

POPULAR EXPOSITOR

OF

THE GOSPELS AND ACTS,

FOR

PULPIT, SUNDAY-SCHOOL, AND FAMILY.

JOHN.

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PREFACE

TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

PERSONAL HISTORY.

John, the younger brother of James, who with him was called to the Apostleship, was the son of Zebedee and of Salome. His father was a fisherman, living at Bethsaida, in Galilee, on the borders of the lake of Gennesaret. The family appear to have been in easy circumstances, at least we find that Zebedee employed hired servants (Mark i. 20), and that Salome was among the women who contributed to the maintenance of Jesus. (Matt. xxvii. 56.)

John was probably one of those disciples of the Baptist who, hearing his remarkable testimony to Jesus, followed the new teacher to his residence, and abode with him the rest of the day. (i. 35-39.) Then was made on the mind of the susceptible son of Zebedee an impression never to be effaced. He doubtless accompanied Jesus to Galilee, and was one of the party present at the marriage at Cana. (ii. 2.) And when Jesus again visited Judea, the little band who had attached themselves to Him attended His steps, and passed with Him on His return in the way from Jerusalem through Samaria. (iv. 3, 4.) It is difficult to trace chronologically the course of events; but most probably when, after His Judean ministry, our Lord was again in Galilee, rejected at Nazareth and removing to Capernaum, John and his brother, like Peter and Andrew, resumed their ordinary occupation. And it was when so engaged that they received the special call (Matt. iv. 18-22; Mark i. 16-20; Luke v. 1-11), to be continually with Jesus, which was supplemented by their appointment as Apostles. (Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 16, 17; Luke vi. 13, 14.) Afterward, we find John one of the especially-favored three who witnessed the Lord's shining glory and His agonizing grief, and before whom, apart from the rest, His most wonderful works were performed. (Matt. xvii. 1-9, xxvi. 36-45; Mark v. 35-43, ix. 2-10, xiv. 32-42; Luke viii. 49-56, ix. 28-36.) John it was who was sent with Peter to prepare the last supper (xxii. 8), and John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, reclined next Him at the meal, and at Peter's hasty nod put the question, most likely in a whisper, "Lord, who is it that shall betray thee?" (John xiii. 23-26.)

NATURAL TEMPERAMENT.

In regard to the natural temperament of John, it is quite evident that he was bold, ardent, impetuous, one who scorned falsehood and hypocrisy, and was ever ready to give expression to his sentiments in the most simple and straightforward terms. It was probably these characteristics which formed the basis of his friendship and intimacy with Peter. Kindred spirits they were, although in moral heroism, especially during the earlier days of their Apostleship, John was greatly the superior of his friend. We see no evidence which Tholuck and some others find, that John's dispo-

sition and turn was of a feminine cast. On the very contrary, while he possessed an open, frank, loving disposition, it was evidently connected with all that was bold, energetic and man-like. It is thought by some expositors, that the epithet *Boanerges, sons of thunder*, was bestowed upon John and James on account of their impetuous spirit, although not without reason others interpret it as predictive of their bold and powerful style of preaching. John's sincerity and frankness, which permitted no concealment of his opinions, or compromise with any form of error, is abundantly manifested in his writings, especially in his epistles. Every portion of them is pervaded by his tender and loving spirit, and yet for plain, direct, out-spoken, burning denunciation against those who would seek to depreciate the glory of his Lord and turn away believers from the truth, they have no parallel in all God's Word, not even in the most denunciatory of the prophetic writings. On the one hand John proclaims with startling severity the claims of doctrinal truth, and the duties of the teacher; on the other, he stands out in the majesty of a sacred office, clothed in something of the dress of the old theocracy. The two views involve no contradiction, but rather exhibit the wide range of that divine love which cherishes every element of truth with the most watchful care, because it is of infinite moment for the well-being of men.

We cannot prevail on ourselves to omit the following interesting anecdote which has been so often told, but which never loses its freshness: "When John was far advanced in age he was too feeble to walk to the meetings. He suffered himself then to be carried in by his disciples. Being unable to speak much, he continually repeated the words, 'Little children, love one another.' And when he was asked why he always repeated these words alone, he replied, 'Because such is the commandment of the Lord, and because it is sufficient, if this is done.'"

As John followed Christ to judgment and death, he received from the cross the charge to receive the mother of the Lord as her own son. (John xix. 27.) After the ascension he remained at Jerusalem with the other Apostles. He was with Peter at the working of his first miracle, and afterward he went with him to Samaria. (Acts i. 13, viii. 14.) At the time of Paul's first visit to Jerusalem John was absent from the city, but on a later occasion Paul describes him as one of "the pillars of the Church." (Gal. i. 18, ii. 9.) At what time, and under what circumstances, he left Jerusalem is wholly unknown; but tradition is unanimous in placing the scene of his after-labors at Ephesus. His residence there must have taken place after Paul's departure, but this is all that can be affirmed with certainty. It is generally agreed that he was banished to Patmos during his stay at Ephesus, but the time of his exile is very variously given. The legend of his sufferings at Rome, which was soon embellished and widely circulated, is quite untrustworthy, and the details of his death at Ephesus are equally fabulous, though it is allowed on all hands that he lived to extreme old age.

GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY.

Some attempts, says an eminent scholar, have been made by modern critics to prove that this work was not from the pen of the Apostle John. They have chosen to suppose that there was an irreconcilable difference between the Gentile and the Jewish types of Christianity, represented by Paul and Peter respectively; and certain books of the New Testament they think were written to bridge over this difference. The fourth Gospel they consider one of them; and they have invented in their wisdom the hypothesis that, about the middle of the second century, a Gentile Christian composed it under the name of the Apostle, to recommend love as higher than faith and to show how the Jewish system was fulfilled in Christ, the true paschal lamb. The Church, according to their notion, was easily deceived, and hailed the production as the genuine work of John. But surely most men will think that it is the critics who are credulous and easily deceived. For, to glance at the external evidence, not only have we the testimony of Jerome and Eusebius in the fourth century after Christ, but in the beginning of the third and end of the second we find

the leading writers in various parts of the Christian world recording their belief of the authenticity of John's Gospel. Of these Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and Irenæus may be specified. The last named writer, in whose lifetime the forgery, if real, must have been committed, was acquainted with the state of the Church in the east and the west; he had known Polycarp, John's disciple, and may therefore be taken as a most competent witness. Now he declares that in his time the fourth Gospel was universally received, and has an argument about the four Gospels—just so many and no more—being the necessary pillars of the truth. How is this compatible with the theory that the work had just been fraudulently concocted? There are yet earlier testimonies. Justin Martyr, born in John's lifetime (about 89 A. D.), quotes this Gospel. Further, it is found in the Peshito-Syriac version and in the Muratorian canon; and additional proof may be obtained even from the early heretics. More it is impossible to say on this part of the question here; but it may fairly be asked, "if it was possible for a history of Christ, falsely pretending to be from the pen of the Apostle John, to be brought forward twenty, thirty, or forty years after his death, be introduced into all the Churches east and west, taking its place everywhere in the public services of the Sabbath? Was there no one to ask where this new Gospel came from, and where it had lain concealed? Was there no one of the many who had personally known John to expose the gigantic imposture, or even to raise a note of surprise at the unexpected appearance of so important a document of which they had never heard before? How was the populous Church at Ephesus brought to accept this work on the very spot where John had lived and died?"

We may reasonably conclude from a consideration of the external evidence that fraud was a moral impossibility. This conclusion is strengthened by a view of the internal evidence. For there are repeatedly assertions made that John was the author (John xix. 35, xxi. 24), and, even if we admit, as has been imagined, that the last chapter is a later appendix, the testimony is not thereby weakened. There is also the graphic minuteness of detail, with the many touches clearly indicative of an eye-witness, of which xiii. 22 may be taken as an example. The structure of this Gospel, too, is far different from what we should suppose a forger would have devised. The variations from the other Gospels bespeak an independent witness: a forger would have servilely followed them; and the wonderful discourses recorded of our Lord, the loftiness of His character portrayed, the emphatic maintaining of His Deity, are all such as the beloved disciple, looking back under the light of Christ's glorification to the days and months of his familiar earthly converse with Him, may well be supposed to have most diligently pondered, and to have been most anxious to record for the Church's guidance and consolation; while a forger would have been utterly incompetent for such a delineation, and his attempt would have proved a glaring failure. Indeed, looking only at this book as a composition, and discovering the Master's hand that penned it, we may well ask, if John was not the author, who was that greater than John who has produced such a marvelous work, and yet has left no name or trace of his existence? Besides, from its tone and character it is incredible that it should have been composed in the second century. Let any one who doubts this read along with it the apostolic and immediately-succeeding fathers, and see the mighty difference between them and this writer.

Renan, in what he designates the *Vie de Jesus*, but what has been more fitly called "The Romance of the Life of Jesus," alleges that there are in the Gospel of John certain indications of a metaphysical turn of thinking, savoring of the Gnostic spirit of speculation, which cannot be regarded as natural to a fisherman of Galilee, or likely to have found expression in his writings. To this it is sufficient to reply that John had long been residing at Ephesus, where the Gnostic tendency began early to show itself, that while there he could not but be familiar with its workings, that nothing was more likely, *à priori*, than that he should, incidentally, as it were, pronounce his judgment upon them, and that unless we take it for granted that there is no such

thing as the inspiration from above, we can consider nothing more likely than that, in treating of the loftiest themes, his language should rise fully to the occasion.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS AND THE THREE EARLIER GOSPELS.

The first three Evangelists, until they come to the final journey to Jerusalem, narrate only what occurred in Galilee, whereas John's narrative, to the extent of six-sevenths of its space, has Jerusalem for its scene. Again, the three Galilean Gospels (as we may call them) have many miracles, many parables in common; told sometimes in almost identical words, as though they had derived their narrative from the often-repeated oral teaching of the self-same eye-witnesses (and this may well be the explanation). John, on the contrary, relates no parables, and has but one miracle in common with the rest. Again, the three relate chiefly our Lord's popular discourses concerning His kingdom; John for the most part His conversations with the Apostles or controversies with the Jews about His own Person and Mission. But the difference in style is still more striking. The three write a plain narrative, making no comment, never speaking in their own person (except in Luke's brief preface); John writes authoritatively, theologically, enforcing his own explanation of the facts which he relates.

These contrasts, which so widely separate the fourth Gospel from the rest, are at once explained by the fact which the early Church traditions unanimously affirm, that John wrote thirty years later than the rest, for a generation of men who had grown up in the Christian faith, and been familiar from childhood with that more popular cycle of Apostolic teaching which the three earlier Evangelists had embodied in their Gospels.

DESIGN OF THIS GOSPEL.

The object which this Evangelist had in view is very clearly stated in chapters i. 1-18 and xx. 31. His design appears to have been to convey to the world just and adequate notions of the real nature, office and character of the Divine Redeemer. For this purpose are especially recorded those passages of our Saviour's life which most clearly displayed His Divine power and authority, and those discourses in which He spoke most plainly of His own nature, of the work given to Him by the Father, and the efficacy of His death as an atonement for the sins of the world. And it is from this Gospel that the most numerous and decisive proofs of our Lord's deity are derived. Yet no Evangelist has portrayed the softer lineaments of our Lord's humanity with more delicacy and beauty, or disclosed more of the inmost affections and feelings of the Saviour's heart.

It is an old and still prevalent opinion that John wrote his Gospel to supply the omissions of the other three, but no such impression is conveyed by the Gospel itself, which is as far as possible from having the appearance of a mere series of supplemental notes to previously existing writings. Indeed, if this had been the Apostle's purpose, it cannot be said that he has in any adequate way fulfilled it. Nor is there any ground for believing that it was a *polemical* object which chiefly prompted him to write this Gospel, though such has often been suggested. Thus *Irenæus* says that the Gospel was written against the errors of Cerinthus. *Jerome* adds, the Ebionites, and later writers have maintained that the Gnostics or the Doketæ are the parties against whom the polemic of the Apostle is here directed. All this, however, is mere supposition, for which there is no real basis. Doubtless in what John has written there is that which furnishes a full refutation of all Ebionite, Gnostic and Doketic heresy, but that to confute these was the *design* of the Apostle, as these writers affirm, cannot be proven. At the same time, though he may have had no intention of formally confuting any existing heresy, it is more than probable that he was stimulated to seek, by means of this record, to counteract certain tendencies which he saw rising in the Church, and by which the followers of Christ might be seduced from that simple faith in Him by which alone the true life could be enjoyed. Still this must be

regarded, at the utmost, as furnishing only the occasion, not the design, of his writing.

Two-thirds of this Gospel are new, the most important additions being in chapters xiii., xvii. and xi. Regarding the twenty-first chapter as a sort of a postscript to the whole, but a postscript from the Apostle's own pen, it winds up the narrative of the thrilling events it records with some interesting and important notices. The last time when Peter and his associates were engaged in their old employment of fishermen, the Lord making what was nearly the last of His interviews with them so nearly resembling what had occurred in one of His earliest, the ardent love of Peter, the thrice-repeated tender questioning and thrice-repeated charge to feed the flock, the semi-prophetic hints as regards John himself and half-implicit reproof of the curiosity of Peter, these form the touching postscript to this most interesting of all the Gospels.

PLACE AND TIME AT WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.

Ephesus and Patmos are the two places mentioned by early writers; and the weight of evidence seems to preponderate in favor of Ephesus. The Apostle's sojourn at Ephesus probably began after Paul's Epistles to Timothy were written, *i. e.*, after A. D. 66. Eusebius specifies the fourteenth year of Domitian, *i. e.*, A. D. 95, as the year of the banishment to Patmos. Probably the date of the Gospel may lie about midway between these two, about A. D. 78. But some place it after the Apocalypse.

LANGUAGE IN WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.

It is the unanimous testimony of tradition that this Gospel was written in Greek, for Gentile readers. Although it abounds in Hebraisms, yet it approaches nearer to classic Greek than any of the other Gospels. This shows that John must have lived in Asia Minor some time before its composition. Unfavorable criticisms have been made upon his frequent employment of the Greek connectives for *but* and *then*. But a careful examination will show that these particles are in hardly a single instance needlessly or incorrectly used. His short and pithy sentences enabled him to dispense with the use of many connectives, which in writings like those of Paul would be found in great abundance. The frequent use of the slightly adversative *but* was the natural result of his emphatic, energetic style, which abounds in antitheses, sudden turns of thought, rapid and unexpected transitions, and the introduction of new points and aspects of the subject under discussion. As to the employment of the Greek prepositions, I know of no writer, not purely Hellenistic, who uses them with more discrimination and effect than John. On the whole we think that none of the New Testament writers approached nearer to classic Greek, than did John.

The language of John (as has been well observed) presents peculiarities, both in words and constructions, which mutually illustrate one another. In both an extreme simplicity and an apparent sameness cover a depth of meaning, which upon a nearer view is felt to be inexhaustible. The simplicity springs from the contemplation of Christianity in its most fundamental relations, the sameness from the distinct regard of the subject in each separate light, by which every step in the narrative is, as it were, isolated, instead of being merged in one complex whole.

The introduction to the Gospel furnishes the most complete illustration of its characteristic vocabulary. "The Word," "the Life," "the Light," "the Darkness," "the Truth," "the World," "Glory," "Grace," are terms which at once place the reader beyond the scene of a limited, earthly conflict, and raise his thoughts to the unseen and the eternal. The conflict of good and evil is presented in an image which conveys in final distinctness the idea of absolute antagonism. The Incarnation itself is regarded as the great climax of the revelations of Him in whom all things "were," and by whom all things "became."

STYLE.

The simplicity, the directness, the particularity of the emphasis of John's style, give his writings a marvelous power, which is not, perhaps, felt at first. Yet his words seem to hang about the reader till he is forced to remember them. Each great truth

sounds like the burden of a strain, ever falling upon the ear with a calm persistency which secures attention. And apart from forms of expression with which all are early familiarized, there is no book in the Bible which has furnished so many figures of the Person and Work of Christ which have passed into the common use of Christians, as the Gospel of John. "I am the head of life," "I am the light of the world," "I am the good Shepherd," "I am the vine," are words which have guided the thoughts of believers from the first ages.

