

LECTURE XII.

CAUTIONS AGAINST PRYING INTO MATTERS WHICH ARE
UNREVEALED.

“Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.”—John, xxi. 22.

LECT. XII. IN previous lectures on the subject of our present discussion, I have endeavoured, first of all, to show that doctrines which have mystery connected with them are not to be regarded as incredible on that account, or as unworthy of a place in a revealed religion; and after doing so, I have sought to apply the arguments by which this position may be supported, to some of those more prominent articles of the Christian faith which have been commonly objected to on the ground of their mysteriousness.

There are still some observations of a practical nature, suggested by the subject with which we have been occupied, which it seems proper to make before closing our discussion. And as a suitable text for these observations, I have selected the words of the Lord Jesus, in answer to a ques-

tion which Simon Peter had proposed to Him LECT. XII. respecting the fate of the beloved disciple. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

It was the constant practice of our Lord to turn aside the thoughts of His disciples from matters of a merely speculative nature to the great principles of Christian faith and Christian duty. He always discouraged them from prying into "secret things" with which it did not essentially concern them to be made acquainted. And as often as a question which had no immediate bearing on their own personal interest or duty was proposed to Him, He declined to gratify their curiosity by replying to it, and turned the discourse into an occasion of imparting some instruction of real importance, or of enforcing some exhortation of practical utility. Our Lord's practice of discouraging speculative inquiries.

Thus, when a certain person asked Him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" instead of obtaining Luke, xlii. 23. a direct answer to his inquiry, he was told to strive that *he* might be of the blessed number, whether it should be great or small. In like manner, when the disciples were inquiring, "Who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Matt. xviii. 1-3. Jesus, instead of naming, as they probably expected, some one among themselves to whom the coveted pre-eminence should be allotted, took up

LECT. XII. a little child and set it in the midst of them; and then with peculiar solemnity assured them, that except they laid aside their ambitious thoughts, and imitated the humility of little children, so far from being greatest in the kingdom of heaven, they should not be found meet to enter it at all. Again, when the apostles asked Him, on the day
 Acts, i. 6-8. of His ascension into heaven, "Whether He would at that time restore the kingdom unto Israel?" He answered that "it was not for them to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power," but that *their* business was to be witnesses of the Christian faith in Jerusalem, and even to the uttermost part of the earth.

Another very notable example of this wise procedure on the part of our Lord is found in that passage of Scripture which I read to you at the commencement of this lecture. The apostle
 John, xxi. 19-22. Peter had just been informed "by what death he should glorify God," and enjoined, notwithstanding the trials and sufferings which awaited him, to "follow Christ." Not content, however, with the information relative to himself which had been thus given, the apostle, with that forwardness of disposition which seems to have characterised him above his brethren, pushed his inquiries into other matters which his Master had not thought fit to communicate, and was anxious

to know what was to be the destiny of another disciple as well as of himself. For, on turning about and seeing John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved, following," he said unto Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Now, by whatever motive this question may have been dictated—whether by some feeling of jealousy or rivalry, or by a kindly interest in his brother's fate, or, as is most likely, by a mere spirit of inquisitiveness—certain it is that the question was an improper one, which Peter had no manner of right or call to propose. Accordingly, our Lord, instead of replying to it, rebuked his idle curiosity in having asked it, and warned him against turning aside from the plain path of faith and duty which lay before him, to pry into matters with which it did not concern him to intermeddle. Jesus said to him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

You will observe that, in the former part of this reply, our Lord makes, not an affirmation, but a supposition. He does not say that John *was* to tarry till He should come again, but that whether John might or might not do so was a matter of no consequence to Simon Peter. From overlooking this, which is the plain meaning of the expression, some have supposed this text to be a prophecy that the beloved disciple was to survive—

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Misapprehension of our Lord's words in John, xxi. 22.

