; chose for himself  
To lessen day by day so Thou increase;  
[p 31]

Knew Thee, the Bridegroom; all his joy to be  
Friend of the Bridegroom, should rejoice for Him!

THE MASTER

Thou hast said well; all this the Baptist did,  
And more thou know'st not of; was not My word,  
No greater born of flesh hath ever been?  
What wouldest thou?

DISCIPLE

Master, Thou saidst of him  
Another word: "Greater than John is he  
Who least in the Kingdom is." What meaneth this?  
Why then is John, who served as none besides,  
Not in Thy kingdom, graced with highest place  
At Thy right hand?

THE MASTER

Thou know'st not what thou askest;  
Nor understand'st conditions of the Kingdom;  
Kings of the world give place to whom they will,  
Invite within their borders, honours give,  
As they shall choose. But, hast thou understood—  
The Kingdom suffereth violence, the violent take?  
[p 32]  
See ye, they *take*; not God Himself bestows;  
The Kingdom is no gift for easy souls  
To get by grace of God. By force, a man  
Must take and hold 'gainst multitude of foes.

DISCIPLE

But took not John the Kingdom? Thou, my Lord,  
Art merciful! Wilt visit his offence,  
And take Thy kingdom from him?

THE MASTER

Nay, My son,  
Not yet thou comprehend'st; I can, nor give,  
Nor take away. Life, grace, the love of friends,  
Honour and victory, praise, beauty, joy,  
Virtue, and peaceful days—all these are Mine  
To give My servant; this one thing alone,  
The Kingdom, gets and keeps he by his prowess.

DISCIPLE

What, then, the Kingdom?



THE MASTER

Where a King rules, is loved,  
Trusted and served—the Kingdom. Though but one  
Subject so hold him, yet is he a King,  
[p 33]

King to that one; ten million subjects his,  
Yet by himself doth each swear fealty  
And pledge him to the King as though none else  
Than he within the Kingdom; he must *will*  
Steadfast allegiance though his life the pledge;  
All else I give him; this must he bring Me;  
Nay, might I give the Kingdom, what were't worth,  
The man a prisoner to his loyalty,  
Not free to love and serve?

DISCIPLE

Then, Lord, can he  
Who wilful quits Thy Kingdom meek return?

THE MASTER

Behold, I stand at the door to bring him in!  
But who goes out is fenced about with foes  
To hinder his returning; few there be  
Who, going forth, have grace to come again,  
And hard the way they tread!

DISCIPLE

But, John, my Lord,  
Returned not he to his old loyalty?  
If John not in the Kingdom, who may hope?  
[p 34]

THE MASTER

And think'st thou lovest more than I? Canst trust  
That I do watch and pray for them who err  
As John hath erred? Thou, too, shalt pray and watch;  
To know is not for thee; leave then the end!  
No righteousness that man hath wrought is lost,  
Forgotten before God! Many there be  
Slow to believe in that they may not see,  
Who yet are righteous; leave the rest to Me,  
And know that love subsists eternally!  
John gave Me love; and I, do I love less?  
Why fear for him held in eternal love  
And graced beyond others by My word, Well done!  
Of what shall be, knows no man, not the Son!

THE DISCIPLE

Forgive Thy slow disciple, dull of heart!  
They took Thy word to John, and, all at once,  
Conviction broke his heart, and to Thy feet  
His alien thoughts, abased, crept sorrowful;—  
He knew Thee, KING, and shamed him for his doubt!

Photo, Hanfstaengl  
A WOMAN ANOINTS THE FEET OF CHRIST  
Schongauer

[p 35]  
VIII

*A woman anoints His feet*

St. Luke vii. 36-50.

CHRIST sat at meat in Simon's house;  
    (Man of repute was he,  
    A righteous Pharisee);  
And as they talked with noiseless step stole in  
A woman known to men for shameful sin.

    Behind the Master as he half-reclined  
    She came in lowly wise,  
    With tears and piteous sighs;  
She saw the blessed feet outstretched, had gone  
With merciful sweet succour up and down,

    All travel-stained and marred with soil:  
    One precious thing she had,—  
    “My heart,” she said, “be glad!”  
Her alabaster cruse she brake, all sweet,  
And spent the ointment on His blessed feet!

    Softer than precious nard, her tears;  
    She wept upon His feet,  
    Nor thought her weeping meet  
To wash the soil she rued; she loosed her hair  
And dried with that poor glory men called fair.

[p 36]

    And while she reverent spilt her nard,  
    Her tears let fall, her hair  
    Used as a napkin fair,  
Jesus nor spake nor looked where she so wrought;  
Nor seemed of her poor presence to take thought.

    But Simon watched, and in his heart  
    Conceived a thought of guile;—

Would He let her defile  
His person by unholy touch if He  
Indeed that prophet He gives out to be?

No word he spake, but Christ perceived  
That thought he meant to hide:  
"Simon," Christ said to chide,  
"Somewhat I have to say to thee, My friend;"  
And Simon in his heart knew to what end.

His fear concealed, "Master, say on;"  
Courteous, replied the host;—  
"A creditor once lost  
Sums by two debtors; one owed fifty pence,  
Five hundred was the other man's offence.

"For they had nought to pay, the man  
Frankly them both forgave;  
Now which of these should have  
Most love for him forgave them?" Simon said,  
"He, I suppose, who most forgiveness had."  
[p 37]

"Yea, thou hast rightly judged:" He turned  
To where the woman knelt,  
Bewraying all she felt  
As o'er His holy feet her tears poured free:  
"This woman whom thou know'st a sinner, see;

"Thy house I entered; no guest-rites  
Thou hastenedst Me to pay;  
No grace upon Me lay;  
Not water for My feet, the common due  
Of every guest, have I received from you.

"This woman with her tears hath wet  
My feet, and with her hair  
Hath wiped with tender care;  
Thou gavest Me not the kiss for guest was meet,  
But she not once hath ceased to kiss My feet:

"My head with oil didst not anoint,—  
Deniedst thy guest that sweet  
Refreshment in the heat:  
This woman for My feet thought not too rare  
The vase of costly ointment broken there!

"My debtors are ye both, but she  
Hath found the only way  
That debt she could not pay  
To cancel in the eyes of Him she owed:  
She lovèd much, and who with pains would goad

[p 38]

“His loving debtor? All her sins  
    Forgiven her for her love,  
    (Love hath its price above),  
Clean goes she forth, from every stain made free  
For sake of that great love she showeth Me.

“That other debtor, he who thinks  
    His whole offence but small,—  
    E’en though forgiven all,  
Hath little love for the so generous lord  
Blotted out his offences with a word!”

Then turned the Lord about and saw  
    The woman, penitent,  
    Her shamèd face down-bent;  
He said,—“Thy sins are all forgiven to thee,  
For thou hast known much love to show to ME.”

[p 39]

IX

*Circuit in Galilee—Women minister*

St. Luke viii. 1-4.

BEHOLD the Master journeying to and fro  
Through villages and cities, everywhere,  
In Galilean borders: as He went,  
With beauteous feet of Him who bears Good News  
Upon the mountains and the plains, He taught,  
And multitudes attended. Not alone,  
The Lord; with Him the Twelve should be with Him,  
And garner all those seeds of life He dropped,  
Ready for sowing elsewhere: here were, too,—  
Going from place to place where'er He went,  
Hearing those words that healed, seeing the grace  
Of the Divine Compassion in His looks,—  
Those Women, blessèd above womankind  
To be with Him, and hourly feed their souls  
On words He spake! Nay, further were they graced;  
To care for meat and drink fell not to Christ,  
Nor were the Twelve encumbered to provide;  
The women cared for these things,—happy, they!

[p 40]

The task they loved for sake of Him they loved  
Fell to their lot, and of their wealth they gave  
Things needful for the hour: now all of these,—  
Mary called Magdalenè, Chuza's wife  
(He, Herod's steward, high in place and power),  
Susanna, many others,—every one

Had by His word been healed of certain plagues  
Destroyed her and oppressed:—would that we knew  
The name of every blessed woman graced  
To minister to our Lord; for us, to express  
In grateful service sense of all she owed  
To Him had healed her of infirmities,  
Cast forth besetting devils, made her whole!  
Ah, how would every woman joy to go  
In train that followed Jesus, minister  
Of all she had in thanks for great work wrought  
For her and hers and all the sinful world!  
All women born bless you, ye happy few,  
Who did the part of all in Galilee!  
[p 41]

BOOK II  
PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

[p 42]  
THE SOWER  
Sir John Millais

[p 43]  
X

*Parable of the sower*

St. Mark iv. 1-9.  
St. Matthew xiii. 1-9.  
St. Luke viii. 4-8.

THE Master sat by the seaside  
And taught the folk. From far and wide  
The people thronged the Word to hear:  
They pressed Him nearer and more near  
The margin of the lake; a boat  
He entered, on the waves afloat,  
And sat and taught the crowds immense  
Gathered in expectation tense:  
On all the upward sloping shore,  
Vast sea of faces stretched before  
The Lord as thus He sat. "Now hear,"—  
Said He; and many things appear  
Before them, set in simple tale,—  
The Parable, which should avail  
To exhibit truth to dullest mind,  
As in a picture clear defined.

Behind the lake, beyond the shore,  
Upon the loftier hill before  
The Lord's uplifted eyes, He saw,

Perchance, a sower instant draw,  
[p 44]  
From scrip before him slung, the seed  
And scatter it with little heed  
Of ground whereon it chanced to lie:  
With liberal hand he sowed, the event  
Rested with Him the good grain sent.

To Him, who saw in things of sense  
A likeness and a fond pretence  
Of the eternal things He knew,  
The Sower's act, an image true  
Of that He came to do for men—  
The seed to sow which should again  
Yield hundredfold of living grain.

The Sower, He said, went forth to sow  
His seed, not careful where to throw  
His handful, casting free around  
On fertile as on barren ground.  
Some fell on footpath trod by man  
And beast, till hard as brick, it can  
Offer no bed to hold the seed:  
Thitherward flock the fowls to feed  
On that not trodden under foot  
In the hard ground, wherein no root  
Can strike, no stalk arise, to bear  
In its due time the fruitful ear.

Now, here was rocky ground, whereon  
Light lay the earth; the seed upon  
This place fell too; nor long had lain  
Ere, sprouted quick with sun and rain,  
[p 45]  
It showed full promising and green:  
Alack, the roots, that part unseen  
On which for life must plant depend,  
Could not in shallow earth extend  
To depth where they should moisture find:  
Scorching upon the place now shined  
The sun; the blade that had no root  
Withered long ere the time of fruit!

Among the brambles some seeds fell;  
In fertile earth, these prospered well;  
Down struck the root, up sprung the blade,  
Fair promise its appearance made:  
But, ah, good soil and sun and rain  
Favoured the brambles as the grain,  
And they, the hardier, stronger growth!  
In early spring fast grew they both;

Then shoots and leaves the brambles spread  
Crowding the blades, from overhead  
Shutting out rain and wind and sun,  
Choking that growth so well begun,  
Till nought but brambles fed the soil,  
And never crop asked reaper's toil.

Not wasted all the sower's seed;  
On good ground cast with little heed,  
Some grew and prospered every day;  
The blade, the ear, full corn, display,  
Each in its season, how good ground  
Shall make the fruitful seed abound:

[p 46]

See you, some ears with weight are bent  
Of hundred goodly grains,—one, lent;  
The others, golden interest, brought  
To him who sowed and him who wrought  
The soil to rich fertility:  
Less heavy other ears, but see,  
In this one sixty well-filled grains  
Rewarding all the farmer's pains:  
In this, but thirty; would ye say,  
Thirty for one, unworthy pay?

“He that hath ears, come, hear My word,  
Pregnant with life when duly heard!”  
The people pondered, knew the tale  
A teaching held for their avail:  
But in that crowd all sorts of ground  
The Lord had told of might be found.

[p 47]

XI

*Of teaching by parables*

St. Matthew xiii. 10-17.

St. Mark iv. 10-12.

St. Luke viii. 9, 10.

CHRIST was alone, and to Him came the Twelve  
With those most eager for His words: they ask,  
“Why speak in parables to all this crowd?  
Thy words so precious, Lord, dispersed are they,  
Thy meaning wrapped in tale none understands;—  
And, lo, thy sayings lost, as string of pearls  
Dropped in the unstable, inconsistent sea!”  
And spake the Lord: “Think not a man may learn  
The mysteries of the Kingdom in short speech  
To dullest, plain; nor think, to go and do,—

Sole obligation laid; no mysteries  
To casual eye disclose them; those deep things  
Pertaining to the Kingdom, how shall be  
Unveiled the least of them to vision marred  
And blurred by incessant glitter of the world!  
But ye shall know, for ye the glamour left  
Of things without, and came within that cool  
And sheltered place the Kingdom is; to you,  
Stone of a thousand facets shall disclose  
Now these, and others now, as ye can bear:  
[p 48]

But not in all eternity the whole  
Splendour of Vision that God's Kingdom is  
Shall be unveiled to one—for all have share!

The rest that are without, how make them know?  
Things daily manifest before their eyes  
Leave them unseeing still: the natural world  
Is full of parables for who can read:  
Flying and running, birth and life and death,  
Blood in the veins, sap rising in the tree,  
Sun, moon, the night and day, the clouds and winds,  
The rain and tender dew, the bow of hope,  
Bridegroom and bride, intimate nuptial bond,  
Children and father, friendship, city life,—  
What each of these but symbol, shows one face  
Of the incommunicable mystery,  
Not to be comprehended by a man,  
So infinite is it in blessedness,—  
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

See ye, as little child with spelling book  
Finds nought but silly scratches on the page  
Till teacher comes holding the magic key  
Shall open knowledge—even so are ye  
Till I by parable shall ope the world,  
Disclose significance of common things,  
Till, when by symbols few interpreted,  
Men learn to read those books before their eyes,  
Writ page by page, the mysteries of the Kingdom!  
[p 49]

Who cannot will himself to will with power,  
How can he hold without the will to hold  
E'en that he hath already, how get more?  
From out slack fingers drops his little wealth,  
And he who will picks up what's in his way:  
By this one law, the rich man richer grows,  
Poorer the poor becomes; the good wise man  
In wisdom yet increaseth; the sorry fool  
Loses last grain of wit; who knowledge hath,  
More knowledge wins, an ever swelling store;



And ignorance increaseth with the years:  
This, too, the Law of the Kingdom; he who hath  
Is more and more endued with that He hath—  
Graces, gifts, powers and joys inherited  
On entering the Kingdom; while slack soul,  
Who willeth not to enter, loseth that  
Of natural towardness he had before;  
With every day more alien be his tastes,  
Dull, his desires; he loseth that he hath!  
Therefore teach I in parables; for see,  
Isaiah's words, how well have come to pass,—  
“Hearing, ye hear, and no wise understand,  
Seeing, ye see, and shall no wise perceive:”  
For greedy, gross, is waxed this people's heart,  
Desiring that alone shall feed their lusts  
Of flesh or spirit,—lusts of meat and pride.  
Lo, therefore, deaf their ears to word of God  
And closed their eyes to aught but prideful shows!

[p 50]

A blindness is upon them, their own deed,  
And God's most righteous judgment; (for man's deeds  
His judges be, and in correction smite):  
Who would not see are blinded, nor can see;  
Who would not hear, unabled they and deaf;  
Heart cannot understand what neither eye  
Nor ear conveys of the eternal truth.  
How can these turn again as dutious sons  
And cry on God to heal them when no word  
Reacheth their understanding to convince?  
Indurate to all parable, these judge  
Themselves: and, if they can, let them excuse,  
And cry, “Dark sayings, who can understand?”

So spake the Lord, mercy remembering  
E'en in the act of judgment: who forgets  
Truth that is wrapped in tale? This shall return,  
Though trodden hard, or out of maw of bird;  
Still living is the seed, and shall bear fruit;  
And after thousand years shall still bear fruit  
A thousand and a thousand fold, those tales  
Let fall by Christ on seeming-careless ears!  
How wonderful Thy judgments, Lord, Thy ways,  
Past finding out! We, hard ones, how can we  
Thy Mercy's tender wiles discriminate!

[p 51]

But “Oh,” saith Christ, “blessed are your eyes which see,  
Your ears, for indeed, they hear! No blessedness  
Pertains to man so great as things to know  
Which belong to his life. That mystery, the wise,  
Sages and prophets, through all time have sought,—  
That mystery's given to you to see and hear,



That I demand of thee;  
How couldst thou know the breadth and height  
Of love and wisdom infinite?  
Canst measure the wide sea?