"The style and spirit of John's writings," says *Dr. Whedon*, "possess peculiarities differencing them from any other specimens in all literature, sacred or profane. There is a *sameness* which pervades his Gospel, Epistles and Apocalypse, yet a *difference* in each from the other. The most remarkable phenomenon in his Gospel is, that whether Jesus, the Baptist, or our John himself, is speaker, the style is *remarkably the same*. Hence it has been boldly inferred that John is the real and sole author of the discourses he puts in the mouth of both. There is also a round of terms, most of which occur indeed in the other Scriptures, but are of very emphatic and frequent use in his Gospel. Such terms are, *light, life, testimony, glorify, only-begotten*. The solution of these facts may appear from the following considerations:

"The character and style of the Lord Jesus Himself were, as we may say, many-sided. He had many different styles and strains of discourse. With one of these styles of thought and spirit the spirit of John was deeply in unison. Discourses of that strain were so congenial to his temperament as to fill his heart, and indelibly impress his memory; to model his mind, and to form his vocabulary and style. That class of discourses he selects for his Gospel. So in a far lower degree we have often seen some eminent preacher stamp his own style upon a whole train of pupils. But never was this impression so powerfully imparted as in this supreme instance. The impress of the Lord's style of discourse reigns through all that John in his Gospel writes. Glimpses, however, of the same spirit appear in the other Gospels. But so entirely is John's style formed by his Master's influence, that when he proceeds to give the general substance of the Baptist's testimony, in a free version, the style is eminently both John-like and Jesus-like. That style appears in all its deepest intensity in the discourses of Jesus; and yet we are obliged to believe that of those divine discourses the pen of John vainly struggles to give the full, deep, continuous flow. They are but *spirited indications* of what the Lord really and fully discoursed; giving us conceptions that they shadowed truths higher than we can fully conceive. But from these discourses, as sources, the same spirit breathes through the whole Gospel: mostly in the Baptist's testimony; less in John's own narrative style; and least of all in the dialogue, where it sometimes nearly disappears. The dialogues are eminently dramatic, natural, and strikingly characteristic of the particular speakers. The conclusion is, not that John makes Jesus talk in his own style, but that Jesus has breathed a style into the entirety of John."

OPINIONS OF CLAUDIUS AND THOLUCK.

The following remarks of *Claudius*, cited by *Tholuck* (Introduction p. 22), are so beautiful and apposite, that I take pleasure in making a full quotation of his words: "I love best of all to read in St. John. There is in him something so perfectly wonderful—dusk and night, and the quick lightning throbbing through them. The soft clouds of evening, and behind the mass the big, full moon bodily!—something so sad, so high, so full of presage, that one can never weary of it. When I read John, it always seems to me that I see him before me, reclining at the Last Supper on the bosom of his Lord, as if his angel held the light for me, and at certain parts would place his arm around me and whisper something in my ear. I am far from understanding all I read, yet often John's idea seems to hover before me in the distance; and even when I look into a place that is entirely dark, I have a presension of a great and glorious sense, which I shall some day understand, and hence I catch

so eagerly at every new exposition of the Gospel of John. 'Tis true, most of them only ruffle the evening clouds, and never trouble the moon behind them." In the same spirit *Tholuck* himself remarks of this wondrous Gospel: "The noble simplicity on the one side, on the other the hovering nature and the dim mystery of the narration, the tone of grief and longing, with the light of love shedding its tremulous beam on the whole, these impart to the Gospel a charm, a peculiar originality to which, out of the writings of John, no parallel can be found." (See notes on John xxi. 24.)

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

On the order of some of our Lord's miracles and parables, the data being scanty, considerable difference obtains.

MIRACLES.	WHERE WROUGHT.	WHERE RECORDED.
Water made wine,	Caná,	John ii. 1-11.
Traders cast out of the temple,	Jerusalem,	John ii. 13-17.
Nobleman's son healed,	Caná,	John iv. 46-54.
First miraculous draught of fishes,	Sea of Galilee,	Luke v. 1-11.
Leprosy healed,	Capernaum,	Matt. viii. 2-4; Mark i. 40-45; Luke v. 12-15.
Centurion's servant healed,	Capernaum,	Matt. viii. 5-13; Luke vii. 1-10.
Widow's son raised to life,	Nain,	Luke vii. 11-17.
Demoniac healed,	Capernaum,	Mark i. 21-28; Luke iv. 31-37.
Peter's mother-in-law healed,	Capernaum,	Matt. viii. 14, 15; Mark i. 29-31; Luke iv. 38, 39.
Paralytic healed,	Capernaum,	Matt. ix. 2-8; Mark ii. 1-12; Luke v. 17-26.
Impotent man healed,	Jerusalem,	John v. 1-16.
Man with withered hand healed,	Galilee,	Matt. xii. 10-14; Mark iii. 1-6; Luke vi. 6-11.
Blind and dumb demoniac healed,	Galilee,	Matt. xii. 22-24; Luke xi. 14.
Tempest stilled,	Sea of Galilee,	Matt. viii. 23-27; Mark iv. 35-41; Luke viii. 22-25.
Demoniacs dispossessed,	Gadara,	Matt. viii. 28-34; Mark v. 1-20.
Jairus' daughter raised to life,	Capernaum,	Matt. ix. 18-26; Mark v. 22-24; Luke viii. 41-56.
Issue of blood healed,	Near Capernaum,	Matt. ix. 27-31.
Two blind men restored to sight,	Capernaum,	Matt. ix. 32-34. [10-17; John vi. 5-14.
Dumb demoniac healed,	Capernaum,	Matt. ix. 35-38; Mark vi. 31-44; Luke ix. 37-43.
Five thousand miraculously fed,	Decapolis,	Matt. xiv. 13-21; Mark vi. 31-44; Luke ix. 10-17.
Jesus walks on the sea,	Sea of Galilee,	Matt. xiv. 22-33; Mark vi. 45-52; John vi. 15-21.
Syro-Phœnician's daughter healed,	Coasts of Tyre and Sidon,	Matt. xv. 21-28; Mark vii. 24-30.
Deaf and dumb man healed,	Decapolis,	Mark vii. 31-37.
Four thousand fed,	Decapolis,	Matt. xv. 32-39; Mark viii. 1-9.
Blind man restored to sight,	Bethsaida,	Mark viii. 22-26.
Demoniac and lunatic boy healed,	Near Cesarea Philippi,	Matt. xvii. 14-21; Mark ix. 14-29; Luke ix. 37-43.
Miraculous provision of tribute,	Capernaum,	Matt. xvii. 24-27.
The eyes of one born blind opened,	Jerusalem,	John ix. 1-41.
Woman, of 18 years' infirmity, cured,	[Perea.]	Luke xiii. 10-17.
Dropsical man healed,	[Perea.]	Luke xiv. 1-6.
Ten lepers cleansed,	Borders of Samaria,	Luke xviii. 11-19.
Lazarus raised to life,	Bethany,	John xi. 1-46.
Two blind beggars restored to sight,	Jericho,	Matt. xx. 29-34; Mark x. 46-52; Luke viii. 35-43.
Barren fig tree blighted,	Bethany,	Matt. xxi. 12, 13, 18, 19; Mark xi. 12-24.
Buyers and sellers again cast out,	Jerusalem,	Luke xix. 45, 46.
Malchus' ear healed,	Gethsemane,	Matt. xxvi. 51-54; Mark xiv. 47-49; Luke xxii. 51-54.
Second draught of fishes,	Sea of Galilee,	John xxi. 1-14. [xxii. 50, 51; John xviii. 10, 11.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE PARABLES OF CHRIST.

PARABLES.	WHERE SPOKEN.	WHERE RECORDED.
The two debtors,	[Capernaum.]	Luke vii. 40-43.
The strong man armed,	Galilee,	Matt. xii. 29; Mark iii. 27; Luke xi. 21, 22.
The unclean spirit,	Galilee,	Matt. xii. 43-45; Luke xi. 24-26.
The sower,	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 3-9, 18-23; Mark iv. 2-9, 14-20.
The tares and wheat,	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 24-30, 36-43. [Luke viii. 5-8, 11-15.
The mustard seed,	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Mark iv. 30-32; Luke xiii. 18, 19.
The seed growing secretly,	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Mark iv. 26-29.
The leaven,	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 33; Luke xiii. 20, 21.
The hid treasure,	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 44.
The pearl of great price,	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 45, 46.
The draw net,	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 47-50.
The unmerciful servant,	Capernaum,	Matt. xviii. 21-35.
The good Samaritan,	Near Jerusalem,	Luke x. 29-37.
The friend at midnight,	Near Jerusalem,	Luke xi. 5-8.
The rich fool,	Galilee,	Luke xii. 16-21.
The barren fig tree,	Galilee,	Luke xiii. 6-9.
The great supper,	Perea,	Luke xiv. 15-24.
The lost sheep,	Perea,	Matt. xviii. 12-14; Luke xv. 3-7.
The lost piece of money,	Perea,	Luke xv. 8-10.
The prodigal son,	Perea,	Luke xv. 11-32.
The good shepherd,	Jerusalem,	John x. 1-18.
The unjust steward,	Perea,	Luke xvi. 1-8.
The rich man and Lazarus,	Perea,	Luke xvi. 19-31.
The profitable servants,	Perea,	Luke xvii. 7-10.
The importunate widow,	Perea,	Luke xviii. 1-8.
The Pharisees and publicans,	Perea,	Luke xviii. 9-14.
The laborers in the vineyard,	Perea,	Matt. xx. 1-16.
The pounds,	Jericho,	Luke xix. 11-27.
The two sons,	Jerusalem,	Matt. xxi. 28-32.
The wicked husbandmen,	Jerusalem,	Matt. xxi. 33-44; Mark xii. 1-12; Luke xx. 9-13.
The marriage of the king's son,	Jerusalem,	Matt. xxii. 1-14.
The ten virgins,	Mount of Olives,	Matt. xxv. 1-13.
The talents,	Mount of Olives,	Matt. xxv. 14-30.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

¹ *The divinity, humanity and office of Jesus Christ.* 15 *The testimony of John.* 39 *The calling of Andrew, Peter, &c.*

IN the beginning ^awas the Word, and the Word was ^bwith God, and the Word was God.
^aCol. i. 17; 1 John i. 1; Rev. i. 2 and xix. 13. ^bChap. xvii. 5; 1 John i. 2. ^cPhil. ii. 6; 1 John v. 7.

In the beginning—of all time and created existence, for this Word gave it being (verses 3, 10), therefore “before the world was” (chap. xvii. 5, 24), or, *from all eternity*. John does not say, as Moses (Gen. i. 1), “In the beginning God created the Word,” but, “In the beginning *was* the Word.” Our conception cannot grasp an infinite range of time. When we wish therefore to speak of eternity, we fix a beginning, which we call *original* beginning. *The Word*. This term, in its application to our Lord, has two senses. It is, 1. *Personal*. It signifies reason or wisdom. In this sense it indicates Christ’s infinite intelligence. He is the Wisdom of God, “the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person,” answering in this and every other perfection of His nature, as exactly to all the attributes of God, as the impression upon the wax to the seal. 2. The term is *official*. It is by speech that wisdom is declared to others. For this reason, also, Christ is called the Word, the Speech, the Mouth of God. Mediately He spake to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He hath spoken to us by the Son. *And the Word was with God*, literal Greek, *was to God*. The Eternal Word was inherent to, in, with, God. Christ as God is a person distinct from the Father, yet undivided and inseparable from the Father in His essence, with whom He eternally co-exists, and this is another

evidence of His Godhead. *And the Word was God*, therefore co-equal and one with Him. No scheme of doctrine can explain and harmonize this passage but that which admits a distinction of persons in the unity of one Godhead. Here we have plainly declared to us the essential Divinity of Christ. He *was* God, one of the Three Persons in the eternal and adorable Godhead.

² ^aThe same was in the beginning with God.
^bGen. i. 2.

The same. Mark the emphasis—the same Word, of whom He speaks, the same Jesus whom they had seen, at whose feet they had sat, who had been “despised and rejected of men,” a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. *Was in the beginning*, &c. This is a repetition of the sentiment contained in the preceding verse, with the additional thought that the intimate union of the Word with God existed before time began. As the writer was about to ascribe to the Word a creative work (verse 3), and in verse 14 an incarnation and sojourn on earth, it seemed proper in view of this wondrous union of the Logos with humanity to reaffirm His distinct personality and pre-existent nature. Here the word *God* is to be taken in the sense of *the Father*, which it has in the second clause of verse 1. The knowledge of Christ as God is a truth to be much and often inculcated upon believers and which they ought to study again and again.

³ ^aAll things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
^bPs. xxxiii. 6; verse 10; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2; Rev. iv. 11.

We are here taught that this Word, who was God, created the universe. Bearing in mind the title here applied to

our Lord (verse 1), we shall see the beauty and recognize the application of such passages as Ps. xxxiii. 6; Heb. i. 1, 2; see, also, Col. i. 15-19. The Apostle directly applies to Christ expressions in the Psalms which were addressed to the Supreme God. (Comp. Heb. i. 10 with Ps. cii. 24, 25.) *All things were made by him.* This is a denial of the *eternity* and *non-creation* of matter, which was held by the whole thinking world *outside of Judaism and Christianity*; or, rather, its proper *creation* was never so much as dreamt of save by those who enjoyed *revealed religion*. Christ, as Creator, is clearly excluded from being of the number of creatures. How can it be questioned that He who created the universe is truly and properly Divine? The Bible everywhere appeals to creative power as the peculiar and distinguishing prerogative of the Supreme God, and attributes it solely to Jehovah. (See Gen. ii. 2, 3; Ex. xx. 11; Isa. xlv. 24; Jer. x. 12; Ps. viii. 3, 4, cii. 25; Isa. xl. 26, 28.) *Without him, i. e.,* apart or separate from Him. The Apostle (Col. i. 16), distinctly ascribes the work of creation to the Son. Nor, in doing this, does he exclude the agency of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Creation was the work of the triune God, but the Son was the immediate and prominent Agent in wielding the three-fold energy of the whole Divine nature. This verse teaches us whose we are. It also affords encouragement to every penitent who is seeking forgiveness. When we see that He who died for us is properly God, we perceive value in His atonement on which we may rest.

4. ^aIn him was life, and the life was the light of men. (^bChap. v. 26; 1 John v. 11. ^cChap. viii. 12, ix. 5 and xii. 35, 36.

Here Christ, in His spiritual, Divine nature, is declared to be the source of all life (chap. v. 26), the word *life* being understood in its most comprehensive sense. Having just been spoken of as the Creator of all things, He is now declared to have been the Source or Author of all life, natural and spiritual. *The life was the light of men.* All that in men which is *true light*—knowledge, integrity, intelligent, willing subjection to God, love to Him and to their fellow-creatures, wisdom, purity, holy joy, rational happiness—all this

"light of men" has its fountain in the essential original "life" of "the Word." (1 John i. 5-7; Ps. xxxvi. 9.) Christ is "God manifest." He is the *Word*, God heard; He is the *Light*, God seen; He is the *Life*, God felt. Eternal life proceeds from Him as its original source. He has obtained and earned it for us. He gives it to all who believe in Him.

5. ^aAnd the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.—^bChap. iii. 19.

The light—that just spoken of. *Darkness* here refers most obviously to the spiritual ignorance and alienation from God, which characterize the whole race of man, until enlightened by the rays of Divine truth. (Isa. ix. 2; Matt. iv. 14-16, xii. 41.) *Comprehended it not*, that is, did not apprehend it, or regard its dictates in such a manner as to secure the blessings to which it would have led. This shining and rejecting existed in all ages, but specially during the incarnation of which John is about to write. The light came pregnant with blessings, but it received not the welcome which from men lying in darkness it should have received. The reception of the Gospel is often sadly disappointing. (Isa. liii. 1; John iii. 19.)

6. ^aThere was a man sent from God, whose name was John.—^bMal. iii. 1; Matt. iii. 1; Luke iii. 2.

There was a man. Having spoken to us at the outset of God the Word, the Evangelist, proceeding on his road, comes to the herald of the Word, his namesake John. Verses 6-8 are in a manner parenthetical, their general design being apparently to prevent any mistake which might arise in regard to the character and mission of John. *Sent from God.* And so sent he has a grand *going forth*, but what is it compared to the eternal goings forth of the Logos?

7. ^aThe same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. ^bActs xix. 4.

For a witness. The *subject* of his testimony was Christ the Light. This shows how subordinate was the position and office of John, compared with that of Christ; he was only a herald and witness of the Messiah. Yet such was the dignity of the Logos (verses 1-5), that to be His herald or forerunner was one of the greatest honors which could be conferred upon man. *That all men, &c.* The aim of John's

testimony was, that through his preaching men might betake themselves to that Light, and be led to believe in Christ. He sought not his own glory. God makes men the instruments of turning the hearts of their fellow-creatures to Himself.

8. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

Not that Light. He was the morning star, but he received not his light from himself. It was the grace of Him, whose forerunner he was, which blazed and shone forth in him.

Note, 1. The ministry of men is a special means by which Christ shines to the world, and helps the world to know Him. 2. Ministers of Christ must not run unsent, but ought to have a calling from God. 3. The chief end of a ministry is, to point out Christ in His excellencies and value to lost men, to declare Him in His person, offices and benefits, how He should be believed in, served or suffered for. 4. No one is excluded from being allowed to believe in Christ, who has the offer. Jesus is to be held forth as the common refuge of all His people, of whatever kindred or nation, for John "came for a witness, that all men might believe."

9. *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

¹Verse 4; Isa. xlix. 6; 1 John ii. 8.

True Light, or original Light, the source of spiritual illumination. Other lights were figurative and derived. Christ is, moreover, the true Light, as opposed to the false light of heathen philosophy, the typical light of the old economy, and those false prophets and false Christs who had arisen, or should afterward arise. *Which lighteth, &c.* Observe two things: 1. *The fact.* The Saviour imparts light—the light of reason. All its powers, capacities and discoveries are from Him. The light of revelation—all the rays of Divine truth emanate from Him. The light of grace—man "by nature is in an awful state of darkness, and will remain so till Christ the Sun of Righteousness rises on the benighted mind. 2. *The universality of it.* We must not take this literally. It intimates the general diffusion of this blessing of light—that it is imparted to men of all climes and kindreds; that it is accessible to all, without distinction, who choose to

be guided by it. As there is only *one* sun in the sky to give us light, so there is only *one* Saviour to save us. We can no more infer from this expression that Christ gives every individual a measure of spiritual light, than from the one just before (verse 7), that every man actually "believeth in Christ" through John's testimony: both inferences are alike contrary to Scripture and to facts.