LECT. XII. as, indeed, he alone of all the apostles did survive
 —the final overthrow of Jerusalem,—an event
 which has been sometimes regarded as typical of
 the Saviour's second advent. And the evangelist
 tells us that others in his own time were led by
 the same oversight to conclude from this saying
 of our Lord that John was never to die at all, but
 was to continue alive until the day of judgment,
 —an error, by the way, which shows how little
 reliance, in matters of interpretation, can be placed
 on those traditions of the primitive Church which
 many persons would have us to receive as of
 equal sanctity and authority with the Scriptures.
 It evidently was not our Lord's intention, how-
 ever, to give any information as to what the
 destiny of the beloved disciple was to be. His
 question, "What is that to thee?" amounts,
 indeed, to a refusal so to do. And to suppose
 that our Lord would first answer Peter's inquiry,
 and immediately after rebuke Peter for having
 made it, would be little short of charging Him
 with inconsistency.

Our Lord's
 words im-
 ply His
 supreme
 divinity.

There is one truth, however, of very essential
 importance, which may be fairly enough inferred
 from the supposition made in the former part of
 this saying, and that is, *the supreme divinity of our
 Saviour*. You will observe that our Lord here
 represents the duration of the beloved disciple's
 life as a thing which entirely depended on His

own will. He speaks as One who had it in His power to lengthen or shorten that disciple's life at pleasure, saying, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Surely this is language which no mere man—no mere creature, however exalted—could be warranted to use. For one creature thus to represent the life of another creature as dependent on his own will, would have been a most daring usurpation of one of the peculiar prerogatives of the Godhead. Our Lord, therefore, by speaking in this manner, evidently teaches us to regard Him as *the very God* "in whom we live, and move, and have our being,"—the God "in whose hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind,"—the God who "determines to all their appointed times, and the bounds of their habitation."

Acts, xvii. 28.

Job, xii. 10.

Acts, xvii. 26.

The doctrine of our Lord's divinity does not wholly rest on those passages of Scripture in which it is broadly and formally affirmed. Even if such passages could be explained away or blotted out of the sacred volume altogether, there are so many others in which this great doctrine is indirectly and covertly involved, or incidentally referred to and taken for granted—so often do we find our Lord and His apostles, without any special view to its establishment, expressing themselves in such a manner as clearly to show that it was present to their minds—and so fully,

LECT. XII. withal, does the doctrine harmonise with the general strain and spirit of the sacred writers,—as to satisfy any candid inquirer not only of its truth, but of its prominence and importance as one of the most vital articles of the Christian faith.

Of these indirect evidences of our Lord's deity—evidences all the more valuable in some respects by reason of their very undesignedness—we have a striking instance in the passage to which I have just referred. It plainly was not the immediate purpose of our Lord, when administering this reproof to the apostle Peter, to set forth His own supremacy as the Son of God. And yet, you see, an allusion to that supremacy is in the most easy and artless manner introduced by Him. "*If I will* that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" His words betoken that conscious greatness of which he felt Himself to be possessed, and which we often find breaking forth, as if it were involuntarily, in His discourses, even when it was not His main purpose to declare it. He here speaks of prolonging the life of one of His disciples even unto the end of the world with all the ease, familiarity, and composure with which you or I might speak of our most ordinary occupations. And without any formal claim to divine attributes, He so expresses Himself as no one is warranted to do but He who is the living

and true God, possessing life immortal in Himself, and giving or withdrawing the life of all His creatures, even as seemeth good in His sight. LECT. XII.

Returning from this digression, however, to the subject more immediately before us, I may remark that there are *two things* against which, in the passage referred to, we are cautioned: the one being a disposition to speculate upon mysteries or "secret things" connected with revealed truths, to the neglect of the truths themselves, which are clearly and intelligibly disclosed; while the other is an idle curiosity regarding the spiritual state and destiny of our fellow-creatures, to the overlooking of our own personal duties and concerns.

Two things against which the words of Jesus caution us.