“Seed of the Word dropped in a soul  
Creates an instant’s stir;  
Be thine to know a life has come;  
See that thou cherish; give it room;—  
That nascent life, thy care!

“This, all the understanding thou  
Must bring to hear the Word:  
A very fool guards bit and sup  
Nor lightly oversets his cup;—  
So guard thou that thou’st heard!

“To receive the word that falls, thy part—  
Act well within thy power;  
The seed must needs its due fruit yield—  
So thou afford untrodden field;  
My covenant—sun and shower!”

[p 54]

“But what should tread the field, my Lord,  
Laid open for Thy seed?”

“Nay, many sowers go about,  
Vain teachers all, an idle rout,—  
To these, if thou give heed,

“And make thy heart a market-place  
With stalls for every ware,  
What growing place in thee is found?  
Would any look that fruit abound  
On ground trod hard and bare?”

“See then, My son, thou keep thy thoughts;  
Nor, easy-tolerant, let  
Thy heart become a beaten way  
Where vain conceits find place to play,  
But truth shall nowise set!”

[p 55]

XIII

*The “sower” explained.—2. The stony ground*

St. Matthew xiii. 20, 21.

St. Mark iv. 16, 17.

St. Luke viii. 13.

A MAN there was who one day heard

With great delight that living Word,—  
Lit up for him all common days,  
Taught him to comprehend God's ways,  
Gave peace in place of senseless strife,  
And noble purpose to his life.

He heard and talked and grew apace;  
With promise filled he all his place,—  
As seed dropped where the sun's rays fall  
And seasonable rains that call  
Of early green, a quick display,  
Promise of fruit some later day.

What if on rocky ground it fell,—  
For all its promise, is it well  
With seed in shallow soil that grows  
Where stubborn rocks its roots oppose?  
Who knows the word and does not love,  
His show of growth is all—above!

The tender rootlets are not fed  
From a full heart, nor nourishèd  
[p 56]

On meditation, prayers and tears,  
On loving hopes and tender fears,  
On all that substance of the heart  
In which the mind hath little part.

The man who was so glad to hear,  
His show of life so quick t' appear,  
Finds on a day that things go ill  
With him would word of God fulfil:  
His scruples stand in his own light,  
Nor let him prosper as he might:

Nay, wiser men he will flout  
This very Word:—Why such a rout  
For hindrances in thine own mind?  
If God there be, then is He kind,  
Nor visits with a rigorous hand  
Offence 'gainst even just command!

Half fearful, half persuaded, he  
Will, now, with this, with that, agree;  
Small persecutions soon assail;  
His hold on truth doth not avail,  
So shallow is the soil, to keep  
A heart where is of love no deep:

So tribulation's winnowing flail,  
Or persecution's fierce assail,

Shows this man's faith a passing phase,  
Not rooted firm beneath his days!  
He falls away, his promise green  
Withered ere any fruit be seen!

[p 57]

XIV

*The "sower" explained.—3. The seed among thorns*

St. Matthew xiii. 22.

St. Mark iv. 18, 19.

St. Luke viii. 14.

THIS other man, he hath a heart  
In which or wife or child hath part;  
Neighbour or friend or public weal  
Bears witness that this man can feel!

He hears the Word, and, lo, a shoot—  
The love of God—takes deepest root!  
He thinks upon the Father's grace,  
And tender tears bedew his face;

"Ah, make me worthy, Lord," he prays,  
"To glorify Thy love with praise!"  
So sprouts the seed, the roots strike deep—  
Sure *he* will his fair promise keep?

Alas, he hath a hundred cares  
Infesting e'en his secret prayers;  
His wife—how make her worthy place,—  
His child—how forward in life's race?—

His friends he makes his kind concern,  
And for the common weal doth burn;  
Riches and place, why, these he needs  
To give due scope for his good deeds:—

[p 58]

Well-meaning, he, but every hour  
Spent in pursuit of wealth and power—  
How shall that seed to yield be brought,  
Whose cult compels men's time and thought?

Anxieties and pleasures both  
For God's sweet service make him loth:  
With loving heart and willing mind,  
Yet fails he to yield fruit in kind!

[p 59]

XV

*The "sower" explained.—4. The seed in good ground*

St. Matthew xiii. 23.

St. Mark iv. 20.

St. Luke viii. 15.

THERE was a man who heard and thought;  
Who in himself conditions brought  
To foster that most precious seed;  
His honest heart with reverent heed  
Pondered the Word; he knew had come,  
With that blest Word, of life—the sum!

Now, good his heart as it was true:  
Debased affections might not sue  
Him from his part the Best had found:  
His love, his service, gathered round  
That living Word—his constant praise,  
Guide, Light and Comfort of his days!

No sudden growth marked this man's state,  
Nor went he forth with joy elate  
As one had found the good of life,  
For whom no more are cares and strife.

Poor man, he waited many a day  
Till plant of grace should fruit display;  
A withered blade, an empty ear  
Was all did to his sight appear!

[p 60]

Patient he waited still; said he,  
"My punishment no fruit to see!"

But what is this? Unworthy seems  
The life that he so fruitless deems;  
This man, he knows, bears sixtyfold,  
That other, thirty;—sure, so cold  
And barren soil for that blessed seed,—  
His Lord's reproach is all his meed!

The Master walks abroad and sees  
His drooping servant on his knees;  
What weighs him down? A hundredfold  
Of heavy fruit he scarce can hold!  
See you, the seed had grown, had borne  
Full-ear the while the man did mourn!

[p 61]

XVI

*Of the hidden lamp*

St. Mark iv. 21, 22.  
St. Luke viii. 16, 17.

NONE brings lamp under bed to hide,  
Nor under bushel lets it bide;  
But, worthily on stand decrees  
To place that light by which he sees.  
Thou think'st to screen My word with care  
Lest any see it shining there  
In secret place of thy close heart?  
The ostrich takes as wise a part:  
Thou hast a secret none may keep;  
The truth to all men's eyes shall leap,  
And all the folk who pass thee by  
Shall scornful to each other cry,—  
"Lo, here a man who hath the light,  
And thinks to keep it out of sight!"  
Dishonour hath he done to Me,  
And in men's slight regard shall be,  
Who holds the truth, nor makes it known,  
As it were for *his* wealth alone.  
The flame goes out, deprived of air;  
And, live wick smothered, shall he dare  
Move forward on his perilous way  
Unlightened by that friendly ray?  
Now let that man hath ears to hear  
Exalt the WORD and have no fear.

[p 62]  
XVII

*Parable of the tares and the wheat*

St. Matthew xiii. 24-30, 36-43.

A MAN went out and sowed his field  
With good seed, should large increase yield:  
His devoir done, the good man slept;  
Another, watchful vigil kept,—  
His enemy, who came by stealth,  
Sowed pestilent tares where all that wealth  
Of good seed waited sun and rain;  
These came ere long the seed had lain,  
And both seeds sprouted, wheat and tares,  
In multitude, defying cares  
Of anxious labourers to clear  
The crop had cost their master dear.

They came before their Lord; said they,

“Sir, was it not good seed one day  
Thou sowedst in thy field? Then whence  
Have tares come up for thine offence?”

The master heard, and taking thought—  
“An enemy this mischief wrought  
To me and mine,” he cried; said they,  
“Wouldst have us gather them?” But, “Nay,”  
[p 63]

Said he, “together let them grow,  
Nor try to weed out tares, lest so,  
Ye wheat as well as tares uproot:  
Let both together grow till fruit  
Of wheat is ripened in the ear!

Lo, then, my reapers shall appear!  
Then will I bid them, Gather first  
The tares that spoil my crop; accurst,  
In bundles to be burnt, these bind;  
But every ear of wheat ye find,  
Garner it heedfully, nor lose  
A single grain of my just dues.

The disciples heard and pondered long  
How tares should get the wheat among,  
And what the tares and what the field  
And who the enemy concealed:  
A symbol of the kingdom, knew,  
But failed to read its import true:  
Thrice happy men, these instant bring  
To Christ their troubled questioning!  
So soon as seated in the house—  
“This parable explain to us,”  
They cry insistent; He explains:  
“The Son of man sows the good grains,  
The words of life, with earnest pains.  
The field He sows in is the world:—  
Wherever seed of truth lies curled  
In sheltering folds of hearer’s heart  
Behold a man that hath his part,—  
[p 64]

Son of the Kingdom who receives  
That seed I sow and straight believes.  
But there be other sons abroad,  
Sons of that Evil One, whose word  
Accuseth, hateth, ever lies!  
These be the tares that strong arise  
In field I purchased for mine own.  
The devil, he this crop hath sown;  
The wheat and tares alike are green,  
Alike are goodly to be seen;



Both show alike the promise good  
Of men's abundant wholesome food.

The harvest is postponed long;  
Till end of the world the reapers' song  
Shall not be heard in field of Mine:  
The reapers be Mine angels; then,  
Shall they go forth to garner men;  
Like as the tares burn in the fire,  
So shall those shrivel in the ire  
Of the just Son of man who cause  
Weak souls to stumble, men to fall  
From grace of Him would save them all!—  
Who scoff and doubt or souls offend  
With evil courses to bad end.

As fiery furnace then shall burn  
Their thoughts when they the truth discern  
Impotent, they shall gnash their teeth,—  
Perceiving all that grace beneath  
[p 65]  
Whose sheltering they dared transgress;  
With cries and tears, they shall confess!  
Meantime the righteous enter in  
That KINGDOM they took pains to win.

“Who hath ears to hear, now let him hear!”  
The Master cried; and holy fear  
Possessed the hearts of all those men;  
Might they be tares, could they again,  
Despite of all His fostering grace,  
Offend their fellows, bring disgrace  
On Church of Christ,—by casual life,  
By proud opinions gendering strife,  
By holding up, men to mislead,  
Alluring lights that dead souls breed?—  
And each man questioned in his heart,—  
Could his be this so shameful part?

[p 66]  
XVIII

*Parable of the seed growing secretly*

St. Mark iv. 26-29.

THE Lord said:—  
God's Kingdom is as if a man  
Cast seed upon the earth; none can  
Do more than sow the goodly seed,  
Then go his way, not taking heed:

He slept by night, and in the day  
Worked he, or played, his wonted way.  
But while the man forgot to look  
The living seed its own way took;  
He knows not how, but surely, lo,  
He sees the seed spring up and grow:  
Nor comprehends how germ concealed  
In shrivell'd husk should be revealed  
As the green blade, full ear of wheat,  
As bread itself for men to eat!  
See ye, the earth the secret holds  
Of cherishing that she enfolds,—  
The good seed fostered at her breast;  
Sow ye the seed and leave the rest:  
Think ye the Lord had not prepared  
That soil in which His seed well-fared?  
By storm and sunshine, rain and dew;  
By drought and many labourers, due;—  
[p 67]

When work of every worm, each nought,  
Is to a sum of labour brought,  
Lo ye, His earth, prepared to yield,  
Is one prodigious fertile field!—  
A field thou find'st it, very good,  
With appetency fit endued,  
All eagerly to take that seed  
Thou scatterest with careful speed.  
And, see, returned in season due,  
A ripened harvest waits for you!  
The earth herself hath known to bear,  
First the green blade, and then the ear,  
Herself hath known the fruit to yield  
That, golden, gladdens all thy field.  
Put in thy sickle straight and reap  
A goodly harvest—thine to keep!

The disciples heard with joyful mind,  
Relieved that they might hope to find  
In hearts of men a ready soil—  
Prepared of God through age-long toil  
Of countless servants of His hand—  
To take the Word at His command,  
Bring forth and bear, to His high praise,  
Fruit of good works and holy days:  
For not a soul, from pole to pole,  
But of this seed hath desperate need:  
For never one but knows to hold  
And bring forth fruit an hundredfold:  
Their only business is to sow  
With sedulous care, seed, needs must grow.

[p 68]  
XIX

*The seed growing secretly—The Disciple*

INFORMING the void silence, dropping Seed,  
I heard and did rejoice!  
How apt thy word for my exhausted need,  
Engendering Voice!

My hungry famished soul puts eager forth  
Blind feelers for the Seed;  
Sure, I would cherish till it yield due birth  
Grain that shall feed!

And day and night I wistful come to see  
A seedling that shows green;  
Alas, no sign of things that virtuous be  
Is here, I ween.

Nay, worse; ill weeds do grow; good fruit is not;  
Or is not to be found:  
Sure, seed of subtlest virtue can but rot,  
Lost in the ground!

Then I bethought me how in former days  
Like droppings had I heard;  
And how I vainly watched for fruit of praise  
To prove the Word.

[p 69]  
And is this sound, grateful as brave June rain  
To trees whose hands hang down,  
But echo of desire? In sorry pain,  
I wept forlorn.

“Have faith,” saith One; “thou heard’st the sowing; wait,  
Till ripen’d in the ear,  
Corn stand for cutting: take thy sickle straight,  
Reap, then, nor fear!

“The harvest shall be thine, and thou shalt see:  
The growing of the Seed  
Is hid; a secret thou shalt leave with Me,  
And wait MY speed!”

[p 70]  
XX

*The mustard seed*

St. Matthew xiii. 31, 32.

St. Mark iv. 30-32.

THE Master paused, for in His eye  
The Kingdom showed all gloriously;—  
“Nay, how shall We make manifest  
To weary souls the Kingdom’s rest?  
What parable shall serve to show  
How sudden in its broad fields grow  
Least seeds of virtue, germs of faith,  
There where no harms have power to scathe?”

“A man took grain of mustard seed  
(So small a thing to take with heed!)  
He sowed it in his field, and, lo,  
E’en in a day he saw it grow;  
Week after week it still uprose,  
Higher than any herb that grows;  
Still higher scales the air, and see,  
That smallest seed become a tree!

“Its branches spread, great branches, they  
Give shelter from the sun’s hot ray;  
From storm and tempest, see, they shield  
The men and beasts are in the field:  
In them the small birds sit and sing,  
Seek here their nests on eager wing:—  
[p 71]  
This wealth of life doth all proceed  
From that so inconspicuous seed!”

The eager men thought they perceived  
This tale of th’ Kingdom them relieved  
From anxious care lest seed, so small,  
It scarce could yield a plant at all!  
With joy beheld they least of seeds  
Produce a tree for poor folks’ needs,  
Where sheltered souls sing blithe and play,  
And rear up broods as glad as they!

The Church, the Kingdom is, and see,  
A little word may bid it be:  
It spreads and grows and fills the field  
Which did one inch of surface yield  
For its first planting: See, it thrives;  
Men gather thick as bees in hives;  
In ’ts branches, straight, they congregate  
And bask them in so fair estate!

The Church itself, how small a thing  
That day ’twas planted by the King!

Twelve Chosen Men the mighty band  
Should carry Light to every land,  
Should conquer kings, peoples restrain,  
And, sin-diseased, make born-again!  
The secret of their power, that Word,  
Mighty to grow where it is heard!

[p 72]  
XXI

*The hidden treasure*

St. Matthew xiii. 44.

ANOTHER likeness of the Kingdom, see;  
And learn therefrom the part beseemeth thee:—

A man who dug his hired field  
Lit on an unexpected yield,—  
A buried treasure came to view:

Now, covering up the place, he ran;  
The worth of all he had, began  
To reckon up, if it might do,

Brought into sum, to buy that field  
Wherein the treasure lay concealed:  
All summ'd, in anxious haste he flew

To buy the field, and count the wealth  
That he had gotten (if by stealth):  
Of all he had stripped bare, look you,

The man made rich by sudden find  
Lives on his wealth with easy mind,—  
His ancient labours left for new  
And pleasant ways rich men pursue!

THE HIDDEN TREASURE  
Sir John Millais

[p 73]  
DISCIPLES pondered: what may mean  
This tale of field-trove never seen  
Till a man laboured;—then, gave all  
So he might his that treasure call:  
The treasure is the Kingdom, see,  
All unexpected come to thee:  
But not the while an idle mind  
Goes sauntering, with no thought to find  
Reward a labouring mind and heart

(Zealous to do their proper part),  
Discover to the ravished eye!

But 'tis a treasure thou shalt buy  
At price of all thou holdest dear:  
Come, reckon up, and have no fear  
Lest things thou leavest are worth more  
Than this—must be thy single store.  
There's ease and pride and joy of self;  
And wilful ways and love of pelf;  
There's flattery, and power and place  
For who will join the eager race  
To the world's winning post; there's sloth  
To labours of the spirit loth;

[p 74]

Why, come to reckon up, there's all  
The good I thought might e'er befall  
Some lucky man who had his way;—  
To part with all, and in one day!  
'Tis hard, methinks, for a poor man  
All he most blessèd straight to ban!

