

## LESSON SEVENTEEN

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## DEEPENING OPPOSITION.

THERE was to be one more day of opposition—more bitter, more dangerous, more personal, more implacable—one day of open and final rupture between Jesus and the Pharisaic spies from Jerusalem—before He yielded for a time to the deadly hatred of His enemies, and retired to find in heathen countries the rest which He could find no longer in the rich fields and on the green hills of Gennesareth. There were but few days of His earthly life which passed through a series of more heart-shaking agitations than the one which we shall now describe.

Jesus was engaged in solitary prayer, probably at early dawn, and in one of the towns which formed the chief theatre of His Galilæan ministry. While they saw Him standing there with His eyes uplifted to heaven—for standing, not kneeling, was and is the common Oriental attitude in prayer—the disciples remained at a reverent distance; but when His orisons were over, they came to Him with the natural entreaty that He would teach them to pray, as John also taught his disciples. He at once granted their request, and taught them that short and perfect petition which has thenceforth been the choicest heritage of every Christian liturgy, and the model on which all our best and most acceptable prayers are formed. He had, indeed, already used it in the Sermon on the Mount, but we may be deeply thankful that for the sake of His asking disciples He here brought it into greater and more separate prominence. Some, indeed, of the separate clauses may already have existed, at least in germ, among the Jewish forms of prayer, since they resemble expressions which are found in the Talmud, and which we have no reason to suppose were borrowed from Christians. But never before had all that was best and purest in a nation's prayers been thus collected into one divine and incomparable petition—a petition which combines all that the heart of man, taught by the Spirit of God, had found most needful for the satisfaction of its truest aspirations. In the mingled love and reverence with which it teaches us to approach our Father in heaven—in the spirituality with which it leads us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness—in the spirit of universal charity and forgiveness which it inculcates—in that plural form throughout it, which is meant to show us that selfishness must be absolutely and for ever excluded from our petitions, and that no

man can come to God as his Father without acknowledging that his worst enemies are also God's children—in the fact that of its seven petitions one, and one only, is for any earthly blessing, and even that one is only for earthly blessings in their simplest form—in the manner in which it discountenances all the vain repetitions and extravagant self-tortures with which so many fanatic worshippers have believed that God could be propitiated—even in that exquisite brevity which shows us how little God desires that prayer should be made a burden and weariness—it is, indeed, what the Fathers have called it, a *breviarium Evangelii*—the pearl of prayers.

Not less divine were the earnest and simple words which followed it, and which taught the disciples that men ought always to pray and not to faint, since, if importunity prevails over the selfishness of man, earnestness must be all-powerful with the righteousness of God. Jesus impressed upon them the lesson that if human affection can be trusted to give only useful and kindly gifts, the love of the Great Father, who loves us all, will, much more certainly, give His best and highest gift—even the gift of the Holy Spirit—to all that ask Him.

And with what exquisite yet vivid graciousness are these great lessons inculcated! Had they been delivered in the dull, dry, didactic style of most moral teaching, how could they have touched the hearts, or warmed the imaginations, or fixed themselves indelibly upon the memories of those who heard them? But instead of being clothed in scholastic pedantisms, they were conveyed in a little tale founded on the most commonplace incidents of daily life, and of a daily life full of simplicity and poverty. Journeying at night to avoid the burning heat, a man arrives at a friend's house. The host is poor, and has nothing for him; yet, because even at that late hour he will not neglect the duties of hospitality, he gets up, and goes to the house of another friend to borrow three loaves. But this other is in bed; his little children are with him; his house is locked and barred. To the gentle and earnest entreaty he answers crossly and roughly from within, "Trouble me not." But his friend is conscious of having come on a good errand, and he persists in knocking, till at last, not from kind motives, but because of his pertinacity, the man gets up and gives him all that he requires. "Even so," it has been beautifully observed, "when the heart which has been away on a journey, suddenly at midnight (*i.e.*, the time of greatest darkness and distress) returns home to us—that is, comes to itself and feels hunger—and we have nothing

wherewith to satisfy it, God requires of us bold, importunate faith." If such persistency conquers the reluctance of ungracious man, how much more shall it prevail with One who loves us better than we ourselves, and who is even more ready to hear than we to pray!