It is, of course, with the *first* of these improper and unwarrantable dispositions that we are for the present mainly concerned. Peter was seeking to pry into a "secret thing" which his divine Master had not thought fit to communicate to him; and the Lord Jesus, in reply, admonished him to check that restless and speculative spirit which he was exhibiting, and to turn the full bent of his attention to matters of practical utility and of essential importance.

They warn us against prying into unrevealed mysteries.

This salutary counsel, though specially needed by the apostle, is not without its use and application to ourselves. A disposition to intrude into

LECT. XII. matters which God has not thought fit to disclose to us at all, or to push our inquiries respecting matters which He has revealed farther than we have the light of Scripture to direct us, prevails to no small extent among professing Christians. The Word of God is too frequently regarded by them in a speculative rather than in a practical point of view; and in the study of it they seek, not so much the strengthening of their faith and improvement of their practice, as the mere expansion of their intellect, or increase of their knowledge, or gratification of their curiosity. Those religious inquiries, too, which affect them least, are often those which occupy and delight them most. Some disputed point of doctrine, not very closely bearing, if at all, on the great concerns of duty or of happiness—some sectarian controversy regarding, it may be, the merest outworks or accessories of the Christian system—some dark and yet unfulfilled prophecy which might very well be allowed to wait until the event come which is at once to expound and to accomplish it—or some unexplained, and perhaps to the finite mind of man inexplicable mystery,—has far greater interest in their eyes than the simple truth on which their faith must rest, or the useful precept by which their conduct must be regulated. And even with respect to those vital doctrines in which their personal interest is the closest, they

are commonly much more apt to be engrossed with certain unrevealed matters connected with them, or certain curious and intricate questions arising out of them, than to receive the precious truths themselves with the meekness and simplicity of faith. LECT. XII.

“*How can these things be?*” is the inquiry which such persons are ever and anon proposing, instead of being content to take it on God’s unerring word *that things are as He declares them to be.* How are the three adorable persons of the Trinity united in one Godhead? How are the divine and the human natures united in the one person of Jesus Christ? How is it that divine justice has been satisfied with the sufferings of our Lord as an expiation of human guilt? How is the unperceived agency of the Holy Spirit exercised in converting and sanctifying the sinful heart? How are the fixed purposes of God to be reconciled with the free agency and moral responsibility of man? How are the dead raised up? and with what bodies do they come? What shall be the signs of the Lord’s coming, and of the end of the world? These and suchlike inquiries are too often found occupying the time and engrossing the attention which would be much more profitably employed in seriously pondering such questions as the following: “What shall I do to be saved?” “How shall I escape if I neglect so

Acts, xvi.
30.
Heb. ii. 3.

LECT. XII. great salvation?" "What shall the end be of
 1 Pet. iv. them that obey not the Gospel of God?" "What
 17. do I more than others?" "What shall I render
 Matt. v. 47. unto the Lord for all His benefits?" "Who may
 Ps. cxvi. 12. abide the day of His coming? and who shall
 Mal. iii. 2. stand when He appeareth?" "What is a man
 Matt. xvi. 26. profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose
 his own soul? or what shall a man give in ex-
 change for his soul?" Truly, these last are ques-
 tions which, if men must have questions to pro-
 pose, afford them sufficient scope for their investi-
 gations. Questions they are of real use and of
 essential importance—questions, moreover, to
 which a clear and satisfactory answer may be
 obtained—questions, withal, which, did a man but
 give his mind to the consideration of them with
 one tithe of the earnestness to which they are
 entitled, would leave him little time and as little
 inclination for any such unprofitable and endless
 inquiries as we are seeking to discourage. The mis-
 fortune is, however, that these weightier matters are
 for the most part regarded with indifference, while
 points of vastly inferior importance to our spiritual
 welfare are eagerly discussed. Men will not be
 satisfied to repose a simple faith in the truths of
 revelation. They will ask a thousand questions
 in regard to them, and raise up I know not what
 difficulties in connection with them. They think
 it not enough to be informed of what God hath

done, what He hath taught, what He hath promised, and what He hath required in order to the salvation of sinners. The reasons and motives of His procedure must be canvassed. The *how* and the *wherefore* things should so be as Scripture declares that they are, must be discussed. And thus, in the multiplicity of speculations regarding matters *connected* with religion indeed, but not *themselves* proposed as objects of our faith, the substance and spirit of religion are forgotten.