[p 75]

HAST counted, soul, the other side,  
The riches shall with thee abide  
Then most, when thou forsakest most  
Gains thou hast garnered at great cost?  
The earth is thine, and all its wealth,  
Sweet joys and pleasures for soul's health;  
Solace of Strength to lean upon;  
The grace of Goodness not thine own;  
Alliance with the KING of Kings  
WHO to thine aid His armies brings  
In every moment of distress  
When foes distract thee, ills oppress:  
There's peace when all around is strife;  
A child's glad-careless, happy life;  
There's quick forgiveness for thy sin,  
Ready or e'er thy prayer begin;  
And, O, my weary-wandering soul,  
There's One who hath the sole control  
Of all thou art and all thou dost,—  
Thy Master! whom to serve, thou must  
At fixed "Attention" stand and wait:  
No longer shalt thou runagate;

[p 76]

And, ah, what ease to be constrained  
To hold that substance thou hast gained!

Make haste, my soul, compare and try,—  
Sell thy poor dross, this treasure, buy!

THE LEAVEN  
Sir John Millais

[p 77]  
XXII

*The leaven*

St. Matthew xiii. 33.

A BLIND man held it lightly in his hand—  
The jewel that was left him, all his wealth;  
Nor saw its radiance, knew its worth: with eyes  
Impervious to the light, how see the glow  
That little star gives out with every ray?  
So found the Lord; how should He make men see,  
The glorious, radiant Kingdom—dark to them,  
A small thing and opaque, of splendour shorn,  
A little trifling toy not worth regard!

Another image took He: See yon dame  
Mixing her bread in trough; now, pours she in  
Water to hold the meal consistent all,  
And, kneading, to the oven straight conveys?  
Heavy and flat her bread, a weariness  
To him who eats, not satisfied, but sad  
With weight of food too leaden to digest!  
But, no; she brings a little leaven forth,  
Hides it in all that meal, and by-and-by,  
She comes to mix, and lo, the whole is light!  
Pleasant and good for food the bread she makes;  
The man who eats goes strong upon his way.

[p 78]  
The hearers pondered: What the leaven, then,  
(And what the meal) a little in the midst  
Will cause to rise, light bread to feed that flame,  
A man's consuming life, from day to day?  
The meal—is't all the loves and joys and hopes,  
The passions and desires, fill that trough—  
Man's heart, where he makes bread to live upon?  
Without the leaven, is all heavy, flat,  
Scarce to be eaten and endured as food,  
And yielding nought to nourish the starved life?  
And now, put in the leaven—hopes and joys,  
Thoughts, works, desires and loves—why, how they rise,  
A glad and light consistence, happy whole!  
The leaven, sure, the very Word of God,—  
Put in the trough of life transforms the whole  
And turns the heavy stuff to wholesome food!  
This, then, is like the Kingdom, how a man,  
Receiving Word of God in the very midst,

His life is bound in one consistent whole  
And he goes light; is bread that man may eat  
And nourish soul upon:—Thy Kingdom Come!

[p 79]  
XXIII

*The pearl of great price*

St. Matthew xiii. 45, 46.

A MERCHANT seeking goodly pearls went up and down the land,  
And now and then a jewel rare came to his eager hand;  
And here he sought, and there he bought, some pearl of value great;  
And folk said of this wealthy man, How waxeth his estate!

But when the man sat down to scan the pearls he'd got with care,  
Discerned he flaw in this one, stain or slight distortion there;  
His soul in loathing turned away from all that goodly store,—  
“O, found I but one perfect pearl, all these I'd hold no more!”

One day the news of such a pearl came to his ready ear;  
He sought the man who own'd the pearl; in anxious haste drew near—  
[p 80]

“Now, let me see thy jewel, hid in safe place and secure;  
That better it than be mine own, I would full fain be sure!”

He gazed with vast cupidity on that mild-gleaming gem,  
So large, so chaste, so perfect-pure! Abased, he clasped the hem  
Of th' owner's garment: “Now, declare,” he piteously implored,  
“If thou wilt sell this peerless pearl for all the wealth I've stored?”

Who owned the pearl gazed steadfastly, and thus at last he spake,  
As one that scornful sets a task not one will undertake;—  
“Go, sell thy goods, thy precious pearls, each costly thing thou hast,  
With price of all these in thy hand, why, we may deal at last!”

The man went sorrowful, for joy he'd found in things he had;  
How could he part with all that wealth had erstwhile made him glad?  
Long he debated; should he sell, or keep those costly things?  
The pearl persuades; he sells the whole, and all their value brings

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE  
Sir John Millais

[p 81]  
To purchase that mild-lustrous gem: he holds it in his hand,  
Takes it away with him, a joy, no man could understand  
But who had sought for pearls of price, and knew to value each,  
And knew that now he held a prize beyond hope's fondest reach!



So spake the Lord: disciples knew,—for little pearls they'd sought,  
Small pearls of pleasure, profit, play, advancement,—easily caught  
By any show of value in those trivial things they'd found;  
And, now they knew their little worth, would trample on the ground!

For, happy men, disclosed to them that Pearl of price so great  
The life of Him who offered it was added to make weight!  
But not a gift, this pearl of price; a man must sell his all,  
E'en to his secret thoughts, ere he that pearl his own may call.

[p 82]

At feet of Him who holds the pearl, his barren wealth must lay,  
And stand, a poor man,—amply rich in that he bears away:  
An image of the Kingdom see; learn how a man must trade,  
Sell all he hath that he may buy that Pearl for him uplaid!

That merchant who seeks goodly pearls of wealth or place or name,  
He, great of mind, of fortune great, an-hungered for high fame,  
At feet of Him who is that Pearl, these must he haste to lay,—  
A beggar seeking alms,—to go, a rich, rich man away!

[p 83]

XXIV

*The net cast into the sea*

St. Matthew xiii. 47-50.

AGAIN, the Kingdom is like net  
Cast into the deep sea to get  
What fish it meshes, without choice  
Of bad or good; fishers rejoice  
A heavy net to draw to beach;  
Opened, alack, disclosed to each,  
Are fishes of good sort and large,  
But many fish must they discharge  
In waste place of the world, for these  
Too small, too vile in kind t'appease  
The hunger of the meanest soul;  
The good, in vessels place they whole,  
The bad they cast away; for tried,  
And wanting found, these must abide  
Destruction, they must perish all,  
E'en though caught in the net's great haul!

The Fishers four pricked up their ear—  
They knew that net of which they hear  
Now, for the second time: but, hark,  
The Lord repeats not saying dark  
Just as at first; new word hath wrought  
Great thoughts within them, terror fraught!

[p 84]

What if the net *they* draw to land  
Should furnish nothing for His hand?

Forthwith the Lord explains: ye say,  
The Church hath sinners bad as they  
That never in the net were ta'en;  
Nay, worse are they, for they have lain  
Safe in the net, as they were Mine!  
Ye say, that holy souls must shine,  
Convince you by their righteous ways,—  
Then will ye come, nor make delays!  
But, see you, other is the part  
That net, My Church, plays in the mart,  
The field, the city, that wide sea  
Wherein men cast that net for Me.  
The bad and good are drawn within  
And dwell together,—grace and sin!  
Who knows but on some early day  
The bad shall turn them round and pray?  
But, pray they not, worse is their case  
That wilful, they resisted grace!

Thus shall it be; the world shall end,  
And that day I Mine angels send  
To sever all those wicked souls  
From them My righteous law controls;  
They shall be cast to furnace flame,  
Shall weep and gnash their teeth for shame!

Lord, if they weep, shall they do well?  
Thy fire purgeth, prophets tell!

[p 85]

XXV

*"Have ye understood?"*

St. Matthew xiii. 51, 52.

ALL day He sat by the seaside and taught;  
Things hidden since beginnings vague of time  
Disclosed He in dark sayings, parables:  
As a man discovering glories of a land  
Shows it in panorama, sheet by sheet,  
Ever new landscapes, each more perfect-fair  
Than that which went before, all various,  
And every one delightful, and all one—  
That land delectable the traveller fain  
Would show to homely folk who have not seen:—  
E'en so, the KINGDOM Christ unrolled that day

In many several aspects, so might eyes,—  
Untravelled in the regions where is God,  
To light of heavenly places all unused,—  
Discern some glimmer of the radiancy,  
Glad fruitfulness, fair justice, preciousness,  
That is—the KINGDOM! Weak, the eyes of men,  
So every heavenly aspect, shrouded, shines  
Through a dark saying few might comprehend!  
[p 86]

Now, Have ye understood these things? saith Christ;  
“Yea, Lord,” they answer; for the luminous words,  
So simple, little child might understand,  
Deceived the simple folk; they thought they knew,  
Nor dreamed that each, dark with excess of light,—  
Those parables the Master dropp’d as pearls!  
Then sudden darkness fell; the folk dispersed,  
Each to his habitation; idly told  
Of lamp and net and leaven, common things,  
A score,—on each the Master ready hung  
An apologue good for the ear to hear!  
But what might mean each story, mirror’d clear  
On untroubled surface of their idle mind,  
Concerned them not to know:—they went their way.

Ah, Lord, forefend that any word of Thine  
Should glance thus idly from this heart of mine!

Not so the twelve Apostles; pondered they,  
E’en through the long night watches. What might mean  
Each transcript of the Kingdom, sudden flashed  
’Fore unaccustomed eyes? What knew they now,  
Ungessed before, about that mystery  
The Kingdom of God—to be discerned alone  
[p 87]

By instant beam illuming, here and there,  
One single spot of that immensity,  
Infinite, blissful, not to be known of men!  
The words the crowd found easy, hard to these:  
The more man knows, more strange the mystery grows.

Much pondering, a few things got they clear:  
As palace of a king thrown wide to all,  
The Kingdom is for who will enter in!

The Kingdom is a threefold mystery;—  
Net, drawing bad and good, a field, with tares  
Agrowing ’mid the wheat,—the kingdom, here,  
That Church of Christ shall gather all men in!  
But all men in that field bear not good fruit:  
The faithful heart, the second mystery,  
That holds the Kingdom its one precious pearl

For which all loss is gain. Have I sold all?  
Am I indeed good ground? The anxious soul  
Queries persistent of its patient Lord:  
But not so much as this the soul shall know  
That in the Kingdom is:—Believing, go,  
And growing secretly, till that last state,  
The final mystery man may not conceive!  
See, graced to sudden mighty growth that seed  
Ye go to scatter free in all the world!

Thus dimly with uncertain eye they spell  
Those mysteries of the Kingdom Christ had taught:

[p 88]

But not one word these men let idly slip;  
For each, a treasure pondered in his heart,  
As good maid ponders speech of him she loves!  
And this His word to them: Now, go ye forth,  
Disciples of the Kingdom; rich are ye  
As householder with many good things stored:  
Bring forth things new and old for him who comes  
Hungry, to share thy ample plenitude,  
Athirst, to taste what wine of life thou hast!

[p 89]

XXVI

*His mother and His brethren*

St. Matthew xii. 46-50.

St. Mark iii. 31-35.

St. Luke viii. 19-21.

A WHISPER passes slow from mouth to mouth,  
From row to row, of them who sat and heard,—  
Vast multitude of eager listening folk;  
Man charged with message pulls his neighbour's sleeve;  
He twitches man in front and mouths the words  
His fellow passed to him; quick frowning brows  
Query, impatient, what 'tis all about,—  
This interruption, impertinent:  
At last a man stands up and cries aloud,—  
To stop this murmuring unbearable  
To the tense listening crowd—"Thy mother waits,  
Thy mother and Thy brethren fain would speak  
A word with Thee, they stand without."

Remote,

On the far edge of all that breathing throng,  
The little family group impatient fret  
That He, their very own, should give Himself,  
Unheeding all their claims, to public use:  
Wise in their generation, they foresee

[p 90]

Trouble will come of popularity  
They, jealous, eyed, nor understood at all!  
Impotent, they assert a right to stop  
The SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD in that slow work  
Wrought line on line for man's Salvation.

Sure, He who taught men goodness would show forth  
All a son's duty, all a brother's love?  
But there be nearer ties than kith and kin;  
The truth that a man lives by, more to him  
Than dearest bond of mother, wife or child;  
New law of spirit-kindred speaks the Lord,  
Relationship within the Kingdom's bounds  
Reaching to none outside, nor mother dear,  
Nor wife nor tender child; but, ah, enhanced  
A thousandfold, the love that binds these close,—  
Included in the Kingdom!

He answered straight,—

Who is My mother? and My brethren, who?  
And looking round on them that sat about,  
He stretched His hand toward them, His followers,  
Disciples of His choice;—Behold, saith He,  
My brethren, these, My mother, all My kin!  
For see, we be, all ye and I, one kin;  
One Father own we,—Him which is in heaven,  
And all our part, to do our Father's will:  
That will, came I to manifest to men,

[p 91]

And whoso hearing hastes My Word to obey,—  
That man, My brother; woman, sister dear!  
The will of God, the one strong law of men;  
Obedience, sole tie of tenderness  
Shall outlast flesh and blood, proclaim to men  
Paternity divine of sons of God.

[p 92]

XXVII

*"The same is My mother"—The disciple*

ALL his rest is on her arm;  
She, his only shield from harm;  
She doth his sole meat supply;  
All his joy is in her eye.

Helpless, that is not his care;  
A burden, she is strong to bear;  
Fragile, will she not forefend?  
Ailing—soft, her love shall tend.

Jesus, Saviour, Son of man,  
Who camest, Infant of a span,  
Was Mary Thy one Mother mild,  
Or art Thou ever born a Child?

My trembling heart doth in me burn;  
There, perchance, shall I discern—  
Though the stall be all defiled—  
The tender form of Christ the Child:

Is there One, a little One,  
Who lieth sweetly as a son—  
All His meat, the Father's grace,  
All His joy, the Father's face;  
[p 93]  
Rueing not His feeble state,  
Fearing not the ills that wait,  
Safe, nor asking why, nor how—  
Jesus, then, not I, but THOU!

Other fearsome inmates there;  
Evil dragons, giant Care;  
Hope, joyous, sees them led in thrall,—  
This "Little One" shall rule them all.

[p 94]  
XXVIII

*Rejected*

St. Mark vi. 1-6.  
St. Matthew xiii. 53-58.

NEW lessons duly given, new work done,  
The ten great Parables, as planets, shot  
From the hand of Him who made, to run their course  
Eternal in those heavens where souls of men  
Seek light of star to guide; finished, this work—  
Perfect and very good—the Lord departs.

Wistful o'er them of Nazareth, pleasant folk,  
Around whom cling all memories of youth,  
He thither goes with train of loyal men,  
Disciples, with their Lord. The Sabbath come,  
Again He teaches in their synagogue;  
Again, they wonder at the mighty words  
Proceeded from His mouth: alack, the day!  
What hostile power compels that men repeat  
That error has condemned them? Astonished, they,  
But not to their salvation: "Pray, who is this  
That comes amongst us with such mighty words?"

Where hath he learned this wisdom? Bears it seal  
[p 95]

We recognise, of doctor of the law?  
And by what right performs he mighty works  
Unauthorised of our rulers? Year in, year out,  
Have we not known him well, a working man,  
A carpenter who did small joiner's tasks?  
His mother, too, is she not Mary called,—  
James, Joseph, Simon, Judas,—all we know,  
His brethren, sisters too, belong not all  
To family of decent working folk  
Here living in mean street? Pray, who is this  
Assumes to teach his betters, would know more  
Than scribes and doctors teaching in our midst!”  
Just indignation filled them, as when one  
Teacheth new doctrine, credentials having none.

Offence they take, and Jesus tells them why:  
Ever He placeth finger on the spot  
Where lurks disease; a principle reveals  
To guide those men and all men in like case:  
What His offence? That He belonged to them:—  
“No prophet in his country shall find grace;  
Strangers shall hear his word, but not his own;  
No honour hath he of his kith and kin,  
Of them in his own house; not there his work  
Of saving grace and service shall he do;  
For none can work beyond the measure strait,  
His fellows grace him with of generous trust.”  
Poor city, Christ went forth and did no works—  
[p 96]

Save that He laid His hands on few sick folk—  
So hindered Him, these men, by unbelief!  
He, who knew man, astonished went away  
At the great marvel of their vast unfaith;  
How could they see and hear nor know the truth!