It has been well observed that the narrative of the life of Christ on earth is full of lights and shadows—one brief period, or even one day, is brought at times into strong relief, while at other times whole periods are passed over in unbroken silence. But we forget—and if we bear this in mind, there will be nothing to startle us in this phenomenon of the Gospel record—we forget how large and how necessary a portion of His work it was to teach and train His immediate Apostles for the future conversion of the world. When we compare what the Apostles were when Jesus called them—simple and sincere indeed, but ignorant, and timid, and slow of heart to believe—with what they became when He had departed from them, and shed the gift of His Holy Spirit into their hearts, then we shall see how little intermission there could have been in His beneficent activity, even during the periods in which His discourses were delivered to those only who lived in the very light of His divine personality. Blessed indeed were they above kings and prophets, blessed in the richness of their privilege beyond all who have ever lived, since they could share his inmost thoughts, and watch in all its angelic sweetness and simplicity the daily spectacle of those "sinless years." But if this blessing was specially accorded to them, it was not for their own sakes, but for the sake of that world which it was their mission to elevate from despair and wickedness into purity and sober-mindedness and truth—for the sake of those holy hearts who were henceforth to enjoy a Presence nearer, though spiritual, than if, with the Apostles, they could have climbed with Him the lonely hills, or walked beside Him as He paced at evening beside the limpid lake.

The day which had begun with that lesson of loving and confiding prayer was not destined to proceed thus calmly. *Few* days of His life during these years can have passed without His being brought into distressing contact with the evidences of human sin and human suffering; but on this day the distress was brought before Him in its wildest and most terrible form. A man blind and dumb and mad, from those strange unaccountable influences which the universal belief attributed to demoniac possession, was brought before Him. Jesus would not leave him a helpless victim to the powers of evil. By His look and by His word He released the miserable sufferer from the

horrible oppression—calmed, healed, restored him—“insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.”

It appears from our Lord's own subsequent words that there existed among the Jews certain forms of exorcism, which to a certain extent, at any rate, were efficacious; but there are traces that the cures so effected were only attempted in milder and simpler cases. The dissolution of so hideous a spell as that which had bound this man—the power to pour light on the filmed eyeball, and to restore speech to the cramped tongue, and intelligence to the bewildered soul—was something that the people had never witnessed. The miracle produced a thrill of astonishment, a burst of unconcealed admiration. For the first time they openly debated whether He who had such power could be any other than their expected Deliverer. “Can this man,” they incredulously asked, “can *He* be the son of David?”

His enemies could not deny that a great miracle had been performed, and since it did not convert, it only hardened and maddened them. But how could they dissipate the deep impression which it had made on the minds of the amazed spectators? The Scribes who came from Jerusalem, more astute and ready than their simple Galilæan brethren, at once invented a ready device for this purpose. “This fellow hath Beelzebub”—such was their notable and insolent solution of the difficulty, “and it is only by the prince of the devils that He casteth out the devils.” Strange that the ready answer did not spring to every lip, as it did afterwards to the lips of some who heard the same charge brought against Him in Jerusalem, “These are not the words of one that hath a devil.” But the people of Galilee were credulous and ignorant; these grave and reverend inquisitors from the Holy City possessed an immense and hereditary ascendancy over their simple understandings, and, offended as they had been more than once by the words of Jesus, their whole minds were bewildered with a doubt. The awfulness of His personal supremacy—the felt presence, even amid His tenderest condescensions, of something more than human—His power of reading the thoughts—the ceaseless and sleepless energy of His beneficence—the strange terror which He inspired in the poor demoniacs—the speech which sometimes rose into impassioned energy of denunciation, and sometimes, by its softness and beauty, held them hushed as infants at the mother's breast—the revulsion of their unbelieving hearts against that new world of fears and hopes which He preached to them as the kingdom

of God—in a word, the shuddering sense that in some way His mere look and presence placed them in a nearer relation than they had ever been before with the Unseen World—all this, as it had not prepared them to accept the truth, tended from the first to leave them the ready victims of insolent, blasphemous, and authoritative falsehood.