10. He was in the world, and *the world was made by him*, and the world knew him not.

²Verse 3; Heb. i. 2 and xi. 3.

In the world. The reference here is not so much to Christ's personal presence among men, in the days of His flesh, as to those manifestations of Him which, from the beginning of the world, had furnished them with the means of knowing Him, and which, therefore, rendered their ignorance inexcusable: such as the revelation of Him as the woman's seed, the sacrifices which were appointed to prefigure His atonement, and which, though perverted, were never discontinued, even among the heathen, the selection of the seed of Abraham, and their miraculous settlement in Canaan, which would necessarily proclaim the Messiah (who was a prominent feature of their religion) through every nation, &c., &c., &c. Not only was He in the world, so as to render their ignorance of Him inexcusable, but *the world itself was made by Him.* When Jesus became incarnate, it was an event which ought to have excited universal inquiry, and to have induced all men everywhere to repent; but, instead of this, *the world knew him not, i. e.,* did not recognize and acknowledge Him as the Messiah, or one sent of God. The love of the world hinders men from knowing Him who made it—though He made it only to make Himself known!

11. *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*—³Acts iii. 25.

To his own. Jesus was in the world, and therefore within the reach of inquiry, but *He came* to the seed of Abraham, knocking, as it were, at their door for admission. This simple expression may serve to confirm the truth, that all the manifestations of God, made by Him to His ancient people, were made in the person of His Son. (1 Cor. x. 9; Heb. xi. 26.) *Received him not.* The world are accused of igno-

rance, but *they* of unbelief, for *receiving him* not, though a merely negative form of speech, yet is expressive of a positive refusal of Him. Sufficient marks of Divinity appeared in Jesus to convince the meek and teachable, the child-like souls that were ready to submit their prejudices to His teaching, and consider fairly His claims to their faith and obedience; yet so veiled was His Divine nature under the form of a servant, as to escape the notice of those who were too proud to learn of One so lowly, too prejudiced to attend to One so different from what they had expected, too worldly to regard One who had no worldly claims to honor, too carnal to listen to One who called them to self-denial and mortification of sin.

12. But *as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

^aIsa. lvi. 5; Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iii. 26; 2 Peter i. 4; 1 John iii. 1.

As many, &c. Though the world in general knew not Christ, and though the body of His own nation rejected Him, yet there were some, partly Jews and partly Gentiles, who received Him. To *receive Christ*, is equivalent with *believing on His name*. The word supposes Him to be God's free gift. The act presupposes a sense of sin and of our exposedness to the just displeasure of God. It also implies the renunciation of everything which stands in opposition to Christ, or comes in competition with Him. To receive Christ requires not only that He be received by *all in us*, but that we have respect to *all in Him*—receive Him for all the purposes for which He is given. *Power* implies not only right and privilege, but power to attain the filial relation here spoken of. *The sons of God.* The *regeneration* and *adoption* of believers are here affirmed. The first gives them a new nature, the second adds to them a new name. This filial relation implies: 1. Access to God as our own God and Father. 2. Access to all the ordinances of God's house, and to the fellowship of His people. 3. A part in the first resurrection. 4. An interest in the eternal inheritance.

13. ^aWhich were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
^bChap. iii. 5; James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23.

In this new family of the sons of God,

"there is neither Jew nor Greek;" that is, admission into it depends not upon the circumstances of a man's birth. *Born.* This doubtless refers to the *new birth*, or to the great change in the sinner's mind, called regeneration, or conversion. *Not of blood*—not as being, by nature, descended from Abraham. (Matt. iii. 9.) *Nor of the will of the flesh*—not of the individual's own will. *Nor of the will of man*—not by the power nor will of friends, teacher, or parents. (John iii. 3, 5, 8; Rom. ix. 16; Phil. ii. 13; Eph. ii. 10; James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 3.) *But of God*—by the free grace of God. Regeneration is God's own work, who employs His word as the seed (1 Peter i. 23), sending His ministers as instruments to sow this seed (Gal. iv. 19), and who quickeneth this seed by the Spirit, who is the immediate worker of regeneration in order of operation (John iii. 6, 8), and so, whatever excellency regenerate men may have, they are still bound to acknowledge that grace prevented them and made them to differ from others, for they "were born," not of anything, "but of God." Grace runs not in the blood, piety is not hereditary. Religious parents propagate corruption, not regeneration. No man by the utmost improvement of nature can raise himself up to the privilege of adoption, and be the author and efficient cause of his own regeneration.

^a14. ^aAnd the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.
^bMatt. i. 16, 20; Luke i. 31, 35 and ii. 7; 1 Tim. iii. 16.
^cRom. i. 3; Gal. iv. 4. ^dHeb. ii. 11, 14, 16, 17. ^eChap. ii. 11 and xi. 40; 2 Peter i. 17. ^fCol. i. 19 and ii. 3, 9.

Christ, as *the Word*, was the Speech, the Mouth of God. (See on verse 1.) But more than teaching was wanted, something which should give us an interest in the truths revealed by Christ, and make them available to us. Without this these truths had been a splendid vision, the noblest exercise for the intellect, but nothing more. We are, therefore, taught that *the Word was made flesh, &c.* Christ took not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, the nature of man. There was such a union of Divinity with humanity, that the incarnate God was verily God and verily man, having two distinct and complete natures ineffably united in one Person.

Of course He did not assume our nature as it is corrupted with sin by the fall, for He was separated from sinners. (Heb. vii. 26.) *And dwelt among us.* If Christ's body had been only a phantom and apparition, in all probability it would have suddenly disappeared (Judg. xiii. 15-21); but He "dwelt among us," and conversed familiarly with men for a long time, and gave them sufficient opportunity to know that He had a true and real body of flesh. (1 John i. 1, 2.) Christ so put on our nature, when He was *made flesh*, as never to desert it again: He carried it through the agonies of death, and delivered it from the power of the grave, and dwells in it forever in His throne of glory. What words can declare, what mind can conceive, the honor and dignity this way conferred upon our nature?

And we beheld his glory. Others beheld it not, but His disciples did. Allusion is here made to the tabernacle in the wilderness, within which was the Shechinah, or cloud of the Divine glory. It is affirmed of this glory, 1. That it was *the glory as of the only begotten of the Father*. In other words, it was Divine glory, for the term "only begotten" is used to express Christ's Divine nature, as the Divine and eternal Son of God. 2. That it was *full of grace and truth*. It was a glory, not like that of Sinai, but softened and filled in every part and in all its manifestations, by grace and truth. In other words, in the glory of Christ were embodied and exemplified, not only the will and counsels, but the grace, the kindness, the compassion of God.

15. *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, *He that cometh after me is preferred before me, *for he was before me. *Verse 32; chap. iii. 32 and v. 33. *Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7; Luke iii. 16; verses 27, 30. *Chap. viii. 58; Col. i. 17.

Bare witness. There was a man who saw this glory (verse 14), and pointed Jesus out to others. His name was John the Baptist. *This was he of whom I spake.* He spake of Him long before he saw Him. Jesus was six months younger than John, therefore John said He came *after* him. Yet He was before him, for He was with His Father before He came into the world—before him in dignity of person and of office, as being the eternal God. As Christ is still above, and preferred before, the

most eminent of ministers, however He abased Himself in the days of His flesh, and subjected Himself to fulfill all righteousness, so it is the duty, and will be the practice of faithful ministers and honest Christians, to abase themselves that Christ may be exalted, and to guard against any respect that may encroach upon His honor.

16. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. *Chap. iii. 34; Eph. i. 6, 7, 8; Col. ii. 9, 10.

The Evangelist had said (verse 14) that Christ was *full of grace and truth*. Of that fullness he now says that all the disciples received grace answering or correspondent to that which is in Christ Jesus; that is, they derive from Christ, from His abundant truth and mercy, grace to understand the plan of salvation, to preach the Gospel, and to live lives of holiness. This declaration had not an exclusive reference to the Apostles, but is to be extended to all Christians. *Grace for grace.* Correspondent to His grace of "wisdom," Christ, as our Prophet, gives us "understanding;" correspondent to His "counsels," He, as our King, bestows upon us "might," or power to do His will, and, correspondent to His "knowledge," or the acquaintance with God, into which He, as a Priest, introduces us, He imparts "the fear of the Lord," a holy, reverential confidence in Him. (Isa. xi. 2.)

Observe, 1. All men, even the best of Christ's servants, are by nature, and of themselves, empty of anything that is good, for they must receive of Christ's fullness. 2. Whatever any receive of Christ, it comes of grace, and not of merit. 3. Christ is not only the storehouse from whose fullness grace flows to believers, but the procuring cause thereof also, grace being given to them because of His redemption and righteousness made theirs of free grace, and because His gracious acceptance with the Father as Mediator includes all His people in and with Him. (Rom. v. 15, 17; Eph. i. 6.) 4. Whatever believers receive from Christ, yet He remains still full. As the sea diminishes not by rivers coming from it, and as the sun does not wear away nor lose light by giving light to all, so Christ is still the same for fullness, notwithstanding what He communicates.

17. For ^athe law was given by Moses, ^bbut ^cgrace and truth came by Jesus Christ.
^aEx. xx. 1, &c.; Deut. iv. 44 and v. 1. ^bRom. iii. 24 and v. 21.

The law, the system of religion communicated in the Old Testament, the dispensation established by the agency of Moses. *Grace and truth*, the true love of God. The law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ are here contrasted, in order to illustrate the succession of the Divine benefits. The people of God, in ancient times, enjoyed a rich blessing under the Mosaic dispensation, but a far richer blessing came when that dispensation was superseded by the clearer manifestation of God's saving love through Jesus Christ. (Comp. Heb. i. 1, 2.) The "grace" of the Gospel is here contrasted with the sterner character of the Old Testament dispensation, and the "truth" is referred to as being the substance of *its* types and shadows.

18. ^aNo man hath seen God at any time; ^cthe only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.
^aEx. xxxiii. 20; chap. vi. 46; 1 Tim. i. 17 and vi. 16; 1 John iv. 12, 20. ^cVerse 14; chap. iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9.

The superiority of the Gospel to the Law referred to in the preceding verse is here further shown. Christ has revealed God, in His gracious attributes, more fully and clearly to us than Moses could. Why? Because Christ has *seen* Him whom no man, not Moses even, hath seen by immediate gaze, or direct intuition, for *He* is God's only begotten Son; *they* are only God's faithful servants. (See Ex. xxxiii. 20; John v. 37, vi. 46; 1 Tim. vi. 16; 1 John iv. 12.) *The only begotten Son*. He who was in deed and truth *the Son of God*, possessing a nature like God's, as a son possesses his father's nature. *In the bosom of the Father*. A remarkable expression, here only used, presupposing the Son's conscious existence distinct from the Father, and expressing His immediate and most endeared access to and absolute acquaintance with Him. *He*, and He only, *hath declared him*, because He only *can*. (See chap. x. 15, vi. 46.)

19. ^aAnd this is ^bthe record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?—(Chap. v. 33.)

The historical part of John's Gospel now begins. *The record*—the testimony or witness. *The Jews*, &c. The Jews of Jerusalem—the Sanhedrim, or council of seventy, who had the authority of making

inquiry into the pretensions of prophets. John's fame was great (Matt. iii. 5), and the nation seemed to suppose, from the character of his preaching, that he was the Messiah. (Luke iii. 15.)

20. And ^ahe confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.
^aLuke iii. 15; chap. iii. 28; Acts xiii. 25.

Some of his disciples may, in their pride, have given out that their master was the Messiah Himself. This committee cross-examine him, and thus draw out a prompt and explicit denial, which our Evangelist adduces to silence all false claimants in John's behalf. (See on Luke iii. 16.)

21. And they asked him, What then? Art thou ^aElias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou ^bthat Prophet? And he answered, No.
^aMal. iv. 5; Matt. xvii. 10. ^bDeut. xviii. 15, 18.

What then? What then are we to think of you? *Art thou Elias?* The Jews thought that the Messiah would come attended by Elijah, as His most honored and confidential friend and follower. The general appearance and habits of John, so much like those of Elijah (see 2 Kings i. 8), together with the burden of his proclamation (Matt. iii. 2, compared with Mal. iv. 5), suggested the idea that he might be the reappearance of that Old Testament Prophet. *That Prophet*—probably put generically for any prophet who might be supposed to appear in the time of the Messiah. *No*. The Baptist replies first in a negative form. The brevity of his answer may be accounted for by the compendious character of the narrative, but verse 22 shows that he, in accordance with his rugged, ascetic character, actually answered no more than the question demanded.

22. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

Who art thou? The conjectures of rumor are exhausted, and hence they now demand a positive declaration. *Of thyself*. Every man ought to know himself, and if he enters upon any undertaking in particular, he ought to be ready to give a reason for it.

23. ^aHe said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as ^bsaid the prophet Esaias.
^aMatt. iii. 3; Luke iii. 4, on which see notes; Mark i. 3; chap. iii. 23. ^bIsa. xl. 3.

I am, &c. Here was John's *positive* denial

that he was the Christ. Observe, 1. Every one who undertakes the work of the ministry ought to be clear of his calling, as on this his courage, comfort and success much depend. 2. As Christ's coming into the world was kingly, though in appearance it seemed common, and as, wherever He is received He will be received as a King, therefore He came with a forerunner, which is the prerogative of kings. 3. Men's hearts are naturally unprepared for Christ to come into. 4. Although Jesus commands us to prepare His way, that He may show us our duty, yet this work of preparation is not in our power, but must be His work whose reward is with Him, and His work before Him. (Isa. xl. 3, 4, &c.; Luke iii. 4, 5.)

24. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet? 26. John answered them, saying, I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not: 27. He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. 28. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

^aMatt. iii. 11, on which see notes. ^bMal. iii. 1. ^cVerses 15, 30; Acts xix. 4. ^dJudg. vii. 24; chap. x. 40.

Pharisees. This sect was extremely rigid in matters pertaining to the ritual. *Why baptizest, &c.* Thinking he disclaimed any special connection with Messiah's kingdom, they demand his right to gather disciples by baptism. It was commonly believed among them, that it would justly pertain to the Messiah to modify existing usages, introduce new laws, and in various ways assert His Kingly authority. *There standeth one, &c.* The Baptist does not enter into their nice distinctions, or attempt to combat their vain traditions. He simply endeavors to draw off their thoughts from himself to a greater, to lead them from the servant to the Master. Our Lord had nothing in His outward appearance to distinguish Him from others. There is much excellency in the world unknown. In nature there is many a rich vein of ore concealed beneath a rude surface, and many a flower that blooms unseen in the woods, and sheds its fragrance on "the desert air." Learning and genius are often buried in obscurity. The same may be said of moral and religious qualities. We are not to measure or number the instances of godliness by our personal observation. God has His hid-

den ones. *Is preferred, &c.* The most deep and pure humility does not so much arise from the consideration of our faults and defects (though that also may have its own place), as from a calm contemplation of the Divine perfections. By fixing our eyes on the infinite greatness and holiness of God, we are most fully sensible of our own weakness. We will appear as nothing in our own sight, when beheld from so great a height. This is really the greatest elevation of the soul, and there is nothing in the world so noble and excellent as the sublimity of humble minds. (Chap. iii. 27-31; Job xxxiii. 15.) It is the duty of ministers, and will be the care of such as are faithful and zealous, to exalt and commend Christ on all occasions. Jesus may be among a people, and yet they who reckon themselves very high in the Church neither see Him nor know Him. *Bethabara beyond Jordan.* The country east of the Jordan was designated as *beyond* the river. Bethabara signifies literally, *the house of passage*, and is thought to be the place where the Israelites passed the river Jordan under Joshua. (Judg. vii. 24.) The precise situation of the town is not known.

29. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!

^aEx. xii. 3; Isa. liii. 7; verse 35; Acts viii. 22; 1 Peter i. 19; Rev. v. 6, &c. ^bIsa. liii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 3; Gal. i. 4; Heb. i. 3, ii. 17 and ix. 28; 1 Peter ii. 24 and iii. 18; 1 John ii. 2, iii. 5 and iv. 10; Rev. i. 5.

The Evangelist, having set forth Christ in the dignity and excellency of His office, now declares how He was to execute His office, and to bring about these benefits; which was by suffering. *The Lamb of God.* The reference is not to any of the lambs of sacrifice, ordained in the Old Testament, in particular, being indeed to them all. They severally set forth in type and in figure some part of that which was fulfilled in substance and in full, not by a lamb of men, but by the Lamb of God, there being thus fulfilled to the uttermost the significant word of Abraham, "God will provide himself a lamb." *Which taketh away, &c.* Not the sins of one nation only, not the sins of the Jews alone, by whom alone the typical sacrifices of the law were offered, but the sins of the whole world, of all who in all the world believe in Him. (1 John ii. 2.) Christ bore the sin of the world by

letting it be imputed to Him by His Father, in a manner incomprehensible to us, so that it became no longer ours but His. Christ takes away the sin of those who trust in Him, partly by justification, in which the merit of His death is applied for taking away the guilt and punishment due to sin, and partly by sanctification, in which the power of His death and resurrection is applied by the Holy Spirit, for subduing and removing the pollutions of sin. The expression, *taketh away*, being in the present tense, denotes a continued act, and it intimates to us that it is the daily office of Christ to take away our sin, by presenting to the Father the memorials of His death. *Behold*, with an eye of admiration, but especially with an eye of faith and dependence, improving the fruit of His death to our consolation and salvation.