Why are those bristles in a man erect  
Against that neighbour, better than the rest,  
Not yet due stamped with hall-mark of the world?  
The world approving, we delight to praise;  
His glory makes us great; meantime we wound  
With unbelief, contempt, a thousand pricks  
That neighbours know to make their neighbour smart.  
Is't envy that consumeth all our power  
Of upright judging, knowing what is true?

Neighboir to every man, the Lord remains;  
Still are we envious of His place and power,  
His right to lead us, utter the last word  
In all conflicting cries that vex our days!

A man like us, men say, what doth He know?  
What right hath He to order wiser thought  
Than any man discerned in those dim days  
When Jesus walked the plains of Galilee?  
Offended at Him, we, and turn deaf ear!

[p 97]

Still wistful, waiteth He our slow relenting,  
And meantime He can do no mighty work,—  
Sudden uplifting of all people's hearts—  
Hindered, His grace, by our crass unbelief!  
A penny piece shall hide the orb of day,—  
Our little faithlessness put out our SUN!

[p 98]

XXIX

*He could do no mighty works there*

St. Matthew xiii. 58.

St. Mark vi. 5, 6.

AND is it true He doth no mighty works  
In this our England, grown so scanty dear  
To the cold sons she nurtures at her breast?  
Where be the men of might, the giant race,  
Who did great things in our midst! Now, where be they  
Whose pulpit thunders shook a nation's soul?  
Or they, sweet souls, who filled a little space  
But walked with God, and sang, and still their song  
Droppeth as dew on souls dried up and sere?  
Tinkers enow have we, but where that one  
Who knows to mend a broken Pilgrim's heart  
So it shall hold the red wine of God's grace?  
Do poets "justify the ways of God"?  
Who painteth a great picture, men shall bear  
With allelulias through their crowded streets  
For its witness to th' ineffable mystery—  
All the world's wonder—Immanuel, Virgin-born?  
Where be the willing folk who bring deft hands,  
Wrought stone, or wood, or vessel choice of gold,  
To raise a sanctuary shall for ever show  
That, *there*, the centre of the people's life?

[p 99]

Do mighty voices shake our Senate House,  
Enunciating, not expediency,  
(Vain god we bow before,) but principle,  
Pure patriot-principle, sure word of God?  
These have been; are they now?

Who tells a tale

Shall open all men's eyes to see the way  
Men work on men, and nature lays cool hand,



And God holds every issue,—tho' the NAME  
Be little named on the pleasant page?  
Who rears his child to know that one sole aim  
Shall dominate his days; for God, in God,—  
His steadfast purpose, his supremest joy?

Not gone are they, the mighty works of old;  
Latent they lie, as Sleeping Beauty bound,  
Till magic kiss of faith shall wake them up;  
Then, see—they stir, they rise, stretch hands, try strength,  
Ope eyes and go forth, strong and fair to bless  
Mankind,—those mighty works our God doth keep  
Sealed 'neath His hand till men shall come in faith!

We cry on Thee, our Lord, increase our Faith!  
Bid us from quest of her we call "the Truth"—  
Vain births of scalpel, microscope, and text  
Minute-dissected till its life evade  
Hard methods of the scholar. These be true;  
[p 100]  
True, gutter-children speak unseemly words;  
But, therefore, childhood is unlovely? No!  
True, there be pimples on an aged face  
Which art may picture all a pimple-patch  
Nor see the beauty life and thought have wrought;  
True, textual error may impugn a phrase;  
These things be true; but make not that full-orbed  
And radiant Splendour we may name, The Truth—  
Proportion is whose essence, faith whose life,  
An all-embracing wisdom, whose content,  
And CHRIST, her sole supreme Embodiment!

[p 101]  
BOOK III  
ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM

[p 103]  
XXX

*He stilleth the storm*

St. Mark iv. 35-41.  
St. Luke viii. 22-25.  
St. Matthew viii. 18, 23-27.

EVEN was come upon a day  
When Christ had laboured long; always,  
Multitudes pressed to hear Him speak  
Or healing from His hand to seek.  
Outwearied, entered He a boat;  
The disciples, ever quick to note

Each indication of His will,  
Quick followed Him: there's wind to fill  
Sails of the little craft; saith He,  
"I would from all the folk be free  
A little space, repose to take;  
Go we to other side of lake."  
E'en as He was, they took Him then,  
And launched the boat, those fisher men:  
(Some other boats were with Him there;  
Sea-wise, would they that crossing dare?)  
Scarce had the skiff got under weigh  
Than sleeping in the stern He lay,  
His head upon a pillow low—  
Poor couch, His friends had made Him so.  
Now, black the restless waters grow  
'Neath clouds as black; the wild winds blow  
[p 104]  
With steady stress from angry skies:—  
Such sudden squalls must needs arise  
In mountain lands; and neighbours told  
Of awful risks to those, o'erbold.

The skiff leaped high, the skiff sank low;  
"Sure that will waken Him!" but, no;  
He lay serene in slumber bound,  
Through strife of elements around.  
Great storm of wind upon the sea  
Their vessel filling, "What doth He  
Asleep, while we, in jeopardy?"  
Half-angry, cry they, yet refrain  
From rousing Him for all that strain.  
At last, they venture; scarce can they  
Get at Him for the monstrous fray  
That winds and waters wild create;  
They wake Him,—soon 'twould be too late!  
"Our Master, hast Thou then no care  
That we are battling 'gainst despair?  
Thy love goes sleep, nor shields us, poor,  
Who for Thy sake the storm endure!  
Save, Lord, we perish!" Lo, He wakes,  
And first, that storm of fear that breaks  
Tumultuous through their cries and fears,  
He chides, or e'er their prayer He hears—  
Grants peace from tumult of the storm  
Whose perils, sure, excuse alarm!

Then, He arose, where none could stand,  
And issued, kingly, His command:  
[p 105]  
"Peace!" saith He, and the waters drop  
To their low level; rude winds stop:

And a great calm falls all around—  
A stillness, wonderful, profound,  
So men might hear the Voice of God  
Control rebellious storm and flood!  
“He stills the raging of the sea!  
His servants, floods and tempest be!”—  
Frighted, exceedingly, they cry,  
Those men who saw their God so nigh!  
“Who then is this?” they fearful ask,  
“Who bringeth winds and seas to task  
And they obey His potent word—  
As children by command deterred  
From small rebellion, little flight  
Of mischief’s furtive fond delight?”

Rough winds, wild waves, sank soft to sleep  
At word of Him who knows to keep  
These in the hollow of His hand,  
Obedient to His least command.  
These were rebuked, nor these alone;  
The disciples heard His awful tone:—  
“Why are ye fearful?” asked the Lord,  
“Not yet know ye to trust My word?  
Not yet are certain I command  
Those adverse powers on every hand?  
Not yet assured that I fulfil  
For least disciple all his will?”

[p 106]

Why should ye fear, when I refrain  
The hearts of princes, winds restrain?  
Have I then taught you all these days  
Nor know ye the first word of praise,—  
That trust in Me, that mighty faith  
Which knows not fear in life or death?  
My labours, have they been in vain,  
That ye no certainty attain?  
Turn back, poor souls, and learn ye well  
Faith’s earliest rudiments to spell!”  
Like chidden children, low and meek,  
The disciples find no word to speak!

We know the tale; have we not quailed  
A thousand times when fears assailed,  
When all our sky was overcast,  
Nor spot of standing-room, earth-fast,  
Might our wild staggering steps sustain—  
Ah, then, ’fore God, how we complain!  
“Nay, tell me not a God of love  
Ruleth men’s fortunes from above!  
I, but a man, would never, sure,  
Let them I love like ills endure!

Then if a man be tenderer far,  
What proof have I that God doth care?  
Nay, I will call on Him and cry—  
'Is't nought to Thee that I should die?'"  
Of "little-faith," we speak this word,  
And through the din a voice is heard:—  
[p 107]  
"Peace," restless tumult of wild cares,  
"Be still," ye dreadful fears, despairs;—  
And sudden are we isled around  
In God's peace, infinite, profound!  
Those things we dreaded cease to vex,  
No perils, tumults, more perplex:  
To the dear feet of God we come  
Like timid child afraid to roam.

To whom then spake the Lord that word of peace,  
So sudden soothed the sea, bade storm to cease?  
Could the insensate waters hear His word,  
The winds, are they by utterance deterred?  
Or hath He given a word, a mystic key—  
Which opes an instant's space, that we may see  
Mystery of things unseen,—"the Prince of powers  
That hold their sway in air?"—This world of ours,  
Is it administered by myriad sprites  
Lab'ring for man's diseases or delights?  
Be these, the angelic host His voice obey,  
And those, the wilful spirits of decay  
Who haunt waste places, bid Malaria breed  
And waste with horrid pains the human seed;  
Who in our dense-thronged cities find a place  
Where they make free to decimate the race;  
Who vex the seas, consuming fires, fan;  
And move unstable earth to 'whelm vain man?  
[p 108]  
Be these the secular works of them whose choice—  
Obedience to an evil Father's voice,  
Whose works they do; and, labouring at his hest,  
Continually the sons of God molest  
E'en as they did whilst earthly frame they wore,  
In mischiefs yet increasing ever more?  
Was it to these Christ spake, and all was still,—  
For these, unwilling servants of His will,  
Compelled to do His pleasure? All the harms  
With fell care they accomplish, dire alarms,—  
What do they all but summon to the fight  
Strong Daughter of the heavens, Science, hight?  
See how her Knights go forth in eager haste  
To combat unseen dragons of the waste!  
See how they fall and die, one, two, a score,—  
Science, uncowed, but sends forth Knights the more!

Full fell the conflict; victory is sure,  
For Knowledge, born of Him who doth endure,  
Knows no relaxing, failing, in her course,  
No pity hath she, knoweth not remorse;  
Toward noxious things, Destruction is her name;  
For whatso worketh benefit, this same  
Servant of God, as Progress, shows to men,  
Beneficent in action: every ill,—  
Unwilling instrument to work His will!

They who worked ill, hap, evil works still do,  
Divested of the flesh; but these—the few  
[p 109]  
Be they, or many—ever gathering host,  
Whose days are spent in seeking out the lost,  
In serving Christ in ways Himself made plain,  
What state of blessedness do these attain?  
Sure, their works follow them; they still go on,  
Still wait their Master's word,—“Servant, well done!”  
And, cities many under each one's hand,  
Sweet graces work they at divine command!  
There be the flowers to cherish; fair trees, shield  
From mischief gnaws their vitals; make corn to yield  
Due bread for men; the sick at heart and sad  
With unseen ministrations to make glad;  
To carry on in ways these had designed  
The works good men, perforce, had left behind;  
Poor wandering souls they hasten to retrieve,  
With whisper of love's Sesame,—“Believe.”

What next, we know not; whether grace of God  
Will conquer all vexed spirits of the flood—  
All waves of the world which we misname our life—  
And bid them cease from tormenting and strife,  
Allay their fever in that sea of peace  
Where e'en the wicked shall from troubling cease,—  
This may we hope from Him whose name is love!  
Meantime, we know that Voice, uproar above,  
Nor dare disquiet us, how rough the sea,  
Lest He should chide our faith's inconstancy!  
[p 110]

“What stuff is this!” saith one who knows the hour,  
And how, as long ago, fair Nature's power  
Is dominant and sole o'er land and sea;  
And man's whole part, to learn how those things be,  
She, cunning, doth combine and bring about!  
“Science, our sole deliverer from doubt;  
And all her work, to watch the subtle ways  
Nature employs. What room for spirits, then,  
The souls, forsooth, of good or evil men!”

“Nay, but, have souls no part in scheme ye praise?  
What’s flesh? Slight curtain drawn to screen the light  
From soul, would not in th’ open of men’s sight  
Its secret energizings manifest;  
But Soul, (or mind, or principle you choose,)  
Lays herself out that ‘Nature’ she may use  
To turn her wheels, her ships to carry straight,  
To yield her triumphs, till she soar elate,  
Sole-sovereign of that Sovereign rules the earth!”

“Why, yes; in mind of man must come to birth  
Due recognition of those laws benign,  
Once learnt—and man’s estate is half divine!  
But, see, that body you despise, the mean  
Whereby we contact reach with things unseen—  
Those very laws that rule us! Naked Soul,  
How shall it ’stablish contact with the whole—  
[p 111]  
How, smallest lens or wheel in right place set?  
How, power to move least mote of matter get?”

“Lo, there, the mystery! That day we find  
How a man’s hand is governed by his mind,—  
The Tree of Knowledge in our garden-plot  
Shall grow for our using: miracle is not  
For him who knows how spirit, matter, rules;  
Till then, we ponder, test,—and own us fools!  
Who knows but Death, a higher state, may yield  
That knowledge to our searching not revealed;  
And naked Soul be free to work its will—  
Or, mountains move, or bid wild waves be still!”

[p 112]  
XXXI

*The demoniac restored*

St. Mark v. 1-20.  
St. Luke viii. 26-39.  
St. Matthew viii. 28-34.

THEY reach the other side, and, on low strand,  
In country of the Gerasenes they land;  
Come down to meet Him, see, terrific sight,  
Man naked, savage, fierce,—a sorer fright  
To the disciples than the storm, allayed  
By word of Him who “peace,” on instant, bade:  
But, here, a soul tossed by its secret pains,  
Not to be held with fetters; iron chains  
Asunder rent he; no man’s strength could hold  
This wretch who night and day, through heat and cold,

Made awful wastes more hideous by his cries,  
Gave terror to the tombs, where, see, he plies  
Sharp stones upon his flesh, and cuts and tears;—  
And fearful shepherds from that region scares!

And, lo, the man saw Jesus from afar,  
Cried out and ran and fell,—but knew a bar  
'Twixt him and the Son of Man: “What then have I  
To do with Thee, Thou Son of God most high?  
Let me alone nor torment with the sight  
[p 113]

Of all Thy grace! By God, I Thee adjure,  
Leave me at large to wait the issue sure  
Of Thy last judgment! Why, before that day  
Wilt Thou torment us? Prithee, go Thy way!”  
For Christ addressed Him to that power within  
Which drove the man to raging, rebel sin.  
“Come forth,” He bade, “spirit unclean and vile,  
Whose constant lust is to destroy, defile!  
What is thy name?” And, cowed, he made reply:  
“Legion, my name, for many devils cry  
And rage in this one soul given up to us:  
Nay, send us not away, but bid us thus;—  
Say, get ye to that herd of swine ye see,  
Enter to them, and let this man go free!”

He gave them leave; and all the herd, distract  
By strange unease, put their brute strength in act;  
In sudden violent rush vent their distress,  
And plunge from precipice, hot-foot to press  
To the cool waters of the sea for ease  
From intolerable burnings of disease.

The men who fed them haste with panic tale  
To their masters in the city. “What avail  
To feed and guard the swine when one doth come  
Able to 'gulph two thousand in that tomb  
Of the deep sea whence none shall be restored?  
[p 114]

The man possessed with devils, sane is he,  
But at what cost—nay, come ye out and see!”  
And all the city came to see this thing—  
How rebel spirits succumbed to the King!

There, terror of those wastes, the man sat low  
At feet of Him who had subdued him so;  
Sat clothed (in garments the disciples lent?)  
Restored to sense and goodness, solely bent  
To keep him in the presence of the Lord,  
Knew to deliver him with potent word!  
And were these glad to see their brother healed,

To see that urgent need of men revealed—  
The Power could reach th' ultimate source of sin,  
Spirits of evil let to rule within?  
Knew they no hellish promptings in their heart  
That they dared pray Him from their coasts depart?  
Did no good angel hold them from that prayer  
Of whose presumption hardly were they 'ware?—  
Who held them from their gains—an enemy,  
Himself by right should perish in that sea!

And Christ—the Saviour, yielded to their fear,  
For never prayer falls idle on His ear!  
The Gerasenes' inhospitable land  
Affords no spot of earth where He might stand  
To heal and teach and bless that barbarous race:  
Rejected,—meek, took boat to quit the place!  
[p 115]

But who is this in haste and all distraught,  
With love and terror torn, urgent besought  
That he might be with Him who knew to save!  
The Lord regarded with look, steadfast, grave,  
This new disciple; faith and love discerned;  
Knew how great longing for His service burned  
In that poor soul late outcast of his kind:  
“Return,” saith He, “to home and friends, and find  
Amongst thine own how best thou shalt serve Me;  
Declare to them how God hath dealt with thee!”  
Now, will this man respond to that sure test  
Christ offers each disciple—laying hest—  
A task of lesser things, on him would great  
Love-task for Him perform? The man went straight  
To his own city; published 'mongst them all  
How Christ alone was mighty to enthrall  
Legions of rebel spirits, cast them out:  
This told he in Decapolis, round about  
Coasts of that land which had the Lord refused,—  
And set men marv'ling while the tale they mused.