And therefore, in a few calm words, Jesus shattered the hideous sophism to atoms. He showed them the gross absurdity of supposing that Satan could be his own enemy. Using an irresistible *argumentum ad hominem*, He convicted them by an appeal to the exorcisms so freely, but almost ineffectually, professed by themselves and their pupils. And when He had thus showed that the power which He exercised must be at once superior to Satan and contrary to Satan, and must therefore be spiritual and divine, He warned them of the awful sinfulness and peril of this their blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God, and how nearly it bordered on the verge of that sin which alone, of all sins, could neither here nor hereafter be forgiven. And then, after these dim and mysterious warnings, speaking to them in language of yet plainer significance, He turned the light of truth into their raging and hypocritical hearts, and showed them how this Dead Sea fruit of falsehood and calumny could only spring from roots and fibres of hidden bitterness; how only from evil treasures hid deep in darkness, where the very source of light was quenched, could be produced these dark imaginings of their serpentine malignity. Lastly, and with a note of warning which has never since ceased to vibrate, He warned them that the *words* of man reveal the true nature of the heart within, and that for those, as for all other false and lightly uttered words of idle wickedness, they should give account at the last day. The weight and majesty of these utterances—the awful solemnity of the admonition which they conveyed—seem for a time to have reduced the Pharisees to silence, and to have checked the reiteration of their absurd and audacious blasphemy. And in the hush that ensued some woman of the company, in the uncontrollable enthusiasm of admiration—accustomed indeed to reverence these long-robed Pharisees, with their fringes and phylacteries, but feeling to the depth of her heart on how lofty a height above them the Speaker stood—exclaimed to Him in a loud voice, so that all could hear—

“Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the breasts that Thou hast sucked.”

“Yea”—or as we may render it—“Nay, *rather*,” He answered, “blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.”

The woman, with all the deep and passionate affection of her sex, had cried, How blest must be the mother of such a Son ! and blessed indeed that mother was, and blessed was the fruit of her womb—blessed she was among women, and blessed because she believed: yet hers was no exclusive blessedness ; there is a blessedness yet deeper and loftier, the blessedness of obedience to the Word of God. “ How many women,” says St. Chrysostom, “ have blessed that Holy Virgin, and desired to be such a mother as she was ! What hinders them ? Christ has made for us a wide way to this happiness, and not only women, but men may tread it—the way of obedience ; this it is which makes such a mother, not the throes of parturition.”

But the Pharisees, though baffled for a moment, did not intend to leave Jesus long in peace. He had spoken to them in language of lofty warning, nay, even of stern rebuke—to *them*, the leaders and religious teachers of His time and country. What gave such boldness to one—a mere “ empty cistern,” a mere *am ha-arets*—who had but just emerged from the obscure and ignorant labours of a provincial artisan ? how did He dare thus to address them ? Let Him at least show them some sign—some sign from heaven, no mere exorcism or act of healing, but some great, indisputable, decisive sign of His authority. “ Master, we would see a sign from Thee.”

It was the old question which had assailed Him at His very earliest ministry. “ What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things ? ”

To such appeals, made only to insult and tempt—made by men who, unconvinced and unsoftened, had just seen a mighty sign, and had attributed it at once without a blush to demoniac agency—made, not from hearts of faith, but out of curiosity, and hatred, and unbelief—Jesus always turned a deaf ear. The Divine does not condescend to limit the display of its powers by the conditions of finite criticism, nor is it conformable to the council of God to effect the conversion of human souls by their mere astonishment at external signs. Had Jesus given them a sign from heaven, is it likely that it would have produced any effect on the spiritual children of ancestors who, according to their own accepted history, in the very sight, nay, under the very precipices of the burning hill, had sat down to eat and to drink, and risen up to play ? Would it have had any permanent significance for the moral heirs of those who were taunted by their own prophets with having taken up the tabernacles of Moloch, and the star of their god Remphan, though they were guided by the fiery pillar, and quenched