This passage alone, if the truth were revealed nowhere else in the Scriptures, justifies the doctrine that our Lord was the sinner's substitute, and thus made a sin-offering for man. But this great truth is taught in the clearest and most ample terms in many other portions of God's Word. To deny the doctrine of Christ's atonement, indeed, is to rob the fabric of Christianity of its foundation, strike at the very roots of the tree of life, attempt to pluck the diadem of glory from Immanuel's brow, mutilate the fair volume of revelation, take the brightest jewel from the crown of Scripture, dash the cup of consolation from the lips of the mourner, and leave the sinner without a gleam of hope. (See 2 Cor. v. 19; also Lev. xvi. 21; Isa. liii. 11; Luke i. 77; Heb. ix. 28, x. 14; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Peter ii. 24; 1 John ii. 2, iii. 5.)

30. *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me. 31. And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

*Verses 15, 27. *Mal. iii. 1; Matt. iii. 6; Luke i. 17, 76, 77 and iii. 3, 4.

This is he, &c. (See on verse 15.) *And I knew him not.* John knew Jesus, but the Baptist knew not yet the Messiah. He indeed was aware of His miraculous birth, he must have known His remarkable character, he may even have suspected Him to be the Messiah: but as God, who sent him on his work as Baptist, had promised him a sign whereby he might discover the

Messiah, and as that sign had not yet been given, he did not yet recognize Jesus as such, whatever might have been his own thoughts and suspicions. *Should be made manifest, &c.* That the Messiah should be exhibited or made known to Israel as the High Priest of God's appointment. See the ordinance to be observed with regard to Aaron and his sons. (Ex. xxix. and Lev. viii.) *Therefore am I come, &c.* "It was chiefly for this end that Christ might thus be more remarkably *made manifest to Israel*, and might be introduced with greater solemnity."

32. *And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33. And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

*Matt. iii. 16; Mark i. 10; Luke iii. 22, on which see notes; chap. v. 32. *Matt. iii. 11; Acts i. 5, ii. 4, x. 44 and xix. 6.

As soon as John received the sign (verse 33), and his expectations were realized, he *bare record. Like a dove.* Is Christ a Lamb? Is the Spirit a Dove? Are these two symbols so united, and so placed before us? And have we yet to learn "what manner of spirit we are of?" (James iii. 17.) *Abode upon him.* This, 1. Indicated and illustrated what is said of the difference between the baptism of Christ and the baptism of John, for He was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, a baptism of everlasting efficacy, and not as John's, which, as he himself professed, was only temporary. 2. It was intended to assure His people that He received the Spirit, not only for Himself, but also to communicate unto them. (Isa. xi. 2, 3.) *And I saw, &c.* He had previously spoken of Christ as *man* (verse 30), and intimated by the words "for he was before me," that He was something more than man. Here he affirms—*this is the Son of God.* So Christ is both God and man. (See 2 Peter i. 16; 1 John i. 1.) This great truth is very full of comfort, assuring us of His sympathy and power, and teaching us that He both knows by experience our sorrows, and can help us out of them.

35. † Again the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples; 36. And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! 37. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39. He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and

abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. 40. One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was *Andrew*, Simon Peter's brother. 41. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the *Messias*, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. 42. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, *Thou art Simon the son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas*, which is by interpretation, a stone.

†Verse 29. ‡Matt. iv. 18, on which see notes.

John stood—doubtless upon the banks of the Jordan, contemplating his sacred work. *Two of his disciples*. Andrew, and probably the Evangelist himself. *Looking upon Jesus*. John was encouraged to commend Him, so a sight and enjoyment of Christ's spiritual presence will much dispose and enable men to speak of Him. *As he walked—the Lamb*. (See on verse 29.) There might have been something in His very look, and whole gesture and deportment, so meek, unassuming, superhuman and heavenly, as silently to attest His Divine character and mission, and of itself to invite the designation of the Baptist. (Acts vi. 15; Luke xiii. 27.) *They followed Jesus*. They quitted one master, and joined themselves to another. There was a drawing, attractive power in that word about the Lamb, the taker away of the world's sin, which no other word possessed or could possess. Set between two magnets, the disciples showed at once which was the mightier of the two. *Jesus turned*, &c. God meets us in the way. The willing mind is accepted. The sincere desire is blessed. He who graciously “turned and saw them following,” was the same God, the same eternal “I am,” who in like manner encouraged His servant Moses. (Ex. iii. 4.) We should be attentive to every intimation of God's providence and will.

What seek ye? Jesus tenderly draws them on to open their hearts to Him. They wish to know as to His abode for the night. They will not trouble Him on His way; they wish to speak with Him alone. The use of the term *Rabbi* by these disciples, shows that they sought instruction from Jesus. For the sake of those Gentiles into whose hands this Gospel should fall, the Evangelist adds the interpretation of this Jewish term. *Come and see*. Christ invited them forthwith to accompany Him. They go, and remain until four o'clock in the afternoon. The

interest and importance of this interview we may well imagine. Its immediate effect is apparent from what follows.

The Messias, or, *Messiah*. Both these words, the one Greek, the other Hebrew, mean *the Christ*, or, the Anointed One. *Brought him to Jesus*. In this beautiful scene we behold the commencement of all Christian activity in missions. Andrew had been for some little time with Jesus himself, and he immediately evinces the influence of the intercourse on his own mind, by his concern to bring others to the same Saviour. They that have tasted that the Lord is gracious themselves, will be always constrained to invite others. Andrew *first* found Simon, but he also prevailed on others. Though we cannot bring souls to Jesus *efficiently*, we may do this *instrumentally*, 1. by intercession, 2. by the influence of example, 3. by instruction and by various other means. We should be concerned to bring souls to Jesus for the following reasons: 1. To feel a concern for this work is an evidence of grace, and an evidence the most decisive. 2. To attempt it is a duty that cannot be declined without the greatest guilt. 3. To accomplish it is the most glorious enterprise. What can be compared to the salvation of a soul? 4. To fail in it is no disgrace. Failure here, is, indeed, more honorable than success in any other enterprise. But wise and good efforts are never in vain. If they are useless as to the direct object, they do good collaterally. If they relieve not the beneficiary, they bless the benefactor.

Jesus beheld him. The Saviour, with that piercing glance which tested men, and to which the Evangelist so often gives prominence (verse 45, ii. 25, iii. 3, vi. 71), looked through the disciple brought to Him. *Thou art*, &c. Though it be the first time that Peter ever saw Jesus, it is not the first time that Jesus, in spirit at least, ever saw Peter. He knows His parentage, His name, and history. *A stone*. The word which is here thus rendered, is in reality the proper name *Peter*, and it should have been rendered as a proper name. The remark is thrown in by the Evangelist, as apprising his readers that the Simon to whom the name *Cephas* was affixed, was

the same as the Apostle whom they knew by the name Peter.

In the calling of these three humble followers of Jesus commenced that little company, that weak and feeble band, which, under the direction and in the power of the Holy Ghost, regenerated the world. Men chosen from the lower walks of life, without wealth, without learning, without much of talent either natural or acquired, and yet who succeeded in a few short years, to use the language of their opponents, in "turning the world upside down." (Acts xvii. 6.)

43. ¶ The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

The day following the calling and naming of Peter. *Into Galilee*—probably on His way home after His baptism and temptation. *Findeth Philip*. Peter, as we have seen, was called by Andrew, as Nathanael was afterward (verse 45) called by Philip, but Philip was called by Christ Himself. How various were the means by which this little party was assembled! How various, will it appear hereafter, have been the means by which the countless multitude who shall fill the everlasting mansions have been congregated! Still, however varying may be the means, the end and object of this blessed work are and must forever be the same, the following Him here on earth, who speaks with power by His Holy Spirit to the heart, and says, "Follow me," and the enjoying Him in the kingdom of heaven.

44. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.—Chap. xii. 21.

The exact mention by the Evangelist, at this point of his narrative, that *Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter*, is an intimation that he was more or less prepared for the calling. He received from Jesus, by some accounts which he had obtained from his fellow-townsmen Andrew and Peter, of what had passed between them and the Lord on the day preceding.

45. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Chap. xxi. 2. 4Gen. iii. 15 and xl. 9. 10: Deut. xviii. 18; see on Luke xiv. 27. 1Isa. iv. 2, vii. 14 and ix. 6; Mt. v. 2; Zech. vi. 12 and ix. 9, Luke xxiv. 27. 1Matt. ii. 23; Luke ii. 4.

Philip, having attached himself to Jesus.

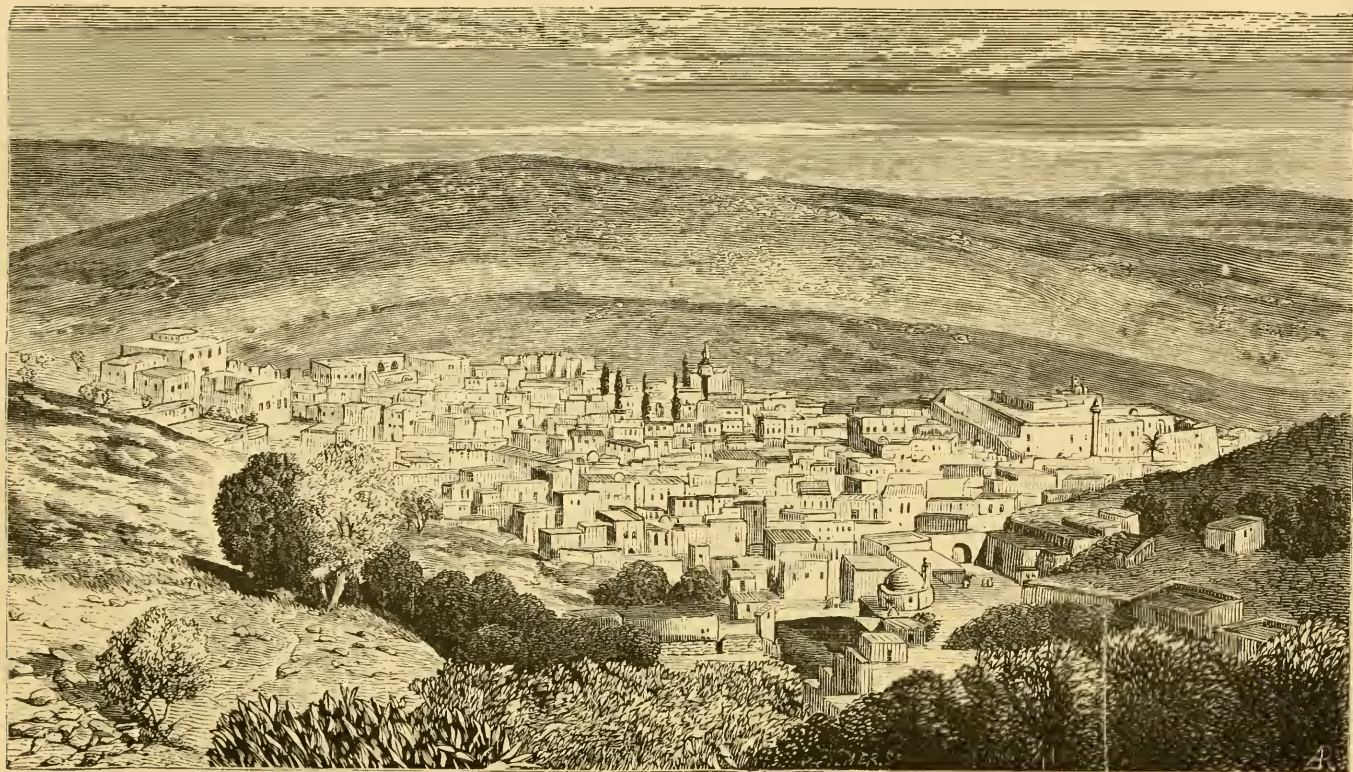
could not be content till he had introduced his friend into the glorious liberty of the same service with himself, until he had done what he could to make his friend a sharer of his treasure and his joy. *We have found him*, &c. A celebrated mathematician of antiquity, while meditating, suddenly solved one of the profoundest problems of geometry. Such was his rapture at the discovery, that he instantly ran through the streets clapping his hands, and exclaiming, *Eureka, I have found*. Philip here joyfully uses the same word, *we have found*. From the frequent recurrence of *finding*, in this chapter, it has, indeed, been called the chapter of the Eureka. (See verses 41, 43.) *Moses in the law*. (See Gen. iii. 15, xlix. 10; Num. xxiv. 17, 19; Deut. xviii. 15-19.) *And the prophets, did write*. (See 2 Sam. vii. 12-16, xxiii. 1-7; Isa. vii. 14, ix. 6, liii.; Ezek. xxxiv. 23-31.)

46. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.—Chap. vii. 41, 42, 52.

Can there any good thing, &c. There is here a reference to the general low esteem and disrepute in which Nazareth was held (Matt. ii. 23), and an intimation of the consequent unlikelihood that aught pre-eminently good would come forth from it. By the *good thing* must be understood that one "good thing," that "gift of God" (John iv. 10), in which all other good things are included. *Come and see*. He has a confidence, which the result abundantly justified, that in that holy presence, if only he could bring his friend within the range of its influence, all preconceived objections would dissolve and disappear. If men, instead of taking up unreasonable prejudices against the Christian religion, Christian missions, Christian people and Christian practices, as too many do, judging from hearsay, not from actual knowledge; from fancy rather than from fact, if these would only do as Philip advised, and as Nathanael did, that is, "come and see," they might haply arrive at a different and a juster conclusion.

47. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 1Ps. xxxii. 2, and lxxiii. 1, Chap. viii. 39: Rom. ii. 28, 29, and ix. 6.

Not long before (verse 36), John cried of Christ: *Ece! Behold the Lamb of God!* Christ is the crier here. *Ece! Behold a*



NAZARETH.

true Israelite—one in whom is no guile—not only no hypocrite, but, with a guileless simplicity not always found even in God's own people, ready to follow wherever truth might lead him. *Behold, &c.* How kind and merciful this salutation! As easy would it have been for Him to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid, to have evinced His own omniscience by convicting Nathanael at once of whatever bigotry and prejudice he had manifested, by repeating to him the words, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" as thus to fix at once upon the favorable point in his character, and so freely and so kindly to acknowledge it.

48. Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Christ here speaks of three wonderful things, which are above man: 1. Although thou wast distant, yet I saw that *Philip called thee*. 2. I saw thee before Philip found thee, *when thou wast under the fig tree*. 3. I saw into thy heart, and thou art *without guile*, verse 47. (Chap. ii. 25; Luke xix. 4, 5; Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.) Let us ask ourselves what effect the omniscience of Jesus, which we profess to believe, has upon us. Both in public and in private we are followed by the all-seeing eye, and listened to by the all-hearing ear. Jesus not only avowed His regard for Nathanael, but He avowed it *before others*. The concealments of Christians are only partial and temporary. Their day is coming: it is the manifestation of the sons of God.

49. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. ¹Matt. xiv. 23. ²Matt. xxi. 5, xxvii. 11, 42; chap. xviii. 37 and xix. 3.

There was something in the very minuteness of our Lord's naming the tree under which he had been sitting, in the privacy of his own garden, where no eye had seen him, and in His showing a knowledge of his state of mind, which evidently brought instantaneous conviction to the mind of Nathanael, hence the acknowledgment into which he burst forth. (See chap. iv. 29; 1 Cor. xiv. 25.) On that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, how will this acknowledgment shame those who with ten-fold, yea, ten thousand-fold, Na-

thanael's evidence, have not attained to Nathanael's faith, who doubt the omniscience and the divinity of Jesus! *Thou art the Son of God*. Here is the first simple creed of the infant church. The salvation, expanded in the writings of "Moses and the Prophets," is contracted into a few words, but words of a mighty power, the germ of all saving truth. Oh, that no more had been needed to join all Christians together in this "One Faith!" (Chap. vi. 69; Acts ii. 38, viii. 37; Rev. xix. 10.)

50. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. 51. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. ¹Gen. xxviii. 12; Matt. iv. 11; Luke ii. 9, 13, xxii. 43 and xxiv. 4; Acts i. 10.

Thou shalt see, &c. Our Lord confirms His faith, and, agreeably to the Divine rule, "he that hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance," promises him higher honor, and more blessed visions. If we are now able to see Jesus, as the Son of God, the Saviour of our soul, we shall see greater things than even His omniscience and omnipotence; we shall see His love employed in blotting out every sin we have committed, His wisdom in enlightening and instructing our mind, His strength in supporting our weakness, His blood in cleansing our pollutions, His Spirit in sanctifying and renewing our soul.