Why, here, a tale to scoff at! All men know,  
Science the story flouted long ago!  
A joke, forsooth, that devils should on swine  
Spend their fine spirit-essence, half divine;—  
[p 116]

That there be devils, spirits, Power to deal  
With that which no man can or see or feel!—  
“Nay, we be flesh and blood: we comprehend  
Such things as reason sanctions; let us end  
Vain talk of devils, spirits of the air  
Able to reach our sprite, its motions, share!  
That which we see, believe we, right or wrong;  
The rest hold we but as an idle song!”



In sooth, we know not; nought can answer these—  
Accept, reject, with unconcern and ease!  
Like him went down to Ethiopia, we,  
Bewildered, read, nor can the meaning see:  
This thing we know: In that tumultuous scene,  
Our Master moveth Godlike, kind, serene:  
He seeks no audience, asks no ready praise,  
Concerns Him not to justify His ways;  
Rejected for His grace, He makes no plaint,  
But tender-wise, lays He the soft constraint  
Of His command upon the man He freed  
From awful bondage:—this, our simple creed,—  
None other than the Christ hath been conceived  
By genius, or of credulous souls believed,  
Could move through like wild scene with grace benign,  
Transcendent in simplicity Divine!

Not we, what moves the strong demoniac, know;  
Like figures skating on thin ice we go;  
[p 117]  
Speak of the weather, that man's easy gait,  
That other,—awkward; sorry we were late!—  
Sudden, a crack! quick sinks our airy grace,  
Submerged in that cold dread Unseen!—No place  
We found; for in our cheerful hours,  
Condemned we as illusion, fear of powers  
Ill of intent who labour to destroy;—  
We chose the pleasant paths and shunned annoy!

This other thing we know: In awful hour,  
Consumed of passion, hate, wild lust of power,  
Our raging spirits tear their heedless way  
To end we covet, scorning reason's sway;—  
Sudden, we hear a word—"My son, be still!"  
And all that tumult succumbs to His will:  
Humbled and sorrowful, we seek our place  
At the dear feet of Him whose Godlike grace  
Subdued demoniac more wild than we,  
And bade him forth—Christ's messenger to be!

[p 118]  
XXXII

*The maiden raised—The woman healed*

St. Mark. v. 21-43.  
St. Luke viii. 40-56.  
St. Matthew ix. 18-26.

THE little maid was sick; how fair she lay,—

Her beauty quick-consuming in decay!  
Father and Mother hung o'er their one child,  
Refraining for her sake their 'plainings wild:

Then one came in and spake of Jesus' power,  
Said, He was nigh at hand that very hour—  
"Go, fetch Him to the house!" the Mother cries;  
And spurred by eager hope the Father flies:

Ere very long he met Him on the way,  
But hemmed in by vast crowd; what hope to say  
That potent word, a father's passionate prayer,  
Should move Him to compassion? How declare

To Him, in midst of multitude, how dear  
The little Daughter, lay to death so near!  
But now, Jairus presses through the crowd,  
Falls low at feet of Jesus, cries aloud,—

Photo, Hanfstaengl  
THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER  
Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout

[p 119]

"My little daughter is at point to die,—  
E'en now she might be saved, wert Thou but by!  
Come, haste Thee to the house kind hands to lay,—  
With healing touch drive fell disease away!"

The Master said no word, but rose and went;  
Disciples, multitude, with one consent  
Pressed on and thronged the Saviour; lo, a pause,—  
Christ Jesus stopped and cried—(now what the cause?)

"Who touched my garments?" All the crowd denied,  
And Peter, ever forward, stood and cried,—  
"Master, Thou seest men throng Thee round about,  
Why askest then who touched Thee?"—"From without,

One touched, for virtue hath gone forth from ME:"  
Then looked He round that trespasser to see:  
A woman, trembling, shamed, her act revealed,  
How she had dared to touch Him and—was healed!

[p 120]

For twelve long years—the time the child had seen  
All her glad days—had this poor woman been  
Deprived of joy in living by disease;  
Of means to live, drained by physicians' fees!

She heard of Him nor money asked nor price;  
Secret, contrived a woman's shy device;

“For if I can,” saith she, “but touch the hem  
Of His garment, lo, a single touch shall stem

Tide drains my life away!” So she drew near,  
Touched, and was healed: but durst not, she, appear  
Before His face to own the thing she’d done;  
And healing got she as by stealth alone!

A hungry man snatches a loaf and flies,—  
But had he waited, seen the kindly eyes  
Of liberal baker on his famished face,  
He had been bold to ask a loaf, of grace,

Not furtive steal it, adding shame to need:  
And this the lesson the dear Lord took heed  
To add to healing the shamed woman took,  
The while love waited for her in His look!

Then, gently, “Daughter, be thou of good cheer,  
Thy faith hath made thee whole; go home, nor fear!”  
[p 121]  
“Daughter,” saith He, “so worthless I, and bad!”  
His word beyond His healing made her glad!

Meantime the ruler waited, hot in wrath;  
Now who was this presumed to cross his path?  
Sudden his anger cooled; from house one came—  
“Why troublest thou the Master? All’s the same

To her thou lovedst if He come or stay;  
Thy daughter’s dead, her spirit passed away!”  
The Lord, who knows the ache of every breast,  
To sorrowing father word of cheer addressed,—

“Nay, heed not what they say; do thou believe,  
And, lo, thy living child thou shalt receive!”  
As they draw near the house, the mourners’ cries,  
Sombre and shrill, from stricken home arise:

The crowd urged forward, but the Lord forbade:  
His four disciples only with Him stayed,—  
The maiden’s father, mother, these the few  
Suffered by Him about as near He drew

To th’ young dead maiden. Shrilly flutes annoyed,  
The crowd’s loud mourning tumult, peace destroyed!  
“Give place,” saith He, “why make ye this ado?  
The child but sleepeth; she shall wake anew.”  
[p 122]

They laughed in scorn, knowing that she was dead.  
He put them forth, and drawing near the bed,

(Only the maiden's parents standing by,  
And the four who followed Him): "Maiden, 'tis I,

Who come to bid thee rise!" He took her hand,  
So tender to the tender maid, bade "Stand!"  
Her spirit come again, she rose and stood,  
Lifted her eyes in hardly conscious mood,—

Whence had she come? What wonders might she tell  
To her rejoicing parents, how there fell  
Upon her ear, removed from sounds of earth,  
Voice able, there, her spirit to bid forth

From where is never substance, touch or sound;—  
Frail voyager come back from the Profound  
Where spirits be, to take her place again,  
A little daughter in the homes of men!

But He was there Who called the darling child,  
Assured already by His aspect mild:  
He bade them give her tender care and food;  
And while He blessed the child, her parents stood

[p 123]  
Astonished out of measure at the might  
Of Him had known to summon from the night  
Of awful Death their Daughter!—"See ye keep  
A secret, how the Maid was waked from sleep!"

Shall we wake up, dear Lord, and find Thee there—  
Uplifting naked Soul with tender care?  
If death be but a tryst we keep with Thee,—  
Lo, we are coming, Lord, our babes and we!

[p 124]  
XXXIII

*Two blind men restored, and the dumb made to speak*

St. Matthew ix. 27-34.

NEVER to see the redness of the dawn,  
The tender hues of eve;  
Never perceive—  
From all that knowledge comes of sight, withdrawn—  
When friends do grieve;  
Or, be there happy smile on face we love,  
How shall joy move  
Our fellowship when we no sign may see?  
In desolate places must the blind man be.

This blind man hath a brother found, one blind  
Like him, shut out from sight  
Of all delight;  
Like him, alone amongst his friendly kind  
Who see the light!  
Together make these their own little joys;  
Escape annoys  
In talk of all those things move a man's heart  
Then most, when he from others goes apart.

Photo, Hanfstaengl  
CHRIST HEALING THE TWO BLIND MEN  
Duccio

[p 125]

To-day, great news stirs those two lonely souls;  
Friends give them news of One,  
Great David's Son,  
Who all afflictions of mankind controls,  
Speaks, and 'tis done!  
The blind go seeing and the deaf men hear!  
"Nay, then, shall fear  
Keep us from Him the King of men, so great,  
Alone, He rules man's intimate estate!"

Lo, He comes by! They follow—cry on Him;  
Eager and loud they cry,  
Lest He pass by,  
Nor ever hear their voice nor know how dim  
To sightless eye  
Are all delights of beauteous world He made!  
"Have mercy!" said  
The two blind men—His mercy all their plea,—  
"Have mercy, Lord, and bid Thy servants see!"

Entered the house had Christ, and bade them rise:  
One question asks the Lord,—  
"Think ye My word  
Is able to give sight to darkened eyes?"  
The blind men heard;  
With leaping heart together they cried out  
Without one doubt,—  
"Yea, Lord, we know that Thou canst bid us see!"  
"According to your faith, so shall it be!"

[p 126]

He touched their eyes—so potent and so kind  
A touch, sure never fell,  
So soft a spell,  
So quick, as made to see these two poor Blind!  
Ah, it was well  
With them that day when seeing, forth they went

And knew Christ sent—  
Deliverer of poor souls in darkness lay,  
That they might share the gladness of the Day!

One other prisoner groaning in the pit  
He passeth in His way;  
The light of day  
This man perceives; but silent he must sit,  
Nor word can say  
Of thoughts all turned to bitterness that surge  
And utterance urge  
Of his sealed lips: Christ's pity set him free!  
"He makes the dumb to speak, the blind to see!"—

Cried out the marvelling multitudes amazed,—  
"Our Fathers never saw  
Since came the Law,  
Prophet could thus set captive prisoners free!"  
To Thee draw we,—  
We who go blind to Thy sweet ways of grace,  
Nor see Thy face,  
Nor with glad tongue Thy tender mercies own—  
Except Thou pity, Christ, we are undone!

[p 127]  
BOOK IV

#### THE BEGINNING OF THE HOLY WAR

[p 129]  
XXXIV

#### *In Galilee—Mission of the Twelve*

St. Matthew ix. 35-38; x. 1-4.  
St. Mark vi. 6, 7.  
St. Luke ix. 1.

NOW, all the cities Jesus went about  
Teaching in synagogues; to poor, unlearned,  
Preaching words of their life; did any ail,  
He healed,—in village, city, open waste!  
Multitudes, souls distressed, cried out on Him,  
Revealed that hunger no man had supplied—  
For word of God to strengthen. Scattered sheep,  
That went unshepherded till Jesus came!

The Christ, perceiving how the people fed  
On milk of the Word like babe at mother's breast,  
Went out to them as mother to her young  
In wistful pity, would upgather these,

His babes distressed and scattered, wanting milk!  
The mother who hath sons, babes of her womb,  
Distressed and scattered on a foreign shore  
Where no man pities, gives them bread to eat,  
Some measure hath she of the heart of Christ  
Beholding how His children go unfed,  
Unguided in a land where, for His sake,  
None comforts them with love nor feeds with grace!

[p 130]

Ah, Christ, give us compassion, that we go  
To teach Thy scattered folk the thing we know!

Were those at hand the Lord would send with bread  
Hither and thither where the hungry be:  
Nay, they themselves a harvest ripe to cut,  
Plenteous and bountiful—that multitude  
Hung famished on His word! Then turned He round  
To His disciples: Have ye understood  
How all the poor stand ready to your hand,  
A golden harvest to be gathered in?  
Say ye, they know not letters, have small need  
Of that which feeds man's spirit? Nay, I say,  
Each hath been sown of God, and reared, and waits  
That word shall as a sickle cut his heart  
And lay him ready to be garnered in  
To th' Kingdom he was made for. Pray ye, then,  
The Lord of the harvest labourers to send  
East, West, and North and South, lest this good grain  
For want of harvesting rot on the ground:  
Plenteous the harvest, but the labourers few!

Then called He forth the Twelve, the Chosen Men,  
Should speed His message to remotest shore:  
And two by two He sent them, lest their heart  
Should fail them in an alien world alone.

[p 131]

With rich endowment sent He these abroad—  
Graced with authority, His proper part,  
To cast out devils, all diseased to heal,  
And preach to men, The Kingdom of God is come!  
The message still is ours to spread abroad:  
Creative Energy, His attribute,  
But lent He for those early days of the Church,  
The Bridegroom yet at hand, or scarce withdrawn!  
We know the Twelve, can name the blessed names  
Of them went with the Lord, the Gospel learnt  
At the very lips of Christ: thus charged He them:—

[p 132]

XXXV

*Charge to the Twelve*

St. Matthew x. 5-15.

St. Mark vi. 8-11.

St. Luke ix. 2-5.

“Go not in way of the Gentiles; nor so much  
As enter city of Samaria;  
To Israel your message; speak it there  
Where be the chosen people.”

(“But, why, dear Lord? The very words of life,  
Be they not for us all?” Yea, but, perchance,  
The Sower sows where soil is full prepared,  
And God had not made ready.)

“To My lost sheep of Israel shall ye go—  
Unshepherded of any, for their lords  
Do take at will the good things of the Word  
Nor feed the sheep, an hunger’d.

“Poor sheep, tell them, the Kingdom is at hand  
Where God doth rule, His people feed and play,  
And gather duteous at their Father’s feet  
Whilst He discourseth music.

“And find ye hindrance, be there many sick,  
Lepers unclean and poor souls devil-bound,  
Nay, be there very dead,—be not constrained,  
By any evil hindered.

Photo, Alinari  
CHARGE TO THE TWELVE  
Beato Angelico

[p 133]

“Behold, I give you of My potency,—  
That which is God’s—Authority to deal  
With every evil doth oppress man’s state:  
Then, freely give ye likewise.

“Rich go ye in my gift and carry wealth  
For healing of the nations: take ye not  
The wealth of men, or gold or brass in purse;  
No virtues be in these things.

“No, not so much as wallet shall ye take  
To hold the alms of th’ faithful: nor take shoes  
To ease the heavy ways, nor second coat  
Nor staff, nor crust for your need:



“Am I not with you all the way ye go?  
Doth any Lord send famished servants forth  
To do his bidding? Am I less than these?  
Assured My servants’ bread, then.

“For, worthy he who laboureth for Me,  
And each householder shall My Almoner be  
His table to provide, his needs supply—  
Who faithful bears My message.

“That roof is honoured which doth shelter you,  
So find out who is worthy ere ye lodge;  
Then enter and abide the while ye stay  
In that same city, village.

[p 134]

“Enter that house with reverent salute,  
Nor cross ye arrogant the man’s threshold;  
And, lo, your peace shall as a river flow  
In that house, be it worthy!

“Unworthy is the house, its inmates all  
Given o’er to lust of flesh and lust of eye!  
Though ample meats they offer, go ye thence—  
Your peace departing with you.

“Go ye to village where no man will hear,  
Where chaffering and feasting all their care,  
Nor have they leisure for one thought of Me!—  
Leave ye that house, that city:

“But, for they have defiance cast at God,  
Rejecting you whom I sent for their help,  
The very dust shake off your feet in sign  
God also them rejecteth.

“One speaks a word, and he who hears it goes  
Or thinks upon it or light lets it pass;  
What matter, saith he, for a spoken word,  
Is a man bound by sayings?

“But, I tell you, a man’s most chief concern  
Is not with work and circumstance of life;  
'Tis by the words he hears a man is judged,  
And how he doth receive them.

[p 135]

“Therefore, no virtues, sins, cross accidents,  
No prospering or failure can at all  
Compare with words ye speak to damn a man  
In judgment, or to save him.

“And whatso town refuse to take you in

Or hear the priceless words ye bring to them,  
They have condemned themselves; Gomorrah's sin  
And Sodom's less than theirs is."

Ah, Lord, make us to know what things import,  
And how the word received by us is more  
Than any wealth or loss; that we be judged  
By that we hear and hold by!

And, Lord, make us regard our city's ways,  
Labour that all the folk discern the truth,  
Nor toil for spurious values, tinsel shows,  
But know, Thy word—their treasure!

[p 136]  
XXXVI

*The charge—Of dangers*

St. Matthew x. 16-23.  
St. Mark vi.