their thirst from the smitten rock? Signs they had seen and wonders in abundance, and now they were seeing the highest sign of a Sinless Life, and yet they did but rebel and blaspheme the more. No sign should be given, then, save in the prophecies which they could not understand. "That evil and adulterous generation," He exclaimed, turning to the densely crowded multitude, "should have no sign, save the sign of Jonah the prophet." Saved after a day and night amid the dark and tempestuous sea, he had been a sign to the Ninevites; so should the Son of Man be saved from the heart of the earth. And those men of Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of Jonah, and the Queen of Sheba, who came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, should alike rise up in the judgment and condemn a generation that despised and rejected one greater than Solomon or than Jonah. For that generation had received every blessing. By the Babylonian captivity, by the Maccabæan revival, by the wise and righteous rule of the Asmonæan princes, recently by the preaching of John, the evil spirit of idolatry and rebellion which distempered their fathers had been cast out of them; its old abode had been swept and garnished by the proprieties of Pharisees, and the scrupulosities of Scribes; but, alas! no good spirit had been invited to occupy the empty shrine, and now the old unclean possessor had returned with seven spirits more wicked than himself, and their last state was worse than the first.

His discourse was broken at this point by a sudden interruption. News had again reached his family that He was surrounded by a dense throng, and was speaking words more strange and terrible than ever He had been known to utter; above all, that He had repudiated with open scorn, and denounced with uncompromising indignation, the great teachers who had been expressly sent from Jerusalem to watch His words. Alarm seized them; perhaps their informant had whispered to them the dread calumny which had thus called forth His stern rebukes. From the little which we can learn of His brethren, we infer that they were Hebrews of the Hebrews, and likely to be intensely influenced by Rabbinical and sacerdotal authority; as yet, too, they either did not believe on Him, or regarded His claims in a very imperfect light. Has not the time again arrived for them to interfere? can they not save Jesus, on whom they looked as *their* Jesus, from Himself? can they not exercise over Him such influence as shall save Him from the deadly perils to which His present teaching would obviously expose Him? can they not use towards Him such gentle

control as should hurry Him away for a time into some region of secrecy and safety? They could not, indeed, reach Him in the crowd, but they could get some one to call His attention to their presence. Suddenly He is informed by one of His audience—"Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee." Alas! had they not yet learnt that if they would not enter, their sole right place was to stand without? that His hour was now come to pass far beyond the circle of mere human relationship, infinitely above the control of human brethren? Must their bold intrusive spirit receive one more check? It was even so; but the check should be given gently, and so as to be an infinite comfort to others. "Who is My mother?" He said to the man who had spoken, "and who are My brethren?" And then stretching forth His hand towards His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother!"

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE DAY OF CONFLICT.

UP to this point the events of this great day had been sufficiently agitating, but they were followed by circumstances yet more painful and exciting.

The time for the mid-day meal had arrived, and a Pharisee asked Him to come as a guest to his house. There was extremely little hospitality or courtesy in the invitation. If not offered in downright hostility and bad faith—as we know was the case with similar Pharisaic invitations—its motive at the best was but curiosity to see more of the new Teacher, or a vanity which prompted him to patronise so prominent a guest. And Jesus, on entering, found Himself, not among publicans and sinners, where He could soothe, and teach, and bless—not among the poor to whom He could preach the kingdom of heaven—not among friends and disciples who listened with deep and loving reverence to His words—but among the cold, hard, threatening faces, the sneers and frowns, of haughty rivals and open enemies. The Apostles do not seem to have been invited. There was no



sympathy of a Thomas to sustain Him, no gentleness of a Nathanael to encourage Him, no ardour of a Peter to defend, no beloved John to lean his head upon His breast. Scribe, Lawyer, and Pharisee, the guests ostentatiously performed their artistic ablutions, and then—each with extreme regard for his own precedence—swept to their places at the board. With no such elaborate and fantastic ceremonies, Jesus, as soon as He entered, reclined at the table. It was a short and trivial meal, and outside thronged the dense multitude, hungering still and thirsting for the words of eternal life. He did not choose, therefore, to create idle delays and countenance a needless ritualism by washings, which at that moment happened to be quite superfluous, and to which a foolish and pseudo-religious importance was attached.

Instantly the supercilious astonishment of the host expressed itself in his countenance; and, doubtless, the lifted eyebrows and deprecating gestures of those unsympathising guests showed as much as they dared to show of their disapproval and contempt. They were forgetting utterly who He was, and what He had done. Spies and calumniators from the first, they were now debasing even their pretentious and patronising hospitality into fresh opportunity for treacherous conspiracy. The time was come for yet plainer language, for yet more unmeasured indignation; and He did not spare them. He exposed, in words which were no parables and could not be mistaken, the extent to which their outward cleanliness was but the thin film which covered their inward wickedness and greed. He denounced their contemptible scrupulosity in the tithing of potherbs, their flagrant neglect of essential virtues; the cant, the ambition, the publicity, the ostentation of their outward orthodoxy, the deathful corruption of their inmost hearts. Hidden graves were they over which men walk, and, without knowing it, become defiled.