This *verily, verily*, this double Amen, which here occurs for the first time, is peculiar to John, he only records our Lord's use of it, but he on very many occasions. It was never used by any one but Christ, and always at the beginning of a sentence. It comes most fitly from the lips of Him who is Himself the Amen (Rev. iii. 14), the God of truth (Isa. lxxv. 16), in whom all the promises of God are yea, and in whom Amen. (2 Cor. i. 19; Num. v. 22; Neh. viii. 6.) How different, too, the majestic, *I say unto you*, of Christ, from that, "Thus saith the Lord," of all the prophets preceding—they hearers of the word of another, He the utterer of His own.

Heaven open. What a saying is this! When the wrath of God was poured upon a guilty world, it is expressed by this kind of language: "The windows of heaven were opened." What, then, can it here

denote, but that God would, in honor of *Him* in whom His soul delighted, pour forth a deluge of blessings in His name. *And the angels of God, &c.* In the miracles the disciples were about to witness, as accomplished by Christ, both on the bodies and souls of men, they should see things marvelous as any in Jacob's ancient vision. Christ here intimates that He should henceforward be the middle point of free intercourse, yea, of uninterrupted communion between God and men, that in Him should be the meeting-place of heaven and earth. (Eph. i. 10; Col. i. 19.) The angels that wait upon the throne of God and "do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word," were sent from thence to attend on Jesus at His resurrection and at His ascension, as His disciples witnessed, and *Nathanael* among the rest; for he is mentioned as a person present when Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after His resurrection. (Chap. xxi. 2.)

Upon the Son of man. He who had just

accepted Nathanael's tribute to Him as "the Son of God" (verse 49), and to whom the Baptist under Divine inspiration had lately borne the same testimony (verse 34), here speaks of Himself under the title of "the Son of man," a title taken from the prophecy of Daniel (chap. vii. 13), but which was never used of our Lord by any but Himself, and which *He* used constantly, to show that God had for our sakes become also very man. The use of this term by Stephen, in Acts vii. 56, is not an exception to this remark, for this use was manifestly in allusion to our Lord's own words in Matt. xxvi. 64, of which the statement of Stephen is in fact an adaptation.

"If the angels," says *Augustine*, "descend to the Son of man, He is here; if they ascend to Him, He is above. He is above with the Father, below in us." (Chap. iii. 13; Acts vii. 56, ix. 4, 5). "An angelical life," remarks *Leighton*, "spent between ascending in prayer to fetch blessings from above, and descending to scatter them among men." (Luke vi. 12, 13).

1. What is meant by "the beginning?" 2. Why is Christ called "the Word?" 3. Is Creatorship ascribed to Him? 4. What is said of "life" in Jesus? 5. Who was sent from God? 6. For what purpose did he come? 7. What is said of Him? 8. What contrast is stated between Moses and Christ? 9. What was John's answer to the priests and Levites who came to him? 10. What did he say when he saw Jesus coming unto him? 11. Who were the two disciples referred to in verse 37? 12. What did Andrew do? 13. What did Christ say to Philip? 14. Whom did Philip find? 15. What did Nathanael say? 16. State the interview between Jesus and Nathanael. 17. What did our Lord say respecting angels?

CHAPTER II.

- 1 *Christ turneth water into wine.* 12 *departeth into Capernaum, and to Jerusalem.* 14 *where he purgeth the temple of buyers and sellers.* 19 *He foretelleth his death and resurrection.* 23 *Many believed because of his miracles, but he would not trust himself with them.*

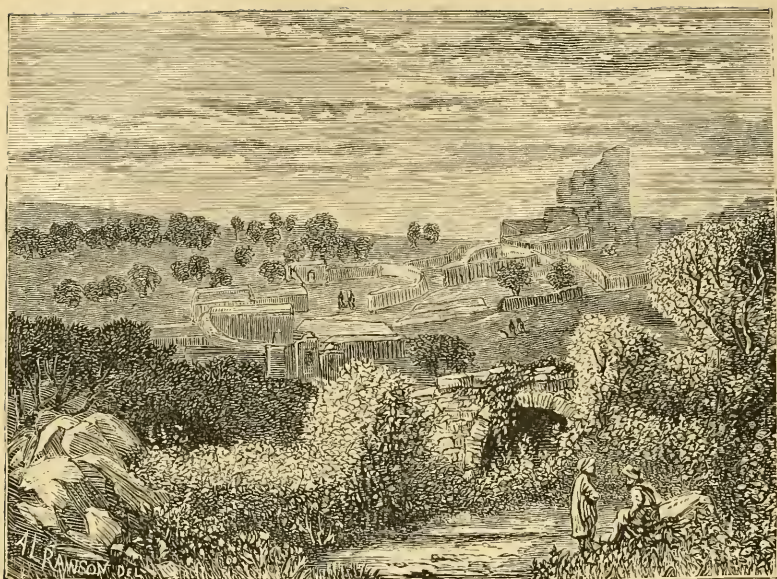
AND the third day there was a marriage in ^aCana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:
^aSee Josh. xix. 28.

The third day after Nathanael's call. *A marriage, i. e.,* a marriage festival. *Cana of Galilee,* so called to distinguish it from Cana in Asher, not far from Tyre. (Josh. xix. 28.) It was situated seven miles north of Nazareth, and about three miles north-east of Sepphoris. *The mother of Jesus, &c.*

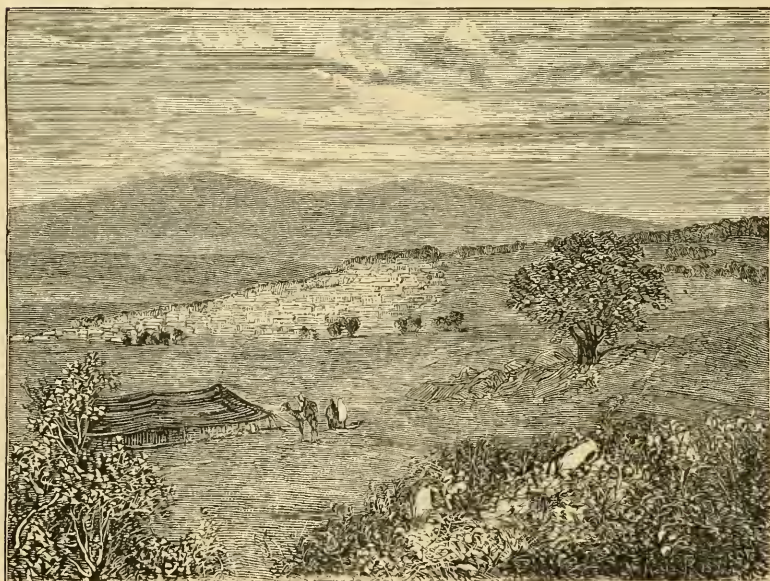
There is every reason to suppose that Joseph was now dead.

2. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

Called—invited. How was this true of Christ, being a stranger? Probably this was the marriage of some relative of the mother of Jesus. But it may be that the invitation came through the friendly intervention of Nathanael, who was of this place. (xxi. 2.) If so, let us admire such a proof, of a convert's early love to the Lord, his zeal in Christ's service, his desire, harmonizing with that of Mary (verse



BETHANY.



CANA OF GALILEE.

5), to promote his Master's honor (i. 49) his brotherly kindness, also, for "both Jesus was called *and his disciples* to the marriage." We need not wonder to find the Lord of life at that festival, for He came to sanctify all life—its times of joy, as its times of sorrow, and all experience tells us that it is times of gladness, such as this was now, which especially need such a sanctifying power, such a presence of the Lord.

3. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

Wanted wine. The supply of wine, from some cause or other, ran short. *The mother of Jesus.* The Evangelist never calls her by name, indeed, he generally prefers to designate those of whom he speaks by their respective titles. *Saith unto him.* Having a greater interest in the matter than a mere guest would have had, she mentions the subject to our Lord, saying, *They have no wine*, implying, of course, the embarrassment of those who gave the feast and of herself also as a relative or friend of the parties. This embarrassment she hoped her Son would in some way remove.

Wine was as common a drink in Palestine as cider in portions of our own country. Their wine was so free from the alcoholic element, that it produced intoxication only through fermentation or by being drugged.

Rev. Dr. Duff, the celebrated Scotch missionary, speaking of the vine regions of southern France, says: "Look at the peasant at his meals in vine-bearing districts! Instead of milk he has a basin of pure, unadulterated 'blood of the grape.' In this its native original state it is a plain, simple and wholesome liquid, which, at every repast, becomes to the husbandman what milk is to the shepherd, not a luxury, but a necessity; not an intoxicating, but a nutritive beverage. Hence to the vine-dressing peasant of Auxerre, for example, an abundant vintage, as connected with his own sustenance, is as important as an overflowing dairy to the pastoral peasant of Ayrshire, and hence, by such a view of the subject, are the language and sense of Scripture vindicated."

Captain Treath, as quoted by *Dr. Lees*,

says: "When on the south coast of Italy, last Christmas (1845), I inquired particularly about the wines in common use, and found that *those esteemed the best were sweet and unintoxicating*. The boiled juice of the grape is in common use in Sicily. About three gallons of the juice is boiled until reduced to two—it is then poured into plates to cool. The poor people mix flour into theirs while boiling, to make it go further. It is eaten at their meals with bread, and very nice it is. The Calabrians keep their intoxicating and unintoxicating wines in separate apartments. The bottles were generally marked. From inquiries, I found that the *unfermented wine was esteemed the most*. It was drunk mixed with water. Great pains were taken in the vintage season to have a good stock of it laid by."

This must be taken into consideration in judging of the moral aspect of this miracle of our Lord. No plea whatever can be drawn from it for the use of such adulterated and poisonous wines as are generally imported and vended in this country. We see no reason for supposing that the wine of the present occasion was of that kind upon which Scripture places its strongest interdict. (Prov. xx. 1, xxiii. 31; Isa. xxii. 13), rather than of that which is eulogized as a blessing. (Ps. civ. 15; Isa. lv. 1.) See on verse 7.

4. Jesus saith unto her, ^bWoman, what have I to do with thee? ^dmine hour is not yet come.
^bChap. xix. 26. ^c2 Sam. xvi. 10 and xix. 22. ^dChap. vii. 6.

Woman, &c. The word "woman," in ancient Greek, is equivalent to "lady." The radical idea appears to be, "What have we in common? Our relations are wholly different. Be not over anxious, I know what I will do, when the proper time has come." Our Lord, in the way of mild reproof, wished her to know that though as a son He was subject to her in private life, as the Son of God His power was not under her control. But it is evident that no disrespect was intended. See the tender use of the same term in chap. xx. 15, xix. 26. *Mine hour*, &c., that is, "the seasonable time," or, "the time for doing what you suggest is not yet come," implying that He alone was the proper judge of that season, and would seize it, thus mixing comfort with the gentle re-

proof. The time would be when the wine was quite exhausted, whereby the reality of the miracle would be undoubted.

5. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

Saith unto the servants. Mary apparently understood the words of Jesus, as indeed was no doubt intended, rather as a postponement than a denial. When we find any particular mystery in God's Providential dealings toward us, instead of wasting our thoughts and time in murmuring and complaint about it, we should give greater diligence in attending to our known duties, obeying the evident will of God concerning us, leaving it to Him to solve every intricacy. (Ps. xxxvii.; Deut. xxix. 29.) *Whatsoever he saith, &c.* To obey God rightly is to obey Him as Supreme Lawgiver, which can never be done, while He only maintains a divided empire in our hearts. The same motive that prompts us to obey God in one thing, ought to influence us to strive to obey Him in all things.

6. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.—Mark vii. 3.

Waterpots of stone—stone vessels for holding water. *Purifying of the Jews.* The Jews, on account of the regulations respecting ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness, had occasion for a constant supply of water, in readiness for washing. (Mark vii. 1-4.) *Firkins.* The word thus translated signifies a measure containing somewhat more than eight gallons. This large quantity of wine made the miracle more striking and apparent. Wedding festivals were prolonged sometimes through a whole week. The report of the wondrous miracle, doubtless, drew numbers to the feast, all of whom would wish to drink, if for no other purpose than to satisfy themselves of the truth of the affair.

7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

Fill, &c. These vessels were now empty, probably, from the ablutions of so many guests. The servants, though wondering, did not venture to disobey Christ. As *Messiah* Christ uttered the reproof (verse 4), as a *Son* He now complied with His mother's suggestion, and thus saved the bridal pair from mortification. The critical

Dr. Trench, now Archbishop of Dublin, says: "He who each year prepares the wine in the grape, causing it to drink up and swell with the moisture of earth and heaven, to transmute this into its own nobler juices, concentrated all those slower processes now into the act of a single moment, and accomplished in an instant what ordinarily He does not accomplish but in months." The same interpretation was given of the miracle by Dr. Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, England, in 1600, by Chrysostom, born A. D. 344, and by Augustine, born A. D. 354. (See on verse 2.) *They bare it.* Equally removed from every appearance of doubt or display, our Lord does not ask to taste, or even to see the wine Himself, to ascertain the certainty of the success of His command, but tells the servants at once to carry it to the governor. As they perceived by the color and odor, that what they drew from the waterpots, had become wine, they scrupled not to do as directed. It was the function of the *governor*, or ruler of the feast, to provide for the occasion, to preside at the table, to relieve the bridegroom from minute solitudes, and to taste first what was set before the guests.

9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom; 10. And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.—Chap. iv. 46.

The governor, after he had tasted the wine, and found it greatly superior to any that had yet been used, called out to the bridegroom across the table, *Every man at the beginning, &c.* It would be unjust and absurd to suppose from the words of the ruler, *when men have well drunk*, that these guests had transgressed the rules of temperance. For, 1, the Greek word rendered "well drunk," does not imply intoxication, and, 2, the ruler describes the customs of others, not the conduct of the present assembly. Besides, as *Alford* well remarks: "We may be sure that the Lord would not have sanctioned, nor ministered to, actual drunkenness. Only those who can conceive this, will find any difficulty here, and they will find difficulty everywhere."

11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.—*Chap. i. 14.*

This was the *beginning of miracles*, the first of a *series*. It was an introduction to all Christ's other miracles, as the parable of the Sower was to all His other parables. (Mark. iv. 31.) And, no other miracle would have served as so fit an inauguration to the whole future work of the Son of God, for that work might be characterized throughout as an ennobling of the common and a transmuting of the mean—a turning of the water of earth into the wine of heaven. *His glory*. Jesus shines with no borrowed light. The light which His Apostles manifested was what they derived from *Him*, but *He* shines in His own proper light. Until now Christ had veiled Himself more or less, but now He gave some glimpses of what He was. *Believed on him*. Such was the result in the case of the disciples. Their faith, as we know from what is subsequently recorded, was weak and imperfect, but it was yet genuine and grew stronger and stronger, and was graciously accepted by our blessed Lord.

From this narrative learn, 1. The lesson of patience, as exhibited in our Lord's conduct, in so meekly awaiting the fit time for disclosing His true character to the world. 2. Religion does not require us to shut ourselves out from the world, like monks and nuns, or to cherish gloomy feelings; it is social and cheerful. (Prov. iii. 17.) It teaches us how to enjoy, as well as to obey. 3. Christ honors His own institution of the marriage state. 4. The rule of giving which the Saviour pursues is very different from that which is followed by the world. The worldling has his best things *first*. He finds life grow darker and darker as he advances. But the path of the true Christian "shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The more religious he becomes, the more happy he finds himself. What, then, will be his experience when he partakes in heaven of the sweetness of redeeming love in all its perfection!

12. ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples, and they continued there not many days.—*Matt. xii. 46.*

He went down—from Cana, in the country to Capernaum, on the lake shore. *His mother*. It is probable that Joseph died

between Jesus' twelfth and thirtieth years. *His brethren*. (See on Matt. xii. 46.) These are put before His *disciples*, showing the greatness of the privileges within their reach. *Not many days*. Because the passover was near.

13. ¶ And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, 14. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables, 16. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. 17. And his disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

1Ex. xii. 14; Deut. xvi. 1, 16; verse 23; chap. v. 1, vi. 4, and xi. 55. 1Matt. xxi. 12; Mark xi. 15; Luke xix. 45. 2Luke ii. 49. 3Lkix. 9.

On verses 13–17 see on Matt. xxi, 12, &c.; Mark xi. 15, &c.

Jesus' passover. So specifically called by the Evangelist, for the sake of the Gentiles to whom this Gospel should come. John mentions four passovers as occurring during Christ's ministry, of which this is generally regarded as the first. *Went up to Jerusalem*. Every male among the Jews was required to appear at this feast. *Oxen and sheep*, &c.—used in sacrifices. *Sitting*; in the very act of negotiation: business was the more brisk, as the passover was at hand. *Scourge*, &c. Thus scourges were formerly made. Moreover, no material injured the body less than this. It is not said that Jesus inflicted a single blow on the men. He accomplished His purpose by terror. The scourge was a symbol of God's judgment soon to fall on the corrupters. These "cords" were the instruments of their unrighteousness, for with them the oxen were tied up. Thus do our sins, even in this life, become our scourges, as in the case of Pharaoh.