How applicable is the remonstrance of our Lord to all who indulge this speculative disposition! "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Why engross yourselves with fruitless investigations into points which you have no sufficient means of ascertaining,—points as to which the divine Author of revelation has given you no knowledge and required of you no faith—points which, even did you know them ever so well, might prove in no way conducive to your real advantage, and which certainly tend in the meanwhile to distract you from other things which are at once more plain and more profitable? Instead of seeking to be wise above what is revealed, ought it not rather to be your earnest desire that your heart may experience more of the power, and your life display more of the influence, of those most precious truths which have been clearly revealed for your edification?

LECT. XII. There are various lights in which this remonstrance may be put.

We have
no means
of clearing
up the
mysteries
of religion.

I. "What is that to thee?" Consider, *what means have you* of reaching any satisfactory conclusion respecting those "secret things" which you would investigate? They are matters which have not been explained to you in the Scriptures, and which you have no independent means of elucidating. And that man who, so soon as they are proposed to him, confesses at once that they exceed his comprehension, has made in a moment as great advances towards the knowledge of them as he who shall exhaust his energies, and perplex his mind, and unsettle his convictions, in the vain attempt to sound their unfathomable depths. The truly wise man is conscious of the limits which God has assigned to the human understanding, and within these limits he is satisfied to remain. Like David, he seeks not to "exercise himself in great matters, or in things that are too high for him." But in regard to everything that exceeds the reach of his faculties or the field of his observation, he is not ashamed to own his ignorance.

Ps. cxxxi.
1.

Now the mysteries connected with *revealed truths* are, of all others, those in regard to which this meekness of wisdom is most appropriate. In other branches of knowledge it may be difficult to assign any bounds to our investigations.

Because wherever our own reason and our own LECT. XII. experience or observation have been our guides, it is impossible to say what new discoveries may not be made by the same means which have led to the discoveries already attained. The case is very different, however, with the peculiar doctrines set forth in Holy Scripture. These, we must remember, are not discoveries of man, but revelations of God. They are things of which we can know nothing, and never could have known anything, but for the revelation of them which God hath given us. And even as we have no knowledge of them *without* revelation, so we can have no sure knowledge of them *beyond* it. In regard to such matters the light from above is our only safe guide. So far as this light leads us we may boldly go; but so soon as it ceases to shine upon our onward path, all farther advances must be uncertain and precarious.

2. Again, "What is that to thee?" Consider, *what right or reason have you* to insist on a higher knowledge of divine mysteries than God has thought fit to communicate in His word? You ought not to expect that the truths of revelation should be in all respects level to your comprehension. Is it to be wondered at that the scheme of redemption should be in some respects inexplicable to those minds which cannot comprehend

We have no right or reason to seek a higher knowledge of religious truths than God has given us.

LECT. XII. the familiar process of vegetation?—that the union of the divine with the human nature in the person of Christ should be just as difficult to explain as the union of soul and body in our own person?—that the origin and progress of spiritual life should be as dark as those of animal life?—and that the resurrection of the dead should not be more easily comprehended and accounted for than the transformation of a grub into a butterfly? If God in *nature* and God in *providence* be, as you must readily admit, compassed about with mysteries, why should it or how can it be otherwise with God in *grace*? Must not every new aspect in which the great God presents Himself to our contemplation bring with it new mysteries equally unsearchable with those which surround Him in aspects which are already known? It is of the very essence of all religion, whether natural or revealed, to involve mysteries. For all religion implies the bringing of the infinite God into fellowship with the intellects and hearts of His finite creatures, by whom He never can be “known unto perfection.” And though a *revealed* religion places before us *more things* pertaining to the character and dispensations of God than otherwise we were capable of ascertaining, yet inasmuch as these additional truths, with which the religion of nature is supplemented by it, stand in a like close relation to the same unsearchable

Being who has disclosed them, we cannot wonder, LECT. XII.
and have no cause to be offended, if they should
to an equal extent exceed our comprehension.