And at this point, one of the lawyers who were present—some learned professor, some orthodox Masoret—ventures to interrupt the majestic torrent of His rebuke. He had, perhaps, imagined that the youthful Prophet of Nazareth—He who was so meek and lowly of heart—He whose words among the multitude had hitherto breathed the spirit of such infinite tenderness—was too gentle, too loving, to be in earnest. He thought, perhaps, that a word of interpolation might check the rushing storm of His awakened wrath. He had not yet learnt that no strong or great character can be devoid of the element of holy anger. And so, ignorant of all that was passing in the

Saviour's mind, amazed that people of such high distinction could be thus plainly and severely dealt with, he murmured in deprecatory tones, "Master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also!"

Yes, He reproached them also! They, too, heaped on the shoulders of others the burdens which themselves refused to bear; they, too, built the sepulchres of the prophets whom their sires had slain; they, too, set their backs against the door of knowledge, and held the key, so that none could enter in; on them too, as on all that guilty generation, should come the blood of all the prophets, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the Temple.

The same discourse, but yet fuller and more terrible, was subsequently uttered by Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem in the last great week of His life on earth; but thus did He, on this occasion, hurl down upon them from the heaven of His moral superiority the first heart-scathing lightnings of His seven-times-uttered woe. They thought, perhaps, that He would have been deceived by their specious smoothness and hypocritical hospitality; but He knew that it was not out of true heart that they offered Him even the barest courtesies of life. The fact that He was alone among them, and that He should have been, as it were, betrayed into such company, was but an additional reason why the flames of warning and judgment should thus play about their heads, which hereafter, unless they repented, should strike them to the earth. Not for an instant could they succeed in deceiving Him. There is a spurious kindness, a bitter semblance of friendship, which deserves no respect. It may pass current in the realms of empty fashion and hollow civility, where often the words of men's mouths are softer than butter, having war in their heart, and where, though their throat is an open sepulchre, they flatter with their tongue; but it shrivels to nothing before the refining fire of a divine discernment, and leaves nothing but a sickening fume behind. The time had come for Him to show to these hypocrites how well He knew the deceitfulness of their hearts, how deeply He hated the wickedness of their lives.

They felt that it was an open rupture. The feast broke up in confusion. The Scribes and Pharisees threw off the mask. From fawning friends and interested inquirers, they suddenly sprang up in their true guise as deadly opponents. They surrounded Jesus, they pressed upon Him vehemently, persistently, almost threateningly; they began to pour upon Him a flood of questions, to examine, to

catechise Him, to try and force words out of Him, lying in ambush, like eager hunters, to spring upon any confession of ignorance, on any mistake of fact—above all, on any trace of heresy on which they might found that legal accusation by which before long they hoped to put Him down.

How Jesus escaped from this unseemly spectacle—how He was able to withdraw Himself from this display of hostility—we are not told. Probably it might be sufficient for Him to waive His enemies aside, and bid them leave Him free to go forth again. For, meanwhile, the crowd had gained some suspicion, or received some intimation, of what was going on within. They had suddenly gathered in dense myriads, actually treading on each other in their haste and eagerness. Perhaps a dull, wrathful murmur from without warned the Pharisees in time that it might be dangerous to proceed too far, and Jesus came out to the multitude with His whole spirit still aglow with the just and mighty indignation by which it had been pervaded. Instantly—addressing primarily His own disciples, but through them the listening thousands—He broke out with a solemn warning, “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is *hypocrisy*.” He warned them that there was One before whose eye—ten thousand times brighter than the sun—secrecy was impossible. He bade them not be afraid of man—a fear to which the sad perturbances of these last few days might well have inclined them—but to fear Him who could not only destroy the body, but cast the soul also into the Gehenna of fire. The God who loved them would care for them; and the Son of Man would, before the angels of God, confess them who confessed Him before men.