Take these things hence. Jesus acted in the spirit of a true reformer, with much zeal, and with as much moderation. He cast out the abuses, but did not forbid the duties of the temple—drove out the merchants, but not the ministers of the house of God. The different treatment of the *doves*, from that of the sheep and oxen is one of those *minutæ* which could only occur to the veritable historian. *My Father's house*. How close the resemblance of these remarkable words to Luke ii. 49—the same consciousness of intrinsic relation to the Temple, as the seat of His

Father's most august worship, and so the symbol of all that is due to Him on earth—dictating both speeches. *The zeal of thine house, &c.* Zeal for thy house, for its purity and honor, hath preyed upon my spirit.

18. ¶ Then answered the Jews and said unto him, "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?"—Matt. xii. 38; chap. vi. 30.

The priests and rulers, though they did not justify the profanations of the temple by these traders, yet were piqued that Jesus should assume an authority which, as the constituted guardians of the temple, belonged rightfully to them, and therefore they demanded His credentials for the office of public reformer which He had thus taken upon Himself.

19. Jesus answered and said unto them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
—Matt. xxvi. 61 and xxvii. 40; Mark xiv. 58 and xv. 29.

As the Jews did not properly attend to the sign already given (verses 15, 16), Jesus now refers them to His death and resurrection. *Destroy this temple, &c.*—that is, "I know you will destroy this temple of my body, by putting me to death, but I will raise myself from the grave the third day." Christ did not command them to destroy His body, but only foretold that they would do it. His assertion of His own power in raising His own body from the dead, is full proof of His Divinity. Was Christ's body a temple? So shall ours be too, temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. Was the temple of Christ's body pulled down by death for our sin? So must the temples of our bodies, ruined by our sin, ere long be destroyed. Was the temple of Christ's body repaired in the morning of the resurrection? So shall the temple of our bodies also, if we are members of Christ by a vital union. *Thy dead men, O blessed Redeemer! shall live, together with thy dead body shall they arise.* (Isa. xxvi. 19.)

20. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21. But he spake of the temple of his body.
—1 Cor. ii. 9; Heb. viii. 2; 1 Cor. iii. 16 and vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16.

This temple. The temple of which the Jews spake, was begun to be rebuilt by Herod the Great in the 18th year of his reign. But though he finished the main work in *nine years and a half*, yet some additional buildings or repairs were con-

stantly carried on for many years afterward. Herod began the work *sixteen* years before the birth of our Lord: the transactions which are here related took place in the *thirtieth* year of our Lord, which makes the term exactly forty-six years. The Jews, as usual, understood Christ's words literally. They looked merely on the surface, without pausing to consider whether any deeper meaning lay below. And many a mistake still arises from understanding *literally*, what in Scripture is spoken *figuratively*, stopping at the sign, without going on to the thing signified. These words of our Lord (verse 19) were misquoted afterward at His mock trial, and made the subject of false witness and accusation against Him. (Matt. xxvi. 60, 61; Ps. xxxv. 11.) And even as He hung on the cross, with malignant mockery they cast the same in His teeth. (Matt. xxvii. 39, 40.)

22. When therefore he was risen from the dead, *his* disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said,—Luke xxiv. 8.

When therefore, &c. It was the fulfilling of the saying which made it plain. *They believed.* Their faith, both in the Scripture and in Jesus Christ, was confirmed thereby. Let it be noted that the Old Testament, together with *the word which Jesus had said*, made up the faith of the first believers, for, as yet, the Books of the New Testament were not written.

23. ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 24. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, 25. And needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.
—1 Sam. xvi. 7; Matt. ix. 4; Mark ii. 8; Chap. vi. 64 and xvi. 30; Acts i. 24; Rev. ii. 23.

The miracles. On the following days Jesus performed a number of miracles, which are alluded to in chap. iv. 45. *Did not commit, &c.* The Saviour penetrated the hearts of men, and did not consider those His true disciples who had been moved to the recognition of Him merely by miracles, or even by superficial impressions. (viii. 31.) *And needed not, &c.* John loves to give prominence to our Lord's profound knowledge of men. (Chap. vi. 61, 64, v. 42.) "We know what is *done* by men, Christ knows what is *in them*, *tries the heart and the reins*. This is the prerogative of that essential, eternal Word. (Heb. iv. 12, 13.) We invade His prerogative if

we presume to judge men's hearts. How fit is Christ to be the *Saviour of men*, and their Physician, who has such perfect knowledge of the patient's state and case, temper and distemper, knows what is in him! How fit also to be the *Judge of all*! For the judgment of Him who knows *all men*, all in men, must needs be *according to truth*." This thought of Christ's intimate acquaintance with the secrets of our hearts

may be applied both for our comfort and for our admonition: to encourage us in our duty, to deter us from sin. Jesus knows our unseen conflicts with self, and all our silent efforts in His service, as well as our secret faults. Let this thought, then, of our ever-present Lord, be ever present with us, to keep us equally from despair and disobedience.

1. What is meant by the "third day?" 2. Who were at the wedding? 3. What did the mother of Jesus say to Him? 4. Explain His reply. 5. What did Christ do? 6. What did the ruler of the feast say? 7. What was the effect of this miracle? 8. Where did Jesus after this go? 9. What did He do in the temple? 10. What did the Jews say? 11. What was our Lord's answer? 12. What did He mean by "this temple?" 13. What was the effect of Christ's miracles in Jerusalem? 14. Why did not He "commit himself unto them?"

CHAPTER III.

1 *Christ teacheth Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration.* 14 *Of faith in his death.* 16 *The great love of God toward the world.* 18 *Condemnation for unbelief.* 23 *The baptism, witness, and doctrine of John concerning Christ:*

THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

The Pharisees were a party noted for attention to the outward rites of their religion, but sadly wanting in the inward principles of godliness, though there were happy exceptions, and Nicodemus was one of these. "He was," says *Tholuck*, "an example of one of those who have attained to what Luther calls 'the milk-faith.'" Nicodemus means "the innocent blood." A ruler of the Jews—a professor of laws, and one of the *Sanhedrim*, or great council of the nation. He is twice mentioned after this as being friendly to the Saviour. (vii. 50, xix. 39.)

2. *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

*vii. 50 and xix. 39. *ix. 16, 33; Acts ii. 22. *Acts x. 38.

By night. Perhaps he was influenced by shame, or fear, or both. "It is most reasonable," observes an old writer, "we should own the God we serve, even in the face of the world, and not, like Nicodemus, carry our religion in a dark lantern." (ix. 9; 1 Kings xviii. 21; 2 Kings v. 18; Matt.

x. 32.) It is better to go to Jesus by night, than not to come at all. He always receives those who come to Him. *We know*—I, and the other rulers. Nicodemus states the antecedent as the consequent, therefore I wished to confer with Thee. There can be no doubt of his sincerity in his inquiries. He seems to have had his attention attracted to Jesus by His miracles (comp. ii. 23), and perhaps he had before been watching for the signs of that kingdom of God heralded by the Baptist.

3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

*i. 13; Gal. vi. 15; Titus iii. 5; James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23; 1 John iii. 9.

Jesus did not reprove the inquirer for coming to Him in this strange way. Having come to inquire about the expected Messiah, our Lord will correct the inadequate view which He entertains as to His being only a Teacher come from God, and will show that He is the Messiah, but He will show this gradually. *I say unto thee*. Nicodemus is virtually told that he has raised a question which he is not in a capacity to solve, and that before approaching it, his spiritual vision required to be rectified by an entire revolution in his inner man. A man—not a Jew merely: the necessity is a universal one. Born

again—or, *over again*, as it were, is made a new creature, receives a principle of Divine life, *begin life anew*, in relation to God, his manner of thinking, feeling, and acting, with reference to spiritual things, undergoing a *fundamental and permanent revolution*. (See 1 Peter i. 3, 23; Titus iii. 5; Gal. vi. 15.) *Cannot see*—can have no part in. *The kingdom of God*—whether in its beginnings here (Luke xvi. 16), or its consummation hereafter. (Matt. xxv. 34; Eph. v. 5.)

4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

A new and surprising thought had been presented to Nicodemus. He had not been in the habit of thinking that every one, in order to enjoy the blessings of the Messiah's reign, must become a new man. He therefore now proposes a question which was fitted to draw forth an explanation of *the kind of new birth* which Jesus affirmed to be necessary. His language is to be understood as *comparative*.

5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

*Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38.

Verily, verily. This verse being a reaffirmation of the truth contained in verse 3, is introduced by the same emphatic adverbs. *Of water and of the Spirit* is explanatory of the word *again*, in verse 3. See Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16, where baptism with water is joined with the baptism of the Spirit, and also Mark xvi. 16, where baptism is connected with faith in Christ as a prerequisite to salvation. The sense demanded by these and other parallel passages, seems to be that which lies on the very face of the text, *except a man be born of water* (i. e. except he receive the rite of Christian baptism) *and of the Spirit* (i. e., except he receive the baptism of the Spirit), *he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, here or hereafter; he cannot be a member of the true Church of Christ on earth (Rom. xiv. 17), or be admitted to heaven. (1 Cor. vi. 9, xv. 50; 2 Thes. i. 5.) It by no means follows from this interpretation that baptism is a saving ordinance. Baptism of water, although the antecedent duty, yet does not stand on the same ground of an absolute condition without which salvation in itself is impos-

sible, as does the *being born of the Spirit*. This we see intimated in Mark xvi. 16, where baptism is required, but there is a careful avoidance of saying that *he that is not baptized shall be damned*. Baptism may in many cases be impossible. How they who deliberately and persistently neglect it will answer for this contempt of the solemn requirement of Christ at the judgment day, is for themselves to answer.

6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The dignity of the new birth is stated as in chap. i. 13. The antithesis here, too, is simple: bodily and spiritual birth. The neuter more general than the masculine. *Flesh* may here mean "human nature as depraved," or "human nature apart from supernatural influence." In the first place it is equivalent to "depraved man can have a son only in his own likeness. Man must become God's son to become fit for His holy kingdom." In the second place it is equivalent to "as the natural descendants of Abraham, you may be, you are, possessors of external privileges, but you must be spiritually born, that is, in your inward views and feelings you must be radically changed, in order to your being fitted to enjoy spiritual privileges. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, none but those who are spiritual can enjoy its privileges, and none can be spiritual without a thorough change being produced on their spiritual nature by *the Spirit*, plainly the Spirit of God. (See verse 8.)

7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Marvel not, &c. Yet Nicodemus did marvel. The two propositions which Christ had laid down were to him very astonishing. They were, 1. That the Jews had no title by natural descent to the blessings of Messiah's kingdom. 2. That men must be brought under a Divine influence, and that their former ceremonial religion would avail them nothing. Our Lord here cautions Nicodemus, who was saying, "How can these things be?" against arguing from the difficulty of the subject to its impossibility.

8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.—Eccl. xi. 5; 1 Cor. ii. 11.

Where it listeth, i. e., pleaseth, so far as

human agency is concerned. The Spirit's times, modes, measures of operation, are variable, mysterious, indefinable. He moves on the soul, not in any way set down and arranged, so that man can follow and trace this out, but absolutely independent of all such set and appointed ways. "God," observes an ancient writer, "hath divers ways into divers men. Into some He comes at noon, in the sunshine of prosperity, to some in the dark and heavy clouds of adversity. Some He affects with the music of the Church, some with the prayer, some with a passage in the sermon, which takes no hold of him that stands next to him. Watch the way in which the Spirit of God comes oftenest to thee, and pervert not that path." *Hearst the sound thereof.* We have no right to speak of the new birth as having taken place, apart from the evidence of the fact. We may charitably hope that it is so, and may speak of one or another, *as if* it were so, but to affirm positively and absolutely that this change has taken place, the Spirit's new-creating energy really applied to a soul in the absence of all outward tokens of such presence, is to fly in the face of the direct teaching of our Lord in these words.

But canst not tell, &c. When the sinner exhibits tokens of a new heart—a penitent heart—a heart made alive to God, and dying to sin, then we see the sinner acted upon by the power and influence of the Spirit, even as the leaf is seen to move under the influence of the wind, but we know no more. Whence sprang this holy influence first? We cannot tell. Whither will it go next? None can tell. As little can we know which leaf is next to quiver in the breathing of the gentlest wind, as the pathway of the Spirit. *So is every one, &c.* As in the blowing of the wind, so in the new birth, there is mystery. But who does not expect to meet with mystery in religion, when it is itself the product of an infinite mind? Some ask, "how can God operate upon a human soul?" Let us rather ask how he moves matter, supports the world upon nothing, and paints the flowers with such various hues. How does the soul operate on the body? How does the mind of one man operate upon

the mind of another, not merely by instruction, but by example and sympathy? We cannot discover the laws by which the particular movements of the wind are governed and regulated. Sometimes it blows gently, and at others there is the storm, and the mighty rushing wind, and then again all is calm. Who can account for this? And who can account for special spiritual visitations on particular persons and districts? But though we cannot account for all the movements of the wind, we may sensibly know them: and so is it with the influences of the Spirit.

9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, *How can these things be?*—*zvi. 52, 60.*

This reply to our Lord's statement respecting regeneration, is the usual reply of carnal wisdom in the case of Divine mysteries. Things which seem strange to human eyes, and which are certainly above human power, are pronounced to be impossible. Objection to the mysterious wisdom of the Gospel is most unreasonable, since all that the Gospel prescribes to us, as our duty, is plain and evident; all that is mysterious is on God's part, and relates entirely to the surprising acts of Divine wisdom and mercy in the redemption of the world. The curiosity of seeing into, and explaining everything, and adjusting it to our weak ideas, is one of the most dangerous diseases of the human mind. (Job xi. 12; Eccl. vii. 10.) But though Nicodemus asked this question, he seems to have proposed it diffidently, and to have been really desirous to learn the truth, and so our Lord proceeded to further statements.

10. Jesus answered and said unto him, *Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*

Master—teacher. The thing which Jesus had been teaching, having been previously taught by the prophets (Ps. li. 12; Ezek. xviii. 31, xxxvi. 24-28; Jer. xxxi. 33), ought to have been known by Nicodemus, hence the measure of reproof administered to him. Ignorance on religious subjects is often found where there was no good reason to suspect its existence. Let the strong not be offended at the inquiries of the weak, but, like Jesus, persevere in presenting the truth to inquiring minds, according as they are able to bear it.

11. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and I ye receive not our witness.* 12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13. And *no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

^aMatt. xi. 27; chap. i. 18, vii. 16, viii. 28, xii. 49 and xiv. 24. ^bVerse 32. ^cProv. xxx. 4; chap. vi. 33, 38, 51, 62 and xvi. 26; Acts ii. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 47; Eph. iv. 9, 10.

Verily, verily. (See on verse 3.) *We.* Our Lord, though meaning only Himself, uses the plural number in order to give weight and dignity to what He says, as kings do. *Speak, &c.* "I declare with authority and bear witness to truths, which from all eternity I have known and seen, as God in union with the Father and the Holy Ghost." (viii. 38.) *And ye*—the greater part of you, *received not our witness*—testimony. The reference here is to the *class* to which Nicodemus belonged, but from which he was beginning to be separated in spirit. *Earthly things*—such as the regeneration which takes place on earth. Spiritual things being represented to us in an earthly form (verse 8), come clothed to us with our own notions. We can see the sun better when reflected in the water of a vase, than in the firmament, and we can interpret heaven's language best when it speaks to us in the language of earth. *Heavenly things*—such as God's requirement, in the counsels of heaven, of the atonement and death of His only begotten Son. If they believed not what He told them regarding *themselves*, how should they believe what He might tell them regarding *Himself*? *No man hath ascended, &c.* Verse 13 contains the first "heavenly thing" which our Lord displays to Nicodemus. Jesus could tell of heavenly things, and He *alone* could tell them; for, whilst no one had ever ascended to heaven to bring back a report concerning the transactions there, *He* had come down from thence for this very purpose, speaking to men of things with which He was familiar. Indeed, though He had for man's sake become *the Son of man*, and His bodily presence was among men on earth, yet His Divine nature was in heaven as well—where, indeed, He had ever been the self-existent from all eternity. (Ex. iii. 14; Rev. i. 4.) "Wonder not," says *Jerome*, "to find one and the same to be *Priest* and *Priest*, God and man, the rod and the root, the root and offspring of David, his Son

and yet his Lord; for these things belong to that one Person, who is both God and man; some of them as He is God, some of them as He is man, and some as God-man." (Matt. xxii. 43.)

14. *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

¹Num. xxi. 9. ²viii. 28 and xii. 32. ³Verse 36, vi. 47.

And as Moses, &c. Here is the first "heavenly thing" shown by our Lord to Nicodemus, viz.: the necessity of His own crucifixion. The truth is here exhibited in opposition to the false views generally entertained by the Jews, that the Messiah would first be elevated to the throne of David, and then to the throne of the world.