Nor is it any disparagement to the Word of God that it does not resolve all the questions we might be inclined to ask respecting those precious truths which are revealed by it. For, as I have Supra,
formerly observed, although *the truths themselves* P. 67, 68.
were necessary to be known by us with a view to our spiritual edification and improvement, it might not be so with the reasons or explanations of them. The knowledge of these, indeed, would only have suggested other questions, of which in like manner a solution would be required. For unless revelation were to make us *omniscient*—which would be just making us *gods*—it evidently must stop *somewhere*, leaving all beyond a mystery. If it be here urged, that without revealing *all things*, the Word of God might surely have revealed to us *some other things* which we greatly desire to know—it seems a sufficient answer that God is the fittest judge of how much knowledge it becomes Him to impart to us. And we may rest assured that He who is all-wise, when deigning to give us a revelation of divine truth, has not left His work imperfect. We cannot doubt that therein He has informed us of all those things connected with religion which it is really useful or necessary for us to know. Indeed He has ex-

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Ps. xix. 7.
8.2 Tim. iii.
15-17.

pressly told us, that "His law is perfect, converting the soul,"—that "His testimony is sure, making wise the simple,"—that "His statutes are right, rejoicing the heart,"—that "His commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes,"—that His Scriptures are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness"—"able to make us wise unto salvation," and "thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

We have
no interest
to seek an
insight into
things
which God
has kept
secret.

3. The question still recurs, "What is that to thee?" Consider once more, *what interest have you* in seeking a farther insight into divine mysteries than God has been pleased to give you in His Word? What real advantage can you derive from it? Wherein can you suppose that it will contribute to your comfort here or to your happiness hereafter?

It is not needful that we should be able to fathom the deep things connected with the revelations of Holy Scripture, in order to the fullest enjoyment of its offered blessings. These blessings are promised to *faith*; and faith is solely concerned with those divine truths which Scripture has revealed to us. As for the unrevealed reasons or explanations of them—the *how* things should come so to be, or the *why* God should so have appointed them—we have no need to disquiet or perplex ourselves. Indeed it detracts

from the simplicity of our faith that we should be so prodigal, as we often are, of our *hours* and *wherefores*. Such idle questionings are symptomatic much more of a doubting than of a believing heart. And though they should lead to ever so sure a result, yet any increase of knowledge that might be thus attained would be no proper object of that *faith* which is conversant, not with the result of human reasonings and speculations, but with the authoritative teachings of the Word of God. It is expressly written, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. x. 17. The proper and requisite objects of that faith, whereby we participate in all spiritual and heavenly blessings, are exclusively to be found in the volume of inspired truth. And hence to intrude into things which are not there revealed, is, to say the least, unprofitable and superfluous.

But this is not all. To speculate on divine mysteries farther than God has been pleased to disclose them, is not only useless, but in some respects pernicious. It turns us aside from those plainer and weightier matters which claim our chief attention. It leads us to regard religion in the light of a mere science to be studied by the intellect, rather than as a matter of faith and life, to be cherished in the heart and developed in the conduct. It genders strifes and perverse disputings, and tempts us to seek the "knowledge which puff- 1 Cor. viii. 1.

LECT. XII. eth up" in preference to the "charity which edifieth." And well would it be if it did not also tend to shake our principles, to weaken our convictions, and to "move us away from the hope of the Gospel which we have heard."