I SEND you forth, My friends, as simple sheep,  
    With ruthless wolves about;  
Harmless as doves in all your goings keep,  
    The serpent's guile without;  
But see ye learn his wisdom; quick to see  
    When danger comes your way;  
Hunt they, wide-mouthed, upon you? turn and flee,  
    Nor fall, a heedless prey;  
For, more than your own life guard ye with wile,  
    My Word is in your hand:  
See that ye guide your ways with innocent guile,  
    And keep ye in the land!

Beware of men, I say; alert are they,  
    On every hand they wait;  
That they may learn? Nay, watching night and day,  
    Then are they most elate  
When unconsidered words put in their power  
    The lives of simple men,  
My servants; before Council in that hour  
    They bring you; and again,

[p 137]  
In synagogue they scourge you; stripes two score  
    Save one, on you are laid;  
Their Kings and governors arraigned before,—  
    Your testimony's made!

Nor take ye heed how ye that witness bear,  
Nor anxiously forecast;

The Spirit shall Himself be with you there,  
'Tis He shall speak at last!  
And ye, content, perceive that words have come  
Beyond your power to think:  
“Now, gladly would we be thus ever dumb,”  
Ye cry, as low ye sink  
And praise your God who hath deliverance brought  
In that so perilous hour;  
The Spirit of your Father, He hath wrought  
Wisdom in you, and power!

But ah, My children, hate shall hem you round,  
And all for My name's sake;  
Brother, his brother shall deliver bound  
To them his life will take:  
Nay, father with his own child by the neck  
Shall come before the judge,  
Witness shall bear against him, nor shall reck,  
Nor blood of offspring grudge!  
Now, what strange sight is this? A son draws near,  
His mother in his hand;  
He tells, how she the Christ doth reckon dear,  
So brings her by command!

[p 138]

The blood of her who bore him sees he fall,  
Nor groans aloud nor weeps;  
Madness of hatred doth his soul enthral  
And him from pity keeps!  
See ye, no easy service have ye ta'en,  
Who under Me would serve;  
But, come ye to extremity of pain,  
E'en then will I preserve!  
Wise in your generation shall ye be;  
When persecutions rise,  
Into another city take and flee,—  
For, long serves he who flies.  
Ah, Lord, was ever following won by Chief  
With words presaging loss, disaster, grief!

[p 139]

XXXVII

*The charge—Of fears*

St. Matthew x. 25-37.

WOULD ye then go at ease, your Lord oppressed?  
Nay, be ye as your Lord,—rejected, poor,  
From no rude insult shielded: have they not  
Confounded Christ with devils, deeds benign,—  
Blasphemous, to Beelzebub ascribed?

Shall ye fare better than your Master? Go  
Observed and honoured where your Lord's condemned?  
My service great estate conferreth not  
On him waits My commands; go, seek ye then  
Another service for a prouder pay  
If Mine content you not.

But have no fear,  
Electing, ye, to stay with Me and serve!  
Their ways are known of God, their secret thoughts,  
And private things men whisper and conceal,  
Plots laid with craft, false witness cunning-taught,  
And guileless men these compass to destroy—  
All these shall show in the light and men shall see:

[p 140]

When God himself is judge, why should ye fear?  
Lo, what in darkness speak I, in dead hour  
Of silent night drop in your wakeful ear,  
That word shall ye make known, shall cry aloud  
Insistent, till men hear for all their noise;  
Courageous, cry from the housetops, nothing feared  
For missiles and hard words against you hurled.

My friends, there is but one whom ye shall fear;  
Not them who kill the body—what of that,  
Killed for My sake, alive for evermore!  
There is, who worse death works—through fear or sloth,  
Or selfish love of ease or greed of gain,  
Bids men eschew My service—fear ye him  
Who knows to kill men's souls; none other fear!  
But ye, why should ye fear? See yon small birds,  
Two sparrows for a farthing, poor men's meat!  
The birds are dear to God; not one shall fall  
But He takes notice: are ye less than they?  
Weary you not with thought of all the world  
Hanging dependent on the Father's care,  
And ye—so small, what mattereth your fate?

But understand, each one hath place with God  
As stood he single in the universe!  
How shall one make you know the Father's care,  
How intimate, how tender! Consider, ye,—

[p 141]

The very hairs of your head be numbered all,—  
The finger-scratch, small ache that vexes you,  
The garments of your choice, all little things—  
Are noted, fatherly, by Him who made,  
Sustains and wise-chastiseth. Fear ye not!

Ye men who hear My word, to you hath God  
Given chance of great obedience; go, confess  
The Lord ye serve before men—remembering

The day shall come when all men, gathered, wait  
The judgment of the Father: then will I  
Go, take him by the hand who Me confessed,  
And straight before My Father in high heaven—  
“This man is My own friend,” shall I declare:—  
He that denies shall that day be denied.

Think not the Prince of Peace sends peace on earth;  
A sword shall go before Me, sets at twain  
A daughter and her mother, father and son,  
Till they of a man’s household be his foes!  
The son shall love the Christ, the father, hate;  
And he that hateth, run to testify,—  
“See, this, my son, a follower of false gods,  
Of Him they call Messias! I bring him you!  
The Law, look you, is more than flesh and blood,—  
So take my son; nay, kill him an ye will!”

[p 142]

None shall be safe; relations peep and pry;  
Who speaks with whom, they note, and catch stray words;  
“Lo, she is of that sect, and he, and he!”  
They cry to Council, delivering them to death.  
Mother will plead that day—“For my sake, son,  
Give up strange doctrines and obey the Law!”  
But whoso loveth mother more than Me,  
Father or son or daughter,—for their sake  
Wills to deny his Lord,—that man, I say,  
Is not found worthy of Me. Other loves  
A man shall hold in My love; none prefer!  
What father keeps his cherished son from risks  
Attending his King’s service? Am I less,  
That ye should slight and set My name aside  
When perils threaten? Say ye, “Life is sore  
When one’s against a household, when all vex,  
Incessant argue, plead and press their cause;—  
Might but a man keep silence, all were well!”  
But, I say, he that loveth kith and kin,  
Father or child, or his own easy life,  
More than he loves his Master, unworthy, he,  
To get that Pearl of price, that Sum of life—  
Christ, who will give HIMSELF to him who loves  
As bridegroom gives to bride—reserving nought!

[p 143]

XXXVIII

*The Cross—The Master*

St. Matthew x. 38, 39.

My children, see, before you as ye go,

A shape of dread;  
Close as your shadow, ever lying low  
On path ye tread—  
See its two arms extended, straight mid-line—  
Ye know the sign!  
Image of shame, it is the Cross ye see,  
Cross raised for Malefactors—and for ME!

And ye who follow shall take up your cross,  
Nor fear the shame;  
Shall suffer gladly ignominy, loss,  
Good neighbours' blame:  
To stand ye well with men, seek not at all,  
But give ME all!  
The thing ye shrink from, hate, that go and do,—  
Lo, I am with you alway, the day through!

None followeth Me but lifts and bears that weight  
Through slights and scorn,  
[p 144]  
Through trials manifold, through anguish great,  
Despised, forlorn!  
Disciple, he, who bears the bitter cross  
To this world's loss:  
See, he is worthy of that fullest bliss,—  
Reserved for him who loves—The Bridegroom's kiss!

But he that finds his life, its grace and joy,  
Men's praise, success,  
Who spends his easy days without annoy—  
He shall go less!  
The life he chooseth shall elude his grasp;  
His fingers' clasp  
Shall not retain those joys he held so dear;  
ME hath he bartered for things small and near!

But who for My sake his dear life shall lose—  
Each fond delight,  
Each pleasure perilous shall straight refuse  
In My sole might,—  
I tell you, that he gives, he finds again;  
And every pain  
Sustained for Me becomes a jewel, wrought  
In that fair crown for him on Cross I bought!

[p 145]  
XXXIX

*A passing cross—The disciple*

MY soul, and whence is this to thee!

Would'st know if so great marvel be,  
That Jesus Christ should condescend  
To dwell, thy close, abiding Friend?

Ask not alone of gracious moods,  
When peace with wings of healing broods,  
And meekness, love, and patience sit,  
Disciples, at those wounded feet.

If Christ doth truly dwell in thee,  
Uneasy Inmate will He be;  
A heavy Presence, sighing, sad,  
Shall oft defy thee to make glad

With any joy that sense can bring;  
In vain thou stirr'st thy heart to sing  
As though no care oppress'd thy state;  
A Man of Sorrows, He doth wait

Till thou be moved to hear His plaint;  
Till thou perceive it is thy taint,  
The plague spot of an alien heart,  
That moves Him to so sad a part!

[p 146]

And then—ah, when, His grief made thine,  
When penitence, sharp grace divine,  
Doth the corrupting spot atone  
In tears, all His, and yet thine own,—

Thy springing heart, a child's again,  
Forgetting all the former pain,  
Is jocund with the temper'd mirth  
Of souls new wash'd to their new birth!

[p 147]

XL

*A secret cross—The disciple*

A FATHER, who his sons would send  
To goal remote for weighty end,  
First called, and bound on each the load  
Whose conduct safe upon the road  
Was their chief care; on each that share  
His strength just fitted him to bear.  
At first scarce noting that they bore,  
Anon the burden presses sore  
Upon the weaker of the two.  
The father, wise, had out of view  
Bound on their backs the load; now he  
Doth bring it round, its bulk to see;

Then in his hands doth poise, and sigh,  
And to his comrade dol'rous cry,—  
“My brother, do but feel the weight!  
How walk, sustaining such a freight?  
Nay, rather, let me ease on thee  
But one end of my load, so we  
May go with equal pace!”—Agreed,  
But ever tardier proves their speed:

Uneven steps, ill-balanced weight,  
Doubles for each his former freight.—

[p 148]

“Good brother, couldst thou bear the whole?  
I know thee strong, a valiant soul,  
And I so weak! full sweet it were  
Thus onward in thy strength to fare!”  
Forgetting that he bears behind,  
The brother yields, ere long to find,  
A wisdom surer than his own  
Had given a burden which, alone,  
Was all his strength could well sustain:—  
“Nay, thou must take thy load again,  
It is too much; and why shouldst thou  
Go free, whilst I twice-burden'd bow?”  
Whereat his brother plains and frets,  
But still to take his load forgets:—  
“I thought thou lov'dst me; now I know  
Thy fondness but a treacherous show!”—  
Thus, hearts divided, thenceforth, they  
Fall out and strive upon the way.

All other burdens men may share,  
And brother, kind, for brother bear;  
'Neath Self, must each soul go alone!—  
Nor for this isolation moan,  
Nor pity thee that none may know  
Thy craving Self's peculiar woe:  
Nor sympathy, exacting, crave  
For every mood or gay or grave;  
Nor entertain thy brother's ear  
With all thy hope and all thy fear;

[p 149]

Nor tell each trifling discontent  
Another's heedless ways have lent;  
Nor thy more intimate concern—  
How love grows cold, how love doth burn,  
Nor how thy prayer doth not prevail—  
Make not of secret grief thy tale:  
Bear it, an unregarded weight,  
With forward step, eye steadfast, straight,  
And, lo, forgot, it disappears,



The burden that oppress'd thy years!  
Another, tenderer yoke is laid,  
Whose heaviness is all o'erpaid  
By the sweet sense of service given;  
Bearing, thou mov'st to-day in heaven!

[p 150]  
XLI

*The Cross—The disciple*

Isaiah liii. 2.

FAIRER than all the sons of men,  
Lovely beyond high seraph's ken,  
The beauty of the Lord our God upon Him,—  
O wherefore say'st thou we should not desire Him?

A sacrifice, with red wounds scarr'd;  
Ah, pity He should be so marr'd!  
But dear love tokens are these stripes upon Him,  
And more than any grace do bind us to Him.

Fast bound, a living sacrifice,  
With silent lips and patient eyes,  
And outspread hands that grasp not any treasure,  
And nailed feet that move not on His pleasure:—

Looking, our hearts do sink in fear;  
Seen from afar, how fair! Drawn near,  
The vision of the Lamb appals! Sore paineth  
Us, this continual Dying that constraineth!

[p 151]  
XLII

*The charge—Of receiving a disciple*

St. Matthew x. 40-42.

WHO opes a door of welcome wide  
And prays that ye with him abide,  
Who spreads his best to entertain,  
Tho' all his best be poor and plain—  
That man another guest receives;  
Behold, his King doth come that day  
With the poor, humble man to stay!  
Nay, God Himself doth condescend  
To visit that man as His Friend:



Trembled they for the thought of prisons, stripes,  
All perils them awaited? "Freely give,  
For freely have ye gotten," was His word;  
And burned their hearts as they told o'er the coins  
Of priceless truth they carried—mighty freight!  
Which first to spend—that simple tale of Sower,  
Or Christ's words of the New Law and the Old,  
Or tale of some great sign their eyes had seen?  
As purse compact so full no single coin  
Can we dislodge but all come pouring forth,  
E'en so these men, who such full treasure held,  
Scarce could they pick out small coin for the way!  
"Let's take the path to yonder village; lo,  
That word most fit shall come to us at need!"

[p 155]

XLIV

*The mission—The first Two*

THEY reached the village; lifted voice  
To arrest the passers: bade, "Rejoice,  
The King is come, Messiah all men wait;  
Come, press ye through the Kingdom's narrow gate!"  
Men gave a passing glance—scarce lent an ear;—  
What was't to them Messiah should appear?  
Busy were they with great concerns;  
"Who has to till the soil, he learns,"  
Say they, "that every idle tale  
Must not to stop men's work prevail."  
This one and that had each bought field;  
Inquired, anxious, of its yield,  
And whether millet, corn or vine  
Were best for first crop to assign:  
"Poor dreamers, these, now what know they  
How men must toil all through the day  
Shelter to keep above their head  
And get their little children, bread?"  
Said labouring men, and turned away,  
Nor would mere words to hear delay.

[p 156]

This friendly man said, "Come and sup,"—  
But would not take their doctrine up,  
Nor for an instant lend a listening ear  
To all they would unfold of hope or fear!

Sad, they went forth from village street,  
And shook the dust from off their feet!

[p 157]

XLV

*The mission—The second Two*

THESE other Two to city came;  
In crowded streets they would proclaim  
Him, came the multitude to teach;  
Here, like their Master, would they preach:  
A haughty scribe gibed and passed by;  
Priest, arrogant, aloud did cry,—  
“These ignorant, why come they here  
Us to instruct, and have no fear?”  
The people hear the scornful word  
Their rulers speak: lightly deterred,  
They quit the men whose words had seemed  
Touched with a glory they had dreamed.  
Alone, rejected, stood the Two,  
But yet their mission would pursue:—  
“In yonder street, perchance, there be  
Men less averse to Christ; go we  
And tell them of that gracious Lord  
Who bade us hither with His Word.”  
They spake, but no man stopped to hear;  
Full of diverse concerns appear  
The poor and rich alike; what heed  
Give they to tales of “lamp” and “seed,”—  
[p 158]  
Such themes were as an idle song,  
Powerless to stay that busy throng!  
They, sorrowful, departing, must  
Shake from their shoes that city’s dust.

[p 159]  
XLVI

*The mission—The third Two*

A BLIND man at the city gate  
Begged alms begrudged,—ah, wretched fate!  
The Two just entered stood and gazed;  
Soon gathered there a crowd, amazed  
That any should regard the sight  
Of man, deprived of heaven’s light!  
The Two conceived the poor man’s state,  
And understanding, pity, great,  
Melted their hearts: they spake HIS Name  
To witness of whose grace they came:—  
“In name of Jesus, ope thine eyes!”  
The folk await what comes; surprise  
And mocking insolence contend  
In every mind,—“Why, here’s a friend  
Worth having, if His name suffice

To open blind eyes in a trice!"  
But, see, the man first looks around—  
Gone mad with sight, leaps from the ground!  
A radiant joy his face illumines,  
Air of a free man he assumes,  
He sees and looks and looks and sees  
Men's faces, branches in the breeze;  
[p 160]  
The blessed sun, all life's sweet shows;—  
Then, grateful, falls at feet of those  
Conferred inestimable boon  
And made him see! The people soon  
Pressed close; recovered of amaze,  
Fixed on the Two their ardent gaze,  
And listened long and learned well,  
What those Apostles had to tell.  
"Nay, leave us not thus soon," they cried,  
"Within our city's walls abide  
Till many hear the wondrous news  
Ye bring of Him, the Christ." "Refuse  
Not shelter of a poor man's roof!"  
Cried one till then had stood aloof:  
They went with him and there remained  
For many days, and still explained  
Such mysteries of the Kingdom as they knew;  
And many sick they healed and great signs did they do.