Mark wherein the brazen serpent and Christ agree. 1. In the *occasion* of their *institution*. They were both appointed for cure and healing. Were the Israelites serpent-stung? We are sin-stung, stung by the infernal serpent. Was the sting of the fiery serpent inflaming, spreading, killing? So is sin. 2. Both the brazen serpent and Christ must be *lifted up* before cure could be obtained. 3. Both must be *looked unto* before cure could be obtained. The looking of the Israelites was as necessary in order to healing as the lifting up of the serpent, and faith is as necessary to salvation as the death of Christ. (Heb. xii. 2.) 4. As *all* were healed that looked upon the brazen serpent, however distant and weak their look, so Christ justifies and saves *all*, however weak their faith, if it be truly sincere, that rely on Him for salvation. 5. As the brazen serpent was effectual for Israel's cure after many stings, so the merit of Christ's death is not only effectual for our cure and healing at our first conversion, but after involuntary relapses and backslidings, if by faith we have recourse to the blood of Christ, we shall find it efficacious for our further benefit and future healing. 6. As the brazen serpent was in the likeness of the fiery serpent, which is Satan's likeness, so Jesus is in the *likeness of sinful flesh*. 7. The consequences of disobedience are the same in both cases. Doubtless many bitten Israelites, painful as their case was, would *reason* rather than *obey*; would speculate on the absurdity of expecting

the bite of a living serpent to be cured by looking at a piece of dead metal in the shape of one—speculate thus *till they died*. Alas! is not salvation by a crucified Redeemer subjected to like treatment? Has “the offense of the cross yet ceased?” (See 2 Kings v. 12.)

“*Must* the Son of man be lifted up,” *i. e.*, it is becoming or necessary in order to the gaining of the ends proposed. *That whosoever believeth*, &c. “Whosoever” in the original is “every one,” salvation through the cross of Christ being declared to be accessible to all who believe on Him. Every one, however guilty, depraved, wretched, who believes the plain, well-accredited testimony of God respecting full salvation through the Just One in the room of the unjust. There is no exception. No holy qualification is required to warrant the sinner to apply to the Saviour. It is because he is guilty and miserable that the salvation is provided. The *belief* here mentioned is not merely of the head, but also of the heart and will, such as is exercised when a person feels his desperate need by reason of sin, flees to Jesus Christ, trusts in Him, leans on Him, and commits his soul entirely to Him as his Saviour and Redeemer. It is not on account of our faith that God saves us: it is through means of our faith. The saving result of faith is given in the two-fold form, the negative, *should not perish* (as otherwise he must), is here opposed to *eternal life*, and the lost condition referred to must therefore be *eternal death*. The words *life* and *death*, are of frequent use in the writings of John, to denote the eternal happiness and the eternal misery of the human soul. (See on verse 16.)

16. *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

*Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 9.

God so loved. How much that “*so*” means, no tongue can describe, or imagination conceive. There is such a height, depth, length and breadth in that love, in every dimension of it, as none but an infinite understanding can fathom. The love of God is the *origin* of salvation. Christ did not die *that* God might love man, He died *because* God loved man. (See Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 9, 10.) The atone-

ment is thus not the *cause*, but the *effect* of the love of God. *The world*. Not merely the Jewish nation, as they supposed, but the human race. The atonement offered by Christ Jesus was not merely sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, but it was intended and fitted to remove out of the way of sinners generally, every bar which the perfections of the Divine moral character, and the principles of the Divine moral government presented. In consequence of that atonement, every sinner may be, and if he believe in Jesus, certainly shall be pardoned and saved. (See Titus iii. 4; 2 Cor. v. 19; Ezek. xxxiii. 11; 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4; Titus ii. 11.)

That he gave. While essentially the Father and Son are one, in the economy of grace the Father is greater than the Son. Jesus Christ was divinely authorized and commissioned to act as the Saviour of the world, to do and suffer all that was necessary for the attainment of the salvation of man, in accordance with the perfections of the Divine character, and the principles of the Divine government. (See Rom. iv. 25, viii. 32; John iv. 10; 2 Cor. ix. 15; John vi. 32.) *His only begotten Son*. We are here taught in reference to the Messiah, 1. That He is of the same nature with His Father, that is, that He is God. 2. That whilst He is of the same nature with the Father, He and the Father are in some respects distinct from each other. The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father. 3. That He is the object of the supreme love of the Father. *That whosoever believeth*, &c. The repetition of this glorious saying (see verse 15), shows that mighty and broad as is the love of God, it will prove useless to every one who does not believe in Christ. Jesus employed the universal term “whosoever,” both to invite indiscriminately all to partake of life, and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers. An ancient writer observes that this verse and the two preceding ones comprise all the causes of justification. 1. The remote and efficient cause, God’s love. 2. The approximate efficient cause, the gift of God’s Son. 3. The material cause, Christ’s exaltation on the cross. 4. The instrumental cause, faith. 5. The final cause, eternal life. *Should not*

perish, &c. (2 Thes. i. 9; see on verse 15.) The sinner who believes in Jesus not only escapes hell and condemnation, but has a seed of eternal life at once put in his heart, receives a complete title to an eternal life of glory and blessedness in heaven, and enters into that life after death. The word here rendered *everlasting*, is the same as that in the preceding verse, which is translated "eternal."

17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

18. Luke ix. 56; chap. v. 45, viii. 15 and xii. 47; 1 John iv. 14.

Our Lord here shows Nicodemus another "heavenly thing"—the main object of the Messiah's mission into the world. *To condemn*, &c. (See on verse 16.) It was love not wrath, which moved the Father to send His Son, it was love, not wrath, which brought the Son down. He was sent, not only to be a witness for the truth, but to be a sacrifice for sin—that *the world through him might be saved*. (1 John ii. 2.) Most wonderful instance of Divine compassion! If we would know how greatly and really God loved the world, we have but to think of the stupendous gift which God the Father gave, and the willingness with which God the Son came down from heaven, not only "making Himself of no reputation," and "taking on Him the form of a servant," but "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 7, 8.) *That the world*, &c. The meaning of this sentence is, not that all the world might finally be saved through Christ, and none be lost, but that all the world might have a door of salvation opened through Christ; that salvation might be provided for all the world, and that any one in the world believing on Christ, might be saved.

18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.—*av*. 24, vi. 40, 47 and xx. 31.

Believeth on him. (See on verses 15, 16.) *Is not condemned*, i. e., the sentence of condemnation under which he lies from having broken God's law, is removed by faith in Christ. *He that believeth not*, is a general description which applies to all who, while they have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with "the truth as it is in Jesus," do not receive and embrace it—do

not trust in Him with a living faith for salvation. *Is condemned already*, &c. This may signify, either "he is even now condemned, in not believing, he contracts guilt, he subjects himself to punishment," or, "he is already sentenced to punishment. Not only will he be condemned at last, but the sentence of condemnation is already passed, and if it be not reversed, the judgment of the last day will only confirm that sentence." (Mark xvi. 16.)

Already. The day of grace may be lost, before the day of death come. (xii. 38–40.)

19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20. 4, 9, 10, 11 and viii. 12.

Here we have the folly and the guilt of those who will not believe. *This is the condemnation*, this aggravates their crime, this justifies their sentence, this very thing condemns them, that when light is offered they prefer to remain in darkness. They are not straitened in *God*, but they are straitened in *themselves*. It is not that opportunity is denied them, but they are unwilling to avail themselves of it. *Light is come*, &c. Christ the Light (i. 9), is come into the world from heaven, a greater than any earthly potentate is come down to us, bringing light with all the blessings it symbolizes, and men are unwilling to come to it, prefer to remain in their original darkness. *Because their deeds were evil*. This light exposes and reproves "the unfruitful works of darkness," therefore men prefer to continue in the darkness which covers and conceals their evil deeds.

20. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.—*Job* xxiv. 13, 17; *Eph*. v. 13.

If men came to the light they could no longer practice the works of darkness, therefore they hate the light, and will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be discovered and reprov'd. But the honest and sincere inquirer, "the Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile" (i. 47), walks faithfully according to the measures of light vouchsafed to him, and instead of shrinking from that light, is eager after more. *That his deeds*, &c. This is not to be attributed to the love of praise or notoriety, but a desire to bring one's acts and feelings to the searching test of truth, in order

that it may be determined whether *they are wrought in God, i. e.*, are in accordance with God's commands, and proceed from Him as the source of all good. (See Ps. xix. 12, cxxxix. 23, 24.) Hatred of the light is still the cause of that prejudice and contempt with which the Bible is treated by evil men. They are against the Scripture, because the Scripture is against them. But Divine truth, however hated and perverted, cannot be made of none effect by all the malice of men or devils. (Job xxiv. 13, 17; Acts iii. 46.)

22. ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23. ¶ And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. 24. For John was not yet cast into prison.

iv. 2. *1 Sam. ix. 4. *Matt. iii. 5, 6. †Matt. xiv. 3

After these things. The expression of time is indefinite. *Land of Judea*—the rural parts of that province, the foregoing conversation being held in the capital. *And baptized.* Jesus did not Himself administer the sign. (See iv. 12.) What a king's servants do, is often spoken of as done by himself. *Enon* was probably situated in one of the valleys running down to the Jordan, from the west. *Salim* was a village near the valley of the Jordan, some eight miles south of Bethlehem. *Because there was much water there.* Some maintain that nothing more is here meant, than that there was water enough there for the multitude of people with their beasts of burden, who flocked to John's baptism. Others contend that John chose this locality for the administration of baptism, because he administered the rite by immersion. Whatever the mode of the baptism, these water conveniences would be very essential for the assembled multitudes.

Cast into prison. (See on Matt. xiv. 3-12.) This incidental allusion by the Evangelist to the Baptist's imprisonment, as to a well-known fact, gives an air of authenticity to his Gospel, stamps upon it a character of genuineness, and is one of the many marks of credibility in the sacred narrative. The remark itself seems to have been inserted as a note of time, that it might be known that our Lord's ministry did not begin, as some might suppose, *after* the imprisonment of the Baptist, but

before. We ought to labor in the work of God until we fall under an impossibility of performing it, according to John's example.

25. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. 26. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.—i. 7, 13, 27, 34.

About purifying, i. e., baptizing, the symbolical meaning of washing with water, being put (as in ii. 6) for the act itself. As John and Jesus were the only teachers who baptized *Jews*, discussions might easily arise between the Baptist's disciples and such Jews as declined to receive that rite. *He that was with thee, &c.* Their jealousy and party zeal for their master prompted them to speak thus circuitously and reservedly of the Lord, whom they ought, with that master, to have openly acknowledged to be "the Lamb of God." *All men come to him.* The disciples of John did not doubt but that this consideration would excite in him those passions which they felt working in themselves. But John was not framed of materials liable to take fire from such a spark. (Mark xii. 32; 1 Cor. iii. 4, 5.) True Christians can be content to have others go before them and others overtake them; envy can be content with neither. (1 Sam. xviii. 8; Luke xv. 28; Prov. xiv. 30.)

27. John answered and said, *A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29. ¶ He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30. He must increase, but I must decrease. 31. ¶ He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 32. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony.

*1 Cor. iv. 7; Heb. v. 4; James i. 17. †Chap. i. 20, 27. ‡Mal. iii. 1; Mark i. 2; Luke i. 17. §Matt. xxii. 2; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 23, 27; Rev. xxi. 9. ¶Cant. v. 1. Verse 13; chap. viii. 23. †Matt. xxviii. 18; chap. i. 15, 27; Rev. i. 5. ‡1 Cor. xv. 47. §Chap. vi. 33; 1 Cor. xv. 47; Eph. i. 21; Phil. ii. 9. ¶Verse 11; chap. viii. 26 and xv. 15.

John answered. His reply is one of the noblest and most affecting utterances that ever came from the lips of man. *A man*—I, who am but a man. *Receive*—take to himself. *Nothing*—not anything, much less the name of Messiah. *Given him from heaven*, that is, from God. John affirms that he could not go beyond the bounds of his heaven-appointed commission. He could not enter the lists with Jesus, whose forerunner only he was to be. He also reminds his disappointed disciples that

such was his language to them from the first—*Ye yourselves bear me witness*, &c. Faithful ministers of Christ think it honor enough to be His servants, and would not have their followers attribute the least part of that honor and glory to them which is due to Him. *The bride*—the Church. *The bridegroom*—Christ. (See Isa. liv. 5, lxii. 5; Jer. xxxi. 32; comp. iii. 14, 20; also Hos. ii. 19, 20; Eph. v. 23, &c.; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Rom. vii. 1-4; Rev. xxi. 9.) *The friend of the bridegroom*. There is an allusion here which would have peculiar propriety in the East, where the friend of the bridegroom is always the recognized agent for negotiating the marriage, and the channel of communication between the bridegroom and the bride elect. Thus early in this Gospel is a second testimony of honor (ii. 2) rendered to the marriage relation.

He must increase, &c. His present success is but the beginning of a most glorious and universal spread of righteousness, peace, truth, and good-will among men. My baptism and teaching, as pointing out the coming Messiah, must *cease*; because the Messiah is now come, and has entered publicly on the work of His glorious ministry.

He that cometh from above, &c., *i. e.*, from heaven. This indicates not only Christ's Divine extraction, but His Divine nature. He had, before His conception, a heavenly being. None but He that came from heaven, was fit to show us the will of heaven or the way to heaven. When God would save man, He *sent from above*. Hence Christ's sovereign authority, He is *above all things* and all persons, "God over all, blessed forever more." The antithesis in *above all* corresponds to the *is of the earth*, and that he *testifieth to speaketh of the earth*. *Hath seen and heard*. In chap. vi. 46, Christ claims for Himself exclusively the *seeing*, and ascribes to man only the power of *hearing* the Father. *And no man*, &c. The phrase must be taken with limitation, denoting few or none. There were some cheering exceptions, and should be more.

33. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. 34. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." 35. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." Rom. ii. 4; 1 John v. 10. "Chap. vii. 16. "Chap. i. 16. "Matt. xi. 27 and xxviii. 18; Luke x. 22; Chap. v. 20, 22, xiii. 3 and xvii. 2; Heb. ii. 8.

He that hath received His testimony. Hath received and fully believed His doctrine—hath yielded his *heart* to its influence. *Hath set to His seal*, &c. As sealing was employed for vouching the authenticity of writs, to *seal* came, by a natural and easy transition, to signify to *vouch*, to *attest*. Our acceptance of God's message by His Son, through an unshaken faith, vouches on our part, the faithfulness of God, and the truth of His promises. Although we cannot demonstrate the mysteries of Revelation by Reason, yet we may give a rational account why we believe them. (i. 51, iii. 3; Rom. iii. 4.) For He whom God hath sent (*i. e.*, the Messiah), *speaketh the words of God*, and hence to disbelieve the one is to disbelieve the other. *Giveth not the Spirit by measure*—as to the highest of the ancient prophets. In Christ "dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (See i. 4, 9, viii. 2; Col. ii. 3; Isa. xi. 2.)

The Father loveth the Son, &c. This is obviously spoken in a way of eminence and distinction; God loves His people, yet though His love to them be the same with the love that He bears to His Son, it is the same in kind only, not in degree—"in all things He must have the pre-eminence." The Father's love to the Son is founded in three things: 1. Likeness. He is "the image of the invisible God," "the express image of His person." "In Him was no sin." 2. Obedience. He was the ten commandments embodied and alive, walking up and down the earth for three-and-thirty years. "I delight," said He, "to do thy will, yea, thy law is within my heart." 3. The devoting Himself to die for the recovery of sinners. "I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me," &c. *And hath given all things*, &c. This assertion cannot be taken too extensively. It takes in, 1, all *Nature*. "The world is His, and the fullness thereof." 2. All in *Providence*. All that is devised and carried on in our world is under His rule. The government is upon His shoulders. 3. All in *grace*. The resources of the natural and providential worlds are His, to enable Him to accomplish the work of grace. He is King in Zion. Everything is committed to His authority. 4. All in *glory*. At death He

comes and receives the souls of His people to Himself, that where He is there they may be also.

38. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. PHab. ii. 4; chap. i. 12 and vi. 47; verses 15, 16; Rev. 1. 17; 1 John v. 10.

He that believeth, &c. Every one that believes with the heart (see on verses 15 and 16) on the Lord Jesus Christ, *hath* everlasting life. He has in him *now* a principle of spiritual life, which shall be expanded and perfected in another, a holier and happier world. He has here the *earnest*, and he shall hereafter have the fruition, of all the blessings and privileges which Christ came to procure for us, purchased with His precious blood, and deserved for us by His perfect obedience and merit. It is not the speculation of heaven as a thing to come, that satisfies the desires of religious souls, but the real possession of it, even in this life. Men are apt to seek after assurance of heaven as a thing to come, rather than after heaven itself, and the inward possession of it here. (Verse 6, vi. 54; 1 John v. 11, 15; Phil. iii. 20.)

He that believeth not, &c. The rejection of Christ's testimony is also a rejection of

God's. (John v. 10.) To *see* in this passage, isto enjoy. (Verse 3.) The life which awaits such is a living death. (2 Thes. i. 8, 9; Jude 15; Rev. vi. 15, xiv. 9-11, xix. 15.) *The wrath of God abideth on him*, because he despises or disregards the offers of His love. This wrath *abideth* on the unbeliever, it remains upon him, and as he has rejected the only means of its removal, it will abide on him forever. This sentence furnishes an unanswerable reply to some grievous errors 1. It condemns the notion that under the Gospel there is no more anger in God, and that He is only love, mercy and compassion, and nothing else. 2. It condemns the modern idea that Christ, by His death, justified all mankind, and removed God's wrath from the whole race of Adam, and that all men and women are justified in reality, though they do not know it, and will all finally be saved, whether they have faith or not. 3. It condemns the weak and false charity of those who say that preachers of the Gospel should never speak of God's wrath, and should never mention hell. To warn men of God's wrath, and of their danger of hell, is not harshness, but true charity.