Ps. cxxxi.
1. In every point of view, then, it is our true wisdom not to "exercise ourselves in great matters, or in things that are too high for us," but to remain content with that measure of light and knowledge respecting them which God hath given us. We have, as you have seen, *no power*, and *no right*, and *no interest* to investigate those mysteries which, like the ark of old, God has forbidden us to look into. It much more becomes us meekly to receive, and highly to prize, and carefully to ponder the many precious truths which are disclosed, so plainly that "he may run who reads them," for our edification. That is a most wholesome admonition of the son of Sirach, and quite in harmony with those words of the Lord Jesus on which I have been discoursing,—“Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength. But what is commanded thee, think thereon with reverence; for it is not needful for thee to see with thine eyes the things that are in secret. Be not curious in unnecessary matters; for more things are shown unto thee than men can under-

Hab. ii. 2.

Eccles. iii.
21-25.

stand. For many are deceived by their own vain opinion, and an evil suspicion hath overthrown their judgment. Without eyes thou shalt want light; profess not, therefore, the knowledge that thou hast not."

I have before observed that those words of the Lord Jesus which I read to you as the text of this lecture, may be considered as teaching another lesson besides that to which our attention has been now directed—a lesson which, though by no means so closely connected with the special subject of our discussion, is of too much practical importance to be overlooked. The subject of Peter's inquiry, besides being one of those "secret things" which "belong unto the Lord," was at the same time a matter by which his own personal duty or interest could not be in the smallest degree affected. It concerned another apostle, but it did not at all concern himself. Accordingly, when our Lord said to him, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me,"—He may be regarded as cautioning Peter, and through Peter His disciples in all succeeding times, against that idle curiosity respecting the spiritual state of their fellow-creatures which might lead them to be neglectful of their own.

Caution
against
curiosity
about the
concerns of
others to
the neglect
of our own.

That such a caution is greatly needed by many professing Christians it is impossible to deny.

LECT. XII. How often do we find persons who, as regards themselves, appear to be very indifferent about the great salvation, discussing eagerly the possibility of its being attained by others who are not placed in their circumstances—who do not enjoy their privileges and advantages—who do not profess to believe all the articles of their creed—who do not observe all the ordinances of their ritual! How seldom, too, is the Bible read, and the preaching of the Gospel heard, in a spirit of earnest self-application;—how ready are we to evade the most pointed appeals, and to set aside the most forcible arguments and remonstrances, by applying them to others instead of to ourselves;—and how successfully are the arrows of conviction thus warded off by the simple device of putting our neighbour before us to intercept them! How frequently, also, does it happen that our own claims to the character and privileges of God's people are the only claims which we are careless about investigating; that our own frailties and inconsistencies are the only ones which we have no wish to detect and censure; and that in the midst of our assiduous endeavours to “pull the mote out of a brother's eye,” the “beam” is allowed to remain unheeded in our own!

Matt. vii. 4.

It is undoubtedly incumbent on all Christians to take a kindly interest in their brethren, and to
 Philip. ii. 4. “look not only at their own things, but every

man also at the things of others." This brotherly interest, however, is not only different from the spirit which our Lord condemns, but is in some respects utterly opposed to it. To be kindly concerned about another's welfare is one thing; but it is quite another thing pragmatically to obtrude ourselves into his private matters without any view either to his improvement or to our own substantial advantage. We are not warranted, under colour of brotherly regard, to interfere with the concerns of our neighbour, with respect to things which lie entirely beyond our province, and for no better end than the indulgence at his expense of an idle curiosity or a censorious disposition. This, indeed, would be to make the profession of Christian charity a pretext for setting at nought the plainest of its dictates.