[p 161]  
XLVII

*The mission—The fourth Two*

"YOU'RE welcome to my house, good friends,  
But who his proper business tends,  
He can't give heed to doctrine strange,—  
Matters so far beyond his range  
He could not comprehend, not he,  
Thought he of nothing else! For me,  
I leave such questions to the priests,  
Whilst I lay fodder for the beasts  
That well repay my kindly care:  
I go e'en now to see how fare  
Five yoke of oxen I have bought;  
Sufficient for my time and thought  
To prove how these will go in plough;  
Small time for dreaming farmer hath, I trow!"  
So spake that man, nor gave the Apostles leave  
To show him of these things he should believe:  
The day's work all his care, he went his way:  
The Two had come to him might not delay  
In village prosperous where that man dwelt,

Where all men's thoughts with crops and cattle dealt:  
What need had they of more? The Two depart,  
Dust shaken from their feet, with sorry heart.

[p 162]  
XLVIII

*The mission—The fifth Two*

“NAY, foolish fellow, I have wed a wife!  
Know what that means and you may talk of life!  
What's this of Kingdom, pearls, a Lord t' obey?  
The word shall rule me, my own wife doth say!  
'Tis but a few days since I made her mine;  
Scarce have I watched her eyes grow soft and shine,—  
And ye would have me turn my thoughts away  
From her, delight of days! Why, e'en the Law  
Allows a man a year ere it would draw  
Him from his new-made wife for any cause;  
Are ye, poor dreamers, greater than our laws?  
Ye talk of faith and joy and that vast prize  
He takes who lays up treasure in the skies:—  
'Tis here and now that I my treasure taste;  
There's nought but love; and he whose hope is based  
On love of wife or child or tender friend,  
Their fond embraces, of his days, the end;—  
Why that man takes and eats, as he goes on,  
Of fullest joy man knows beneath the sun!”

[p 163]  
So prated he, and sealed th' Apostles' lips;  
For who in fleshly slough his senses dips,  
His thought is drowned: of Christ, what need hath he,  
In sensual transports, all whose raptures be?

[p 164]  
XLIX

*Love's ordering: A paraphrase—Disciple*

1 John iii. 18.

SAY'ST, “love is sweet,” young heart,  
“A natural law, and light?”  
Thou know'st not love: thy poorer part,  
The sensible delight  
Affection stirs in nerves and blood,—  
So fond, so fervent, now;—and now, averted, rude.

Holy is love; hedged round  
With fiery “shalt not:” hear  
What disabilities do bound

True love; lest it appear,  
Condemned in that thou dost allow,  
Thou, willing what love ought, to do discern not how.

In word shalt thou not love:  
Ah me, all dulcet dreams  
And “tender morning visions!” when to prove  
Himself the god he seems,  
Thy love lifts gates that shut him in  
From empires Olympian, sweet awards to win!  
[p 165]  
Plainest, “hard the measure,  
Ungenia is the law,  
That would ban life’s tend’rest pleasure!—”  
Nay, then, didst never draw  
On dreams of service to reprove  
Return thou thought’st too measur’d for unorder’d love?

Nor shall thy facile tongue  
Love’s sacred substance spend  
On the sweet tale too frequent sung.—  
Thou question’st, “to what end?”  
Alas, young heart, vows seal the eyes!  
What if thou miss some altar, set for sacrifice?

Wouldst know the worth and meed  
Of love thou crav’st to speak?  
Appraise alone by duteous deed,  
Or by refrainings meek.  
One further doubt;—dost lay out love  
With narrow merchant thought, return in kind to move?

Nay, but love thou in truth,  
And not for any hope,  
But fervently, in loyal sooth:  
Though deed should win no scope,  
Yet hath he love’s divinest part  
Who truly bears another in his steadfast heart!

[p 166]  
L

*The mission—The sixth Two*

INTO poor city came the other Two  
Where was disease and famine: “Let us do  
What may be for these men; speak words of peace  
Shall instant bring the suffering soul release  
From intolerable bonds of his distress:—  
‘Friends, suffering friends, we bring but words to bless,  
But, pray you, hear of Him, has come to reign,

Men to release from hunger, sin and pain! ”  
They told in tender words how Christ for men  
Full forty days had fasted; hungered, then,  
Satan solicited with every wile  
He useth fainting outcast to beguile;  
And how, for men’s sake, He repelled attack—  
That never sufferer, anhungered, lack.  
“Words, idle words,” a hardened fellow cries;  
“Where is the man with words his meat supplies?”  
But all the people knew them fed and eased  
By thought of Him who graciously was pleased  
To suffer hunger, every poor man’s pain,  
That famish’d men to fulness might attain.

[p 167]

“Nay, share our scanty meat, with us abide,  
Your words be bread to us!” the people cried:  
And there through those distressful days they stayed,  
And ministered with healing; preached and prayed.

[p 168]

LI

*The death of John the Baptist*

St. Mark vi. 17-28.

St. Matthew xiv. 3-11.

SEE, in grim fastness by Dead Sea,  
Unwonted signs of revelry!

Soldiers and servitors about,  
Bold chafferers with noisy rout;

Gay cavalcade and grave, great lord,  
To council called, or festive board;—

By all these signs, the King, we know,  
Come with his ladies, lords enow:

The desert he makes populous  
With all his train tumultuous!

See, Herod sits in state amongst his lords,  
Who watch his eye, acclaim his vainest words:

The wine flows free; the king has liberal grown,  
No churl is he to-day, but spends his own:

[p 169]

Who enters there? A maiden rare to see,  
Intruder on the royal revelry:



Now, see her dance, give play to all her grace,  
Till sensuous rapture shines on every face:

Salome, daughter of a mother wise,  
Displays her graces in the monarch's eyes,—

A draught for every lip at royal board;  
The King is grateful, nay, he will accord

Gifts fair, most rich! Now see him in his wine  
Rise, liberal, to give: "It shall be thine,

If half my kingdom serve thee! Have no fear;  
The boon thou cravest shall not prove too dear,

Too hard for him, the King, thou grac'st to-day  
With thy fair beauties' generous display!"

"My opportunity!" Salome thought;—  
"Now, what to choose? estates, or slaves, or gold?"

Bewildered, all embarrassed by too much  
Almost in grasp,—"I'll to my mother go!

[p 170]

This moment is too golden for my use;  
The Queen will better know to name that gift  
The king in his cups would grace me with to-day!"

Her mother sought she, (who had decked her out,  
Foreseen the issue, waited eager, strain'd,  
To learn,—the king did generous incline  
To give the utmost Salome should beg):  
"What shall I ask, my mother?" Never doubt  
She had her answer ready: "What to thee  
The King's most lavish gift—to half his realm?  
Hath the King aught that is not mine and thine?  
How shall he give thee what e'en now thou hast?  
We lift full cup—but poison's in the draught;—  
My life's abhorrèd for John Baptist's sake!  
Would I were dead, unknowing how the King  
Lends ear to John; grave, ponders all his prate,  
And tells me, *me!* how sore his conscience works,  
For John hath bid him put away his wife  
Due-mated to another! Herod is weak!  
Why heeds he all this talk of righteousness,  
Of tempered rule of flesh,—judgment to come,—  
That day by day to hear he seeks out John,  
Unkingly, in his dungeon? leaves my side  
In hour of dalliance sweet; at public joust

Allows me to sit alone while steals he forth  
To sit at feet of his prophet—so he styles

Photo, Medici Society  
THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST  
Group of the Pseudo-Blesius

[p 171]

This bedouin of the desert!—trembles to hear,  
(And tells *me* how he trembles!) this rude man  
Denounce to his face the King, his nobles great,  
The careless ways of th' court, and chief of all,  
The Queen he hates—knowing the easy king  
Would yield him to his guidance, I, removed!  
Now, mark me, girl! A day will come, and soon,  
Your mother's blood shall wash away that sin  
John tells him he hath done in wedding me!  
No rest, no joy have I, nor sleep nor play  
Yields me an interval of pause from thought,—  
How I shall compass his, my enemy's, life!  
He, dead, full easy sit I on the throne  
With none to share dominion o'er the king—  
His public acts and his most secret thoughts!  
But, John alive, tasteless as Dead Sea fruit  
Those envied honours, riches, reverence, joys,  
Fall to my share as Queen!

“And yet thou ask'st,

Callous of heart as young things wont to be,  
Askest with puling innocence, forsooth,  
'What boon, my Mother, ask I of the King?'  
Return to th' feast, cry out before his lords,—  
'Give me John Baptist's head!' Herod, ashamed  
To break his silly word 'fore all his court,  
Will straight commission one to go with axe,  
Cut head from his body—would that I were there!—

[p 172]

No puling, now,—in the King's presence wait  
Till he come back—red axe, and bleeding head  
Borne stately on a charger; steady thy heart;  
Lift thou with thine own hands the ghastly dish,—  
Bring hither to thy Mother! She will bless  
(If any God hear prayer of blood-stained lips!)  
The daughter who by one consummate act  
Shall ease her Mother's life of every grief!”  
Salome heard, infected by the rage  
Of love and jealousy, wild headlong hate,  
Her mother's words imparted: forth she went,—  
In strength of borrowed passion, begged her boon:  
And he, the greatest born of woman, fell,  
Slain by a woman's hate of righteousness!

[p 173]

LII

*John the Baptist*

No great man lives in vain; the tale is told  
A hundred ages after, how he, bold,  
Went forth to meet the dragon, slew the beast,  
While the delivered kingdom, glad, increased  
In wealth and peace and happy progeny,  
And blessed their saviour—sure, a great one, he!  
Some, great, with poet-words go forth to bless,  
And some, with mighty deeds of righteousness;  
Some, fruit of knowledge snatch from branches high  
Of sacred Tree few men are bold to try.  
What then did John that we should know him great,—  
Aware he hath enriched each man's estate  
Of them that have come after? What owe we  
To the Great Baptist? Thankful, would we be!

Image of dread, axe laid to root of tree,  
Threatens our hours of wilful levity;  
That life in desert spent, devoid of ease,  
Chides us at moments we the flesh would please;

[p 174]

That ringing cry, "Repent, God is at hand!"  
Hear we when in the ways of sin we stand:  
And, ah, the grace that cries to men, "Behold  
The Lamb of God!" when hearts are proud and cold  
As flesh of the dead, and all because of sin!

Sure, a great thing, by steadfast thought to win  
A single Nature-secret for men's use;  
Or, thought, the world had hardly thought before,—  
One guiding principle of life, from store  
Eternal in the heavens, by which men live!  
John's greatness 'twas, a few great thoughts to give  
As bread to famished men; his flashing word  
Is quick and powerful now as when first heard:  
For evermore we know—Christ shall increase,  
And we, in growing less shall find our peace:  
We know,—a man receives nor more nor less  
Than God bestows; the Good we take and bless  
The Giver, grudging not 'gainst him hath more;  
We know,—a man's fulfilled when but a Voice,  
Emptied of all besides, he cries, Rejoice  
For joy of the Bridegroom's presence: know we, too,  
To discern Messiah tabernacled new  
In this man, that man, even in me or you,  
By sign of the Dove; meekness and love attest,



A place kept hid from men lest they should sin  
In worship of that saint who died for truth?

Where in wide world these mourners should they go,  
Grief desolated? They rose up and went  
Days' journey two or three, where rumoured 'twas  
The Christ was doing good. They told him all.  
We learn no more; but who hath sorrow faced,  
Light of his life gone out, he knows the rest;  
Knows there's no other place in all the world  
For him to turn to, but where is the Lord;  
Knows that a comforting which hath no words,  
No touch, and scarce a thought, steals through his life;  
Bound up, his broken heart, his heavy steps  
Go lighter in the Way; he sees the dawn  
Of hope in his dark heavens; goes renewed:  
Might any 'bide our sometime Comrade, Grief,  
Save for that solacing at priestly hands  
Of Him Who bare our sorrows?

[p 178]

Herod, meanwhile, confronted by the doubt—  
May life go out? Tormented, for his friend  
He'd slain with bloody hands for idle boast,—  
Assured that John is somewhere, working works,  
And with those words of his searching men's souls  
As strong winds search the forest; knowing well,  
No final period comes to things like these,  
Nor axe can shorten, nor grave cover up,—  
This knowing, Herod heard in every blast  
The Baptist's voice rebuking: saw in dreams  
That rugged figure, emptied luxury  
Of all enticement: nought might palliate  
The King's uneasy pain, nor rest he knew  
Nor any joy: "I am a Voice," said John,—  
Said to him, Herod, "crying evermore;  
In waste places of the wilderness, I cry!"  
And in waste heart and arid of the King,—  
"Why hast thou done this thing—who gave thee right  
To take the life of prophet of the Lord?"

The breath of rumour ever brings new fears  
To soul in torment: Herod heard of Christ,  
His acts of healing and His words of grace:—  
All men were full of talk of some new thing  
Jesus had said—word never heard before;  
Some sign He wrought that sudden oped their eyes  
Till God they saw at work, unveiled 'fore men!  
Some said it was Elias come again;

[p 179]

Some, one of the old prophets; other some  
Bethought them of the Baptist, said 'twas he:

Pallid with fear, the King heard every tale  
And each man's guess, but spake no word himself.  
Troubled, perplexed was he, but not with doubt;  
Full well assured the Baptist was alive,—  
Death could not hold him—what did it portend,  
To him, the murderer, had slain a man  
Chosen of God and precious! Relief he sought  
In reckless speech to his servants—"This is John  
The Baptist, I beheaded. For judgment, lo,  
He's risen from the dead! Would I might know  
That he would have of me! Better to die  
Than go in fear, accursed of men and God!"  
Dreading and craving to see face of him  
With bloody sword he'd slain, King Herod went,  
A coward wretch; nor knew it was the Christ  
Whose words and works were on the people's lips!

[p 180]  
LIV

*The Passover was nigh*

St. John vi. 4.

THE Passover was nigh; high Spring had come;  
As when an army marching through a land  
Leaves track of desolation, charred and sere,—  
E'en so another host had passed that way  
Leaving the land apulse with life and light!  
*Life* made her royal progress, hung her boughs  
With rosy blossoms; made the waste to bloom—  
Garden of flowers rich-painted, odorous;  
Crept, greening through the grasses; flushed bare trees;  
Set birds apairing, full of joy and song,  
And brought all tender young things to the birth!  
That marvel of the Spring had come to pass  
And left the earth renewed; the dry and sere  
Now burgeoned into life; the hoary earth  
Was born again to gladness! Who can mark  
The parable of the spring and take no heed,  
Nor wonder at the upward course the sap  
Takes in the barren tree-trunk, finds its way  
To furthest lateral branch and topmost twig,  
And clothes bare limbs with miracle of leaves!  
The little life laid up in gem-like egg,

[p 181]

Or that in bone-dry chrysalis, breaks forth;  
And would men hold them from that fuss of days—  
Affairs, so futile, fond, engross their thought—  
Why, they might see *Life* early walk abroad  
With movement, glow and beauty in her train;

Hear rhapsody and hymning in the air,  
For what was dead hath come alive again!  
But we are staid to wonders, slow of heart,  
And greet surprises of the spring with eyes  
Long used to things familiar—of small count!  
The LORD of life, was't nought to Him to see  
Through all things living, their green pulse renewed—  
(Or red or pale)—quickenning the whole to life?  
Took He no joy in multi-coloured veil  
Spread sudden o'er the plains of Galilee,  
Her mountain-slopes, her soft ethereal skies?  
Sure, all the shows of earth were good to Him  
As some great Minster to the architect;—  
In such wise all things praise the hand that made!

A deeper joy was Christ's: the world of sense,  
Astirring with new life, with beauty pranked,  
Imaged for Him, how exquisite a life  
Concealed in chrysalis dry as desert dust!  
What sudden glory His foreseeing eye  
Perceived break forth from this poor pilgrim, fraught  
(And that), with dust of wayside, lying thick!

[p 182]

And His thoughts went out to the six great roads  
Traversed all Galilee, north, south, east, west,  
For flush of life discernible in crowds  
Thronging the ways? perchance, to them, the Twelve,  
As arteries, carried Life through all the plains,  
The dry hard cities, thirsting villages!

[p 183]

LV

### *The return of the Twelve*

St. Mark vi. 30.

St. Luke ix. 10.

THE Twelve come back, now two, now other two,  
Till all had gathered there where was the Lord,  
And each bare record in sweet countenance  
Of that he had done, endured, seen come to pass,  
While upon God's high errand. Each pair told  
Of many villages and city crowds,  
Of highways where they spoke to who would hear;  
Of maimed and suffering to whom they brought  
Christ's healing grace. Not one of them said, /  
Spake this or that, did such a mighty work;  
I and my fellow, we—was all their word.