While He was thus addressing them, His discourse was broken in upon by a most inopportune interruption—not this time of hostility, not of ill-timed interference, not of overpowering admiration, but of simple policy and self-interest. Some covetous and half-instructed member of the crowd, seeing the listening throngs, hearing the words of authority and power, aware of the recent discomfiture of the Pharisees, expecting, perhaps, some immediate revelation of Messianic power, determined to utilise the occasion for his own worldly ends. He thought—if the expression may be allowed—that he could do a good stroke of business, and most incongruously and irreverently broke in with the request—

“Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.”

Almost stern was our Lord's rebuke to the man's egregious self-absorption. He seems to have been one of those not uncommon characters to whom the whole universe is pervaded by self; and he seems to have considered that the main object of the Messiah's coming would be to secure for him a share of his inheritance, and to overrule this unmanageable brother. Jesus at once dispelled his miserably carnal expectations, and then warned him, and all who heard, to beware of letting the narrow horizon of earthly comforts span their hopes. How brief, yet how rich in significance, is that little parable which He told them, of the rich fool who, in his greedy, God-forgetting, presumptuous selfishness, would do this and that, and who, as though there were no such thing as death, and as though the soul could live by bread, thought that "my fruits" and "my goods," and "my barns," and to "eat and drink and be merry," could for *many* years to come sustain what was left him of a soul;—but to whom from heaven pealed as a terrible echo to his words the heart-thrilling sentence of awful irony, "*Thou fool, this night!*"

And then our Lord expanded the thought. He told them that the life was more than meat, and the body than raiment. Again He reminded them how God clothes, in more than Solomon's glory, the untoiling lilies, and feeds the careless ravens that neither sow nor reap. Food and raiment, and the multitude of possessions, were not life: *they* had better things to seek after and to look for; let them not be tossed on this troubled sea of faithless care; be theirs the life of fearless hope, of freest charity, the life of the girded loin and the burning lamp—as servants watching and waiting for the unknown moment of their lord's return.

The remarks had mainly been addressed to the disciples, though the multitudes also heard them, and were by no means excluded from their import. But here Peter's curiosity got the better of him, and he asks "whether the parable was meant specially for them, or even for all?"

To that question our Lord did not reply, and His silence was the best reply. Only let each man see that he was that faithful and wise servant; blessed indeed should he then be; but terrible in exact proportion to his knowledge and his privileges should be the fate of the gluttonous, cruel, faithless drunkard whom the Lord should surprise in the midst of his iniquities.

And then—at the thought of that awful judgment—a solemn agony passed over the spirit of Christ. He thought of the rejected peace,

which should end in furious war; he thought of the divided households and the separated friends. He had a baptism to be baptised with, and His soul was straitened with anguish till it was accomplished. He had come to fling fire upon the earth, and oh, that it were already kindled!—that fire was as a spiritual baptism, the refining fire, which should at once inspire and blind, at once illuminate and destroy, at once harden the clay and melt the gold. And here we are reminded of one of those remarkable though only traditional utterances attributed to Christ, which may possibly have been connected with the thought here expressed—

*“He who is near me is near the fire! he who is far from me is far from the kingdom.”*

But from these sad thoughts He once more descended to the immediate needs of the multitude. From the reddening heaven, from the rising clouds, they could foretell that the showers would fall or that the burning wind would blow—why could they not discern the signs of the times? Were they not looking into the far-off fields of heaven for signs which were in the air they breathed, and on the ground they trod upon, and, most of all—had they but searched rightly—in the state of their own inmost souls? If they would see the star which should at once direct their feet and influence their destiny, they must look for it, not in the changing skies of outward circumstance, but each in the depth of his own heart. Let them seize the present opportunity to make peace with God. For men and for nations the “too late” comes at last.

And there the discourse seems to have ended. It was the last time for many days that they were to hear His words. Surrounded by enemies who were not only powerful, but now deeply exasperated—obnoxious to the immediate courtiers of the very king in whose dominion He was living—dogged by the open hatred and secret conspiracies of spies whom the multitude had been taught to reverence—feeling that the people understood Him not, and that in the minds of their leaders and teachers sentence of death and condemnation had already been passed upon Him—He turned His back for a time upon His native land, and went to seek in idolatrous and alien cities the rest and peace which were denied Him in His home.