Religion is to every man a matter of *personal* concern. It would be the merest trifling with a subject, of all subjects unquestionably the most momentous, to look upon it in any other light. In this vital matter no man is warranted to stand aside or to keep himself aloof, as if he were a disinterested party, — a mere onlooker, or, at the utmost, a critical observer of the part which others are taking in regard to it. Here every man must take his own part, and bear his own burden, and look to his own interests. It is not the faith of another man that will save us, any

LECT. XII. more than it is the food which another man eats that will nourish us. Each one of us must seek for himself the nourishment of his own soul by feeding on the bread of life. Neither is it the conduct of another man that will evince the genuineness of our faith, and the consequent certainty of our interest in the Gospel blessings. "Every man must prove his own work." Every man must "examine himself," instead of examining his neighbour, "whether he be in the faith." God will judge us all on the last day according to our own works, and not according to the works of others; and even so ought we in the meanwhile, and in order to prepare for that solemn inquest, to judge ourselves.

Gal. vi. 4.
2 Cor. xiii. 5.

But further, religion is a matter not only of personal interest, but of personal duty, to all mankind. God has allotted to each man his proper sphere—committed to each his proper talent—prescribed to each his proper work. Accordingly, it is the part of every man, in the particular station which Providence has assigned to him, to serve the Lord with singleness of heart. Just as it is with the organs of the human body, each one of which has to perform its proper functions, but cannot discharge those allotted to another organ,—so is it with the members of the Church of Christ. Every member must keep his own place, and look specially to his own concerns, and

fulfil earnestly his own duties. And truly, were all of us as anxious as we ought to be to perform our own part with faithfulness and zeal, we should be the less disposed to engross ourselves with matters which do not lie within our province. We should find so much to do at home, that neither leisure nor inclination would be left to us to wander abroad in search of occupation.

I cannot more suitably close these remarks than by commending to you, in a very few words, the concluding part of our Saviour's admonition,—Admonition to 'follow Christ.'—"What is that to thee? *Follow thou me.*" Our Lord, you perceive, is not satisfied with exposing and rebuking the error of His apostle, but shows him in what way that error may be rectified. "Follow thou me" is the injunction which He gives to Peter, and through him to all by whom at any time the like spirit of inquisitiveness, as to things which do not necessarily concern them, may be exhibited.

"Follow thou me;" *this* truly is a matter in which each one of us is most profoundly interested,—a matter in comparison with which all our inquiries about other subjects are insignificant. Nothing that we may either know or desire to know,—no conjectures or speculations we may indulge in—whether concerning the mysteries of religion, or the character, conduct, and destiny of our fellow-

LECT. XII. creatures,—can be of any solid advantage to us, further than we are heartily disposed by them to “follow Christ.” We have cause to be thankful, too, that this is a matter respecting which there is no room for doubts or questionings. For whatever dark or deep things we may now and then encounter in the Word of God, *here* there is no mystery. All that pertains to the faith and duty of a Christian when following Christ is clear as noonday.

Wherefore let us give our most earnest heed to this main concern in which we are so deeply interested. Instead of searching into things that are beyond our reach, let us ponder well the weighty instructions and comply with the plain directions of the Saviour. Instead of prying into other men’s matters, let us keep the Lord Jesus constantly before us, and be ever looking to Him and learning of Him. Let us “follow Him” by faithfully confiding in Him, firmly cleaving to Him, and cheerfully obeying Him. Let us “follow Him,” too, by imitating His example,—seeking to have “the same mind in us which was in Him,” and to “walk even as He walked.” Thus following the Saviour on earth, we shall be found meet to dwell with Him in heaven. He will safely guide us by His counsel while we live, and bring us at last to those mansions of eternal light,

Philip, ii. 5.

1 John, ii.

6.

where doubts which now disquiet us shall be re- LECT. XII.
 solved, and difficulties which now perplex us shall
 be unravelled,—where “we shall be like Him, and 1 John, iii.
 shall see Him as He is,” and in the unclouded ^{2.}
 brightness of His presence “we shall know even 1 Cor. xiii.
 as also we are known.” 12.