Each pair had disappointments—told how men

Rejected them and that blest WORD they bare  
As jewel in rough casket. How, the dust  
Here, there and elsewhere they had shaken off  
In testimony against men, refused to hear!  
But, ah, of other things they told their Lord  
With glistening eye, voice broken on the word!  
How, here, whole city gave itself to God,  
Brake into life, sudden as field in spring,  
[p 184]

And clothed it in like beauty, fresh and sweet,  
And goodlier growing as the days went on:  
How, here, a stricken man, there, little child  
Had seemed to see Messiah eye to eye!  
How, instant, hard dry souls converted, showed  
The spring's assurance of new life and joy:  
How men raised hallelujahs like the birds—  
Gladness and singing greeted the new day!

Was't thus they spoke, and thus the Master heard,—  
Gave grace of comprehension infinite,  
Gladness of sympathy, ease of strong control?  
And may fond fancy picture how each pair  
Fared on that first great errand? Were it so,  
Or otherwise, we know not; yet have we  
Some license for thought reverent, for we, too,  
Be sent on missions at the Master's word;—  
We come with joyful tears or shame of heart  
To tell how we have fared: is't well with us?  
We know that HE has wrought through our weak words,  
And bring Him of the first fruits. Is it ill?  
How have we shamed the Master whose we are!

[p 185]  
LVI

*The desert place*

St. Mark vi. 21, 32.  
St. Matthew xiv. 13.  
St. Luke ix. 10.  
St. John vi. 1.

THE Lord looked on the Twelve and saw their mood—  
Tender of soul and sweet, but sore outworn  
With all they'd done and felt these many days:—  
“Come ye apart,” saith He, “and rest awhile”:  
No leisure had they, not so much as to eat,  
For ever-changing crowd hung round the Lord,  
Some hung'ring for His word, others agape  
For some new wonder, fit to make a tale.  
He took them, went before to waterside,



Disciples following: there took He boat  
To desert place, Bethsaïda, opposite;  
And while they crossed, the men had more to tell  
Of this one, that one, had been born again,—  
Come forth in tender beauty of new life;  
Nay, all their days would they repeat the tale  
Remembering some new thing at every telling.

They reached the desert place—and lo, 'twas clothed  
With waving grasses, jewell'd with bright flowers!

[p 186]

Each looked on other—saw an image true  
Of how those barren lives late had they seen  
Sudden transformed to glow of blossoming life:  
In silent awe, they mutely praised the Christ,  
With eyes acclaimed Him Lord of all men's souls!

[p 187]

LVII

*L'envoi*

GOOD Lord, instruct us while we pore  
    Upon Thy *Kingdom's* lore!  
We know,—the King can raise the dead;  
That, multitudes He nourished  
On such small store as scarce could feed  
One hungry lad; we know, indeed,  
How tempests but display His power—  
If all help faileth, then His hour,  
    When a man's need is sore!

We know,—Thy kingdom is a prize  
    For him will energize:  
A man must diligent seek to find,  
Bring eager heart and zealous mind,  
And potent faith that can receive  
Hard sayings, mysteries, believe;  
That done,—Thy kingdom spreads apace  
In its own strength; hath filled the place  
    When we lift up our eyes!

Lord, draw us in Thy Kingdom's net,  
Nor let us Thy Good Words forget!

[p 189]

APPENDICES

A (p. 124)

## CHRIST HEALING THE BLIND

Duccio (Sienese: about 1260-1340)

THE departure from conventional forms which was characteristic of Duccio, is conspicuous in this picture. Each of the disciples has an individual character, the entire group representing not conventional but living types of men. There is a piece of symbolism in the blind man who has already been healed, which should not escape notice. Duccio is not content to represent the bare act of healing, but insists upon the efficacy of the touch of Him who was the Light of the World, by making the blind man drop the staff of which he has no longer need. There is another piece of symbolism in the gradated scale by which he draws attention to the respective dignities of his characters—Christ being the tallest in the picture, the blind man the shortest. (A. H. Macmurdo in *Century Guild Hobby Horse*, 1886.)

*From Mr. Cook's Handbook to the National Gallery.*

[p 190]

B (p. 171)

## THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

“IN the landscape the Baptist is represented praying in a solitary forest, preaching on a rocky hill to a group of seven persons, pointing out our Lord to his listeners, baptizing Him, pointing Him out to Andrew and John, and being led to prison. . . The daughter of Herodias is dancing before the King to music played by minstrels in the gallery of the banqueting-hall, and in the immediate front she is holding out a dish on which the executioner is depositing the head of Saint John.”

*Hans Memling, by W. H. I. Weale.*

[p 191]

## INDEX

*Of Subjects and References to Passages in the Holy Scriptures on which each of the Poems is founded.*

### BOOK I

#### OF TAKING THE KINGDOM

I

The centurion's servant healed (3)

St. Luke vii. 1-10.

St. Matthew viii. 5-13.

II

“Increase our faith”—The disciple (10)

III

The raising of the widow's son (13)

St. Luke vii. 11-17.

IV

John Baptist a prisoner (18)  
St. Luke iii. 19, 20.

[p 192]

V  
The message of John (20)  
St. Luke vii. 17-24.  
St. Matthew ii. 2-6.

VI  
The Lord testifies of John (23)  
St. Luke vii. 24-35.  
St. Matthew ii. 6-19.

VII  
The disciple dreams that he seeks instruction (30)

VIII  
A woman anoints His feet (35)  
St. Luke vii. 36-50.

IX  
Circuit in Galilee—Women minister (39)  
St. Luke viii. 1-4.

## BOOK II PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

X  
Parable of the sower (43)  
St. Mark iv. 1-9.  
St. Matthew xiii. 1-9.  
St. Luke viii. 4-8.

[p 193]

XI  
Of teaching by parables (47)  
St. Matthew xiii. 10-17.  
St. Mark iv. 10-12.  
St. Luke viii. 9, 10.

XII  
The "sower" explained.—1. The wayside (52)  
St. Matthew xiii. 18.  
St. Mark iv. 15.  
St. Luke viii. 12.

XIII  
2. The stony ground (55)

St. Matthew xiii. 20, 21.  
St. Mark iv. 16, 17.  
St. Luke viii. 13.

XIV

3. The seed among thorns (57)  
St. Matthew xiii. 22.  
St. Mark iv. 18, 19.  
St. Luke viii. 14.

XV

4. The seed in good ground (59)  
St. Matthew xiii. 23.  
St. Mark iv. 20.  
St. Luke viii. 15.

XVI

Of the hidden lamp (61)  
St. Mark iv. 21, 22.  
St. Luke viii. 16, 17.

[p 194]

XVII

Parable of the tares and the wheat (62)  
St. Matthew xiii. 24-30, 36-43.

XVIII

Parable of the seed growing secretly (66)  
St. Mark iv. 26-29.

XIX

The seed growing secretly—The disciple (68)

XX

The mustard seed (70)  
St. Matthew xiii. 31, 32.  
St. Mark iv. 30-32.

XXI

The hidden treasure (72)  
St. Matthew xiii. 44.

XXII

The leaven (77)  
St. Matthew xiii. 33.

XXIII

The pearl of great price (79)  
St. Matthew xiii. 45, 46.

XXIV

The net cast into the sea (83)  
St. Matthew xiii. 47-50.

[p 195]

XXV

“Have ye understood?” (85)  
St. Matthew xiii. 51, 52.

XXVI

His mother and His brethren (89)  
St. Matthew xii. 46-50.  
St. Mark iii. 31-35.  
St. Luke viii. 19-21.

XXVII

“The same is My mother”—The disciple (92)

XXVIII

Rejected (94)  
St. Mark vi. 1-6.  
St. Matthew xiii. 53-58.

XXIX

He could do no mighty works there (98)  
St. Matthew xiii. 58.  
St. Mark vi. 5, 6.

BOOK III

ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM

XXX

He stilleth the storm (103)  
St. Mark iv. 35-41.  
St. Luke viii. 22-25.  
St. Matthew viii. 18, 23-27.

[p 196]

XXXI

The demoniac restored (112)  
St. Mark v. 1-20.  
St. Luke viii. 26-39.  
St. Matthew viii. 28-34.

XXXII

The maiden raised—The woman healed (118)  
St. Mark v. 21-43.  
St. Luke viii. 40-56.  
St. Matthew ix. 18-26.

XXXIII

Two blind men restored, and the dumb made to speak (124)  
St. Matthew ix. 27-34.

BOOK IV

THE BEGINNING OF THE HOLY WAR

XXXIV

In Galilee—Mission of the Twelve (129)  
St. Matthew ix. 35-38; x. 1-4.  
St. Mark vi. 6, 7.  
St. Luke ix. 1.

XXXV

Charge to the Twelve (132)  
St. Matthew x. 5-15.  
St. Mark vi. 8-11.  
St. Luke ix. 2-5.

[p 197]

XXXVI

The charge—Of dangers (136)  
St. Matthew x. 16-23.  
St. Mark vi.

XXXVII

The charge—Of fears (139)  
St. Matthew x. 25-37.

XXXVIII

The Cross—The Master (143)  
St. Matthew x. 38, 39.

XXXIX

A passing cross—The disciple (145)

XL

A secret cross—The disciple (147)

XLI

The Cross—The disciple (150)  
Isaiah liii. 2.

XLII

The charge—Of receiving a disciple (151)  
St. Matthew x. 40-42.

XLIII

The mission—On the way (153)

St. Mark vi. 12, 13.

St. Luke ix. 6.

[p 198]

XLIV

The mission—The first Two (155)

XLV

The mission—The second Two (157)

XLVI

The mission—The third Two (159)

XLVII

The mission—The fourth Two (161)

XLVIII

The mission—The fifth Two (162)

XLIX

Love's ordering: A paraphrase—Disciple (164)

1 John iii. 18.

L

The mission—The sixth Two (166)

LI

The death of John the Baptist (168)

St. Mark vi. 17-28.

St. Matthew xiv. 3-11.

LII

John the Baptist (173)

[p 199]

LIII

Afterwards (176)

St. Mark vi. 14-20, 29.

St. Matthew xiv. 1-5, 12.

St. Luke ix. 7-9.

LIV

The Passover was nigh (180)

St. John vi. 4.

LV

The return of the Twelve (183)

St. Mark vi. 30.

St. Luke ix. 10.

LVI

The desert place (185)

St. Mark vi. 21, 32.

St. Matthew xiv. 13.

St. Luke ix. 10.

St. John vi. 1.

LVII

L'envoi (187)

Printed by BALLANTINE, HANSEN & CO.  
Edinburgh & London

[p 1]

SOME OPINIONS OF THE PRESS  
ON  
"THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD"

VOL. I. THE HOLY INFANCY

This is a very pleasant volume. The authoress has been entirely successful in her aim. Her verse is simple and devoid of sought adornment, and the familiar story wrought into it is revealed in something of its original sweetness.—*Glasgow Herald*.

This book is a rendering, chiefly in blank verse, of our Lord's life as recorded in the Gospels. Its value, apart from the deep reverence and devoutness which characterise the book on every page, is that poetry catches the attention and intensifies the interest, which sometimes flags in reading the text. . . new presentation of familiar truths, expanded and developed, gives a fresh delight, awakens new convictions, and is a further stay to faith.—*School Guardian*.

The talented and devoted Anglican author of this work looks forward to the time when some poetic genius will arise and give to the world the greatest epic of all ages, the august story of the Messiah. . . The medium of verse is specially dignified, being easily impersonal, condensed, reticent, and reverent. We congratulate Miss Mason on the considerable measure of success attending this first volume of the work to which she has put her hand. . . Various other passages it would be pleasing to quote, did space permit, and especially those concerning the weariness, disappointment, and isolation in the wilderness, and again Nicodemus and the soul's new birth—passages in which high doctrine, faithfully understood, is expressed in worthy and musical language.—*Tablet*.

[p 2]

The author of this little book has tried to supply a real want by giving us a poetical version of the Gospel History. She has many of the qualities that fit her for the task—a deep reverence for her subject, and also a true poetic feeling.—*Commonwealth*.

The poetry is entirely that of the narrative itself in its unapproachable grandeur and simplicity. No attempt is made to add to it.—*Western Mail*.

The first volume of what promises to be a remarkable work. This first of the eight projected volumes bears the sub-title "The Holy Infancy," and opens with a paraphrase, in



dignified blank verse, of the prologue of St. John's Gospel. . . The poet-paraphrasist has performed her self-appointed task admirably, with reverence and discretion. . . The interview with Nicodemus might well have been written by Browning himself.—*Lady*.

This is a singularly handsome volume, with beautiful illustrations. . . . To the author the composition of these poems, illustrative of the words and acts of Our Lord, must have been a labour of Love. . . . Everywhere her language breathes a spirit of deep devotion to the Saviour of mankind. The book is beautifully printed and illustrated.—*Catholic Times*.

A distinctly noteworthy contribution to contemporary devotional prosody. . . . We wish her well upon her toilsome but enviable journey.—*Liverpool Courier*.

"The Saviour of the World" has one special merit: it helps one to realise what the Incarnation means practically—that the first Advent of God the Son was a real identification of Himself with our mortal nature, not in appearance only.—*Guardian*.

[p 3]

SOME OPINIONS OF THE PRESS  
ON  
"THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD"

VOL. II. HIS DOMINION

Miss Charlotte Mason has now given us the second instalment of her elaborate work in verse on "The Saviour of the World." . . . Miss Mason renders into graceful and original verse part of the story of Christ as found in the Gospels. She seeks to cover each incident in His career, and each notable saying to which He gave utterance, in a single poem, the series to form a complete story. Her obvious sincerity and the high aim which is everywhere apparent make her pleasing verses singularly attractive. She is reverent throughout and always dignified. The volume is illustrated with a number of apposite pictures.—*Dundee Advertiser*.

The volume is in every way a worthy successor of the first. Miss Mason has much of the subtle skill of Browning, and her effusions breathe everywhere a spirit of deep devotion to "The Saviour of Mankind."—*Catholic Times*.

Miss Mason's gracefully versified tractate in Christian theology—for that is what the poem is—should be read without weariness by the devout. . . . On its literary side the book will readily evoke the admiration and sympathy of readers who like to have familiar lessons of Christianity refreshed by good workmanship in metrical art.—*Scotsman*.

The first volume met with a very cordial reception, and now the talented authoress gives her second volume to the world. . . . The authoress employs the choicest language, and shows great skill in versification. The whole work, in fact, aims at giving the whole of the Gospel story in verse—not a small task, by any means, but one for which Miss Mason seems to be specially endowed.—*Western Mail*.

Miss Mason here continues what she modestly describes as a "paraphrase in verse" of the Gospel story. As the writer aptly remarks, such a theme as this, in its sacred utterances and

[p 4]

dramatic situations, finds a better medium of presentation in poetry than in prose. The first stage

or act of the inspired narrative, "The Holy Infancy," being completed, Miss Mason passes on to the Ministry of Our Lord at its commencement and first teaching (Sermon on the Mount and earlier parables), and first miracles. . . . The sequence of the work is marked no less by the skill of the author than by the reverent spirit in which it is composed. Echoes of George Herbert and of Isaac Williams are to be caught here and there in the various pieces, as, e.g., where paraphrasing a passage in the Sermon on the Mount, Miss Mason writes:—

"Nay, keep thy soul a garden of the Lord,  
Where I may walk at eve,  
Nor e'er perceive  
The heavy odour of an unchaste thought."

It would be difficult to express better the "atmosphere" of the new Paradise "regained" by Christ in place of that which was lost.—*Bookseller*.

The same careful, reverent handling of holy things characterises this new volume, which, like the former, is a paraphrase, in blank verse chiefly, of the Gospel narrative.—*Guardian*.

The handsomely presented volume is enriched with eight reproductions of old masters, and deserves to meet with wide popularity.—*Yorkshire Observer*.

The present volume, the second of the series, bears the subtitle "His Dominion," and shows us Christ as "Lord of all." It is a difficult theme to handle effectively, and Miss Mason must be congratulated on her treatment of it. Her work—mostly in blank verse, but here and there in rhymed stanzas—never gives one the feeling that the incident she has chosen for her subject is belittled, her poems being simple and reverent throughout, and frequently marked by the possession of considerable beauty.—*Birmingham Post*.

LONDON  
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. LTD.  
DRYDEN HOUSE, GERRARD STREET, W.

(August 21 2019)