1. Who came to Jesus? 2. What did he say? 3. What was our Lord's reply? 4. Why is the Spirit's operation compared to the wind? 5. How was the serpent lifted up in the wilderness a type of Christ? 6. Why did God send His Son into the world? 7. What is "the condemnation?" 8. What question arose between some of John's disciples and the Jews? 9. How did John dispose of it? 10. Explain verse 33. 11. What is said of the love of the Father for the Son? 12. What of him that believeth on the Son? 13. What of him that believeth not the Son?

CHAPTER IV.

1 Christ talketh with a woman of Samaria, and revealeth himself unto her. 27. His disciples marvel. 31. He declareth to them his zeal to God's glory. 39. Many Samaritans believe on him. 43. He departeth into Galilee, and healeth the ruler's son that lay sick at Capernaum.

WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2. (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) 3. He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.—lit. 22, 23.

From verse 35 of this chapter, it may be inferred that the Redeemer at this time remained about half a year in the surrounding country. Our Lord knew by His

Divine Omniscience that the Pharisees knew of His success. In verse 1, the word *Jesus* is used instead of the pronoun *He* designedly. It is not tautology. The proper name is employed because the reports which the Pharisees had heard is given *verbatim*. *Though Jesus himself, &c.* The mere ministerial act of baptism, as the Evangelist is careful to note, Jesus accomplished by other hands than His own, He reserving the baptism with the Holy Ghost for Himself. *Departed again, &c.* It

became a measure of prudence to withdraw from the observation of the jealous Pharisees, into the remoter region of Galilee. Jesus submitted to His own precept. (Matt. x. 23.) He had yet a great work to do.

4. And he must needs go through Samaria.

Must needs go, &c., for two reasons, 1. Because the direct road from Judea to Galilee lay through the province of Samaria. 2. He had in design the conversion of the poor woman, mentioned in verse 7. We cannot imagine that an event of such magnitude in itself, and involving the salvation also of many of the Samaritans, was accidental.

5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Gen. xxxiii. 19 and xlviii. 22; Josh. xxiv. 32.

The proper name of the town referred to, seems to have been Shechem, or Sychem, but it was commonly called *Sychar* by the Jews—which appears to have been a species of reproachful nickname—the word signifying “idolatrous,” or “drunken.” The town is still in existence, and is now called Nablûs, a corruption of Neapolis. *Near to the parcel*, &c. In the neighborhood of that piece of ground which Jacob seems first to have purchased from the descendants of Hamor, and afterward, when some Amorites had taken possession of it, to have recovered as his right by a successful appeal to arms, and which he left as a legacy to his favorite son Joseph. (Gen. xxxiii. 19, xlviii. 22; Josh. xxiv. 32.)

6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

We have no reason to doubt that the well which bore Jacob's name, was indeed dug by his orders, and that out of it he and his family drank while residing in this neighborhood. In that dry and thirsty land water is precious to a degree that we can hardly realize in this land of ours, and the man who digs a well there is a public benefactor. These wells are usually enclosed with a low wall, which affords a seat to the weary wayfaring man. *Being wearied with his journey*. This representation does more to convince us that Jesus was “very man,” to assure us of His sympathy and compassion, than all the declarations of sympathy, or all the words of compassion

which He ever uttered. *Sat thus*—that is, like a fatigued person as He was. If wearied with your spiritual journey, thou canst not go on, *sit down*, but let it be by the way-side. Wait, but let it be by *Jacob's well*. Ply the ordinances of God, and the God of ordinances will come to thee and bless thee. (Ps. lxxxiv. 5-7.) The Evangelist, by adding *about the sixth hour*, brings more vividly to our consciousness the oppression and burden of the time, for it was the heat of the middle noon; he also teaches us, even in the smallest matters, to practice exactness and precision.

7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8. For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.

A woman of Samaria, i. e., a Samaritan woman. *To draw water*—an office which in the East still falls to the women. Jesus waits for the despised Samaritan! The Son of God waits! She comes, the well her object, not the Saviour sitting there. By chance she comes, as men would say, to fill her water-pot, but not so Christ. She came to fill her pitcher at an earthly spring, and little did she wist life's open fountain rippled at her feet. How often do men hasten to find a rill to slake their thirst, heedless of the deep waters of life and peace which flow steadily by their side. In the conversion of this woman we have a remarkable example of the Saviour's grace. 1. Of its freeness in selecting so wicked a person without her desire, and making her not only the partaker, but the instrument of His goodness. 2. Of its gentleness, in having recourse to no means of alarm—no violence. 3. Of its power—in the victory it gained over the conception of her heart. 4. Of its effects. She not only believed with the heart, but confessed with the mouth. No sooner had she gained good, than she was concerned to do good. *Give me to drink*. A real thirst was one motive of our Lord's request (xix. 28; Matt. xxi. 18), though what He most truly thirsted after was the salvation of the woman's soul. (See verses 31, 32.) It was our Lord's custom to make material things minister spiritual sustenance. *For his disciples were gone*, &c. This verse is parenthetical, being designed to show why Jesus was dependent upon the woman for a drink of water, His disciples having with

them the vessel with which water was drawn from wells or fountains.

9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

2 Kings xvii. 24; Luke ix. 52, 53; Acts x. 28.

How is it, &c. The woman expresses surprise at the unusual occurrence of a Jew asking a favor from a Samaritan. From His dress, dialect, and those unmistakable features of Jewish physiognomy with which the Samaritans had nothing in common, she took Him to be a Jew, as indeed He was: but she took Him to be nothing more. She was, however, soon to learn how much more He was. It is remarkable that while the Samaritan woman here is taunting the Lord with being a Jew, the Jews, in a somewhat similar passage (viii. 48), charge Him with being a Samaritan. *The Jews have no dealings, &c.* Our Evangelist, as his manner is, adds this as the reason for the woman's surprise. Of that known enmity which subsisted between the Jews and Samaritans, the Lord Jesus took no undue advantage to make friends or proselytes of either. Upon the Jews He inculcated a more comprehensive benevolence, with the Samaritan He defended the orthodoxy of the Jewish creed. (2 Tim. ii. 15.)

10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Isa. xlii. 3 and xliiv. 3; Jer. ii. 13; Zech. xiii. 1 and xiv. 8.

The gift of God. By this is to be understood, according to some, the Holy Ghost; according to others, Christ Himself (Isa. ix. 5; chap. iii. 16); according to others, the gracious and golden opportunity vouchsafed to this woman to meet the Saviour of the world; according to others still, eternal life. (Rom. vi. 23; Isa. lv. 1; Rev. xxii. 17.) The expression denotes the blessings of the Christian salvation—the knowledge of the true character of God—the pardon of sin—genuine holiness—conformity of mind and will to God, which constitute real happiness, and which God gives to souls thirsting in the wilderness of this world as the *water of life* to slake their thirst. *If thou knewest, &c.* If the Samaritan woman had known the nature and excellence of this gift of God, and if she had known that He who spake to her

was indeed the Messiah—the promised Saviour—the Author of this salvation—the Person who was to bestow this gift on mankind—Himself the fountain and spring of this life—instead of hesitating about complying with His request, and instead of moving the embers of that wretched quarrel between Samaritans and Jews, she would immediately, in her turn, have become a petitioner, and in answer to her petition, she would have found no hesitating delay, but would have received from Him, what well deserves the name of “living water,” as calculated to quench and satisfy completely the thirst for happiness. Note, 1. Christ has living water to give. 2. If men would only ask they would receive it. 3. They do not ask, because they are ignorant. 4. We may be very near to our greatest mercies and not perceive them.

11. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water? 12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Sir. This was in that day the usual form of courtesy. (xii. 21.) *Nothing to draw with, &c.* (See on verse 8.) *The well is deep.* Travelers have found the well which tradition has pointed out from the beginning as “Jacob’s well,” to be of the depth of one hundred and five feet, and to this day it contains ten or fifteen feet of fresh water. The argument here is, the great patriarch not only gave his children and his cattle to drink of this well, but he drank of it himself. He knew of no other resource whereby to quench his own thirst. *Art thou greater, &c.*—she therefore asks, already beginning to suspect that she is addressing some great One indeed.

13. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again;

Without directly correcting the woman’s mistake, or formally comparing Himself with Jacob, Jesus asserted, in metaphorical language, that the relief which the water of Jacob’s well could give was only temporary, but that the relief which His blessings would bestow would be permanent. *Drinketh.* The original expressions in this verse, and the next, though both rendered “*whosoever drinketh*,” are different one from the other. The one sets forth the recurrence, the interrupted seasons of

drinking of earthly water; the other, the *once having tasted*, and ever continuing in the increasing power and living forth-flowing, of that life-long draught. *Shall thirst again.* Examine the most specious earthly good, and you will find that disappointment in pursuit, dissatisfaction and satiety in enjoyment, and uncertainty in possession, communicate a three-fold vanity to all sublunary things. The attainment of such good increases the thirst and promotes the torment. "Lord," says *Augustine*, "Thou hast made us for Thee, and our heart is disquieted till it resteth in Thee."

14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.—*vi. 35, 38. vii. 38.*

Whosoever drinketh, &c. (See on verse 13; also viii. 51, 52, xi. 26, xiii. 10.) O precious words to this poor thirsty universe. *Never thirst.* What does it mean? do not those who drink thirst for Christ, for holiness, for happiness and heaven? Yes, but thirst for the polluted and polluting streams of earth, its wealth, its pleasures, its fame, as once they did, they do not. The reason is, the water which Jesus gives quenches the dreadful fire from which such thirst springs. *In him a well of water.* "He who receives this living water of me shall become himself in some sort, although of course only in a secondary sense, a springing well, no cistern merely to contain, but a springing fountain out of which shall flow these same waters, shall minister to others the same salvation which has been already ministered to himself." (See vii. 38.) *Springing up, &c.* This expresses, that death not only does not interrupt this life, this communion with God (xi. 25), but that it rather brings it to perfection. Religion is life and spirit, which, flowing out from God, who "hath life in Himself," returns to Him again, as into its own Original, carrying the souls of good men up with it. The spirit of a good man is always drinking in fountain-goodness, and fills itself more and more, till it be "filled with all the fullness of God." (i. 51; Ps. lxxxiv. 5-7.)

15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. 16. Jesus saith unto her, Go call thy husband, and come hither. 17. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I

have no husband: 18. For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that thou saidst truly; *s. vi. 34 and xvii. 2, 3; Rom. vi. 23, 1 John v. 20.*

Give me this water. There is a certain blind longing after this springing water awakened in the soul of this poor sinner, who had thirsted so long, though still there is confusion and contradiction in her mind about it, for she imagines that it will exempt her from the toil of coming to draw from that well any more. As she has not risen to the full spirituality of His words or of His character, Jesus will now so direct the conversation as to furnish the proof that He is a *prophet* of God, and that His words express Divine spiritual truth. *Call thy husband.* Jesus knew that she had no living husband, just as God knew that Cain had no living brother. (Gen. iv. 9.) *I have no husband.* The woman's slumbering conscience now began to be aroused in reference to the guilty life she was leading. The Saviour, like a good physician, proceeds to probe the wound more deeply still, and to pave the way for her acknowledgment of Him, first as a Prophet, and afterward as the Messiah Himself. *Thou hast well said, &c. He whom thou now hast, &c.* From this it would seem that she was a person of loose morals, and disreputable character.

Observe, 1. Jesus dealt very tenderly and gently with this woman, using no upbraiding speech. So, in reproofing sin, all sharpness and bitterness of expression must be avoided. 2. Christ discovered her sins to her particularly, setting her secret sin before the face of her conscience distinctly. So, if ever the ministry of the word works upon the minds of men to their conversion, it must be by a particular and close application of the word to every man's conscience: general applications will not affect. 3. The particular sin which Christ charged home upon the conscience of this woman, was the sin of uncleanness. This sin will be heaviest upon the conscience, and wound the soul most deeply, when the Spirit of God once effectually discovers it, for there is no sin so directly opposite to sanctification and holiness as this sin, no sin that quenches the Holy Spirit of God like this.

19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20. Our fathers worshipped in this

mountain, and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

¹Luke vii. 16 and xxiv. 19; chap. vi. 14 and vii. 40. ²Judg. ix. 7. ³Deut. xii. 5, 11; 1 Kings ix. 3; 2 Chron. vii. 12.

Our Lord's knowledge of the woman's character and history persuaded her that He must have supernatural means of information. In speaking this, her conviction, she virtually confesses all the truth, acknowledges that the charge was just. (See 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.) The conviction of sin, however, was not at present deep, as appears from the apparent indifference with which she went on with the conversation. *Our fathers*, &c. Glad, probably, to shift the discourse from a subject so painful and discreditable to her, she introduces the great point of controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans. Speculation about theological doctrine is often found in unnatural union with habitual neglect of moral duty, and among the endless tortuosities of the depraved human heart, this is one, to seek in polemical discussions respecting orthodoxy and heterodoxy, protection from the shafts of conviction for plain violation of the law of God. How awful is such self-deception! (See xii. 29; Job xxi. 14; Isa. xxx. 10.) *In this mountain*—Mount Gerizim, but a little way from Sychar. The Samaritans maintained that on this mountain Abraham and Jacob had erected an altar, and offered sacrifices to Jehovah. (Gen. xii. 6, 7, xxxiii. 20), and therefore that the Deity had willed *blessing* to be pronounced from thence, and an altar to be erected, alleging in proof Deut. xxvii. 4, 12. The remnant of Samaritans yet subsisting, continue to worship on Mount Gerizim three times in the year, with great solemnity. *Ye say*, in opposition to our claims for the sanctity of this mountain. *Is the place*, referred to in Deut. xii. 5. *Where men ought* (according to the passage just quoted) *to worship*.

¹Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

²Mal. i. 11; 1 Tim. ii. 8.

"The time is just at hand when the solemn public worship of God 'the Father,' the common Father of His human family, shall not be confined to any one place, and when of course the controversy whether Gerizim or Jerusalem has

the better claim to that honor, shall be superseded."

²²Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³1 Kings xvii. 23. ²⁴Isa. ii. 3; Luke xxiv. 47: Rom. ix. 4, 5.

Ye know not what. The Samaritans acknowledged the Pentateuch only, and as they were destitute of the Prophets and Psalms, they wanted not only the complete development of theological truth, but especially also the entire compass of the Messianic prophecies. God was consequently for them, in a certain degree, an unknown God; hence also the neuter form of expression in the original—"a Being whom ye know not." (See Acts xvii. 23.) *We know*, &c. Under the "*we*" Jesus embraces Himself as well as the Jews. This He may have done in condescension to the woman's idea of Him. But could He be *man* in fact, without belonging to a distinct *nationality*? *Salvation is of the Jews*. Salvation was to come from the lineage of David, and by consequence from the Jews; they could not, therefore, remain without an accurate knowledge of God. (Gen. xlix. 10; Isa. xlii. 13.) Jesus sprang from them as did also the twelve Apostles, and in general the first preachers of the Gospel: the Gospel proceeded from them to the Gentiles.

²³But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴Phil. iii. 2. ²⁵1 Cor. xiii. 17.

But. Jesus further shows that a worship superior, not merely to that observed on that "mountain," but even to that rendered at Jerusalem, is at hand. The "*now is*" declares that this is a future which has already commenced. The dispensation of the Spirit, in which God the Spirit shall be spiritually worshiped, is not merely something which is to be hereafter, she stands already upon its threshold. Prophesied of long since (Jer. iii. 16; Hag. ii. 7-10; Zeph. iii. 9; Isa. xlv. 23) it has now actually begun. *True worshippers*, i. e., those who are free from all formalism and hypocrisy. *In spirit* is opposed to mere external forms of worship. So *in truth* is opposed not only to false doctrine, but also to the hypocrisy that conceals its true character by an outward show of piety. The preposition *in* denotes, as it were, the element in which this wor-

ship is exercised. Of course our Lord does not here (nor does He anywhere else) condemn external worship by suitable forms and observances. He Himself performed such worship unto God, so did His Apostles and disciples. He only condemns the substitution of forms and observances for true and humble devotion. (Ps. xvi. 9; Gen. xxviii. 16, 17; Deut. xii. 11.) We are not to put God off, as the Jews and Samaritans were too much disposed to do, with bodily worship only, but we must worship Him *in spirit* too, and by consequence *in truth*, that being the only true worship, which is thus performed by the whole man, by the body and spirit both, unto Him that made them both. (Job i. 20; Matt. xxvi. 39; Luke xviii. 13, 14; Eph. iii. 14.) *For the Father seeketh, &c* Only such worshippers are acceptable. It is intimated that they are not easily found.

24. *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*—*2 Cor iii. 17.*

The Saviour's intention here is not to prove the spiritual nature of God, but that the worship and service must correspond with its object. If God were corporeal and confined within certain limits, there might be reason why He should be worshiped only corporeally, and His service confined to this or that locality where He might be present and perceive it; but seeing that He is a Spirit, and so present everywhere, men may worship Him everywhere, and spiritual service is peculiarly pleasing to Him. There is also a secondary meaning of the passage—that of earnestness and genuineness, heart-worship. *In spirit and in truth.* (See on verse 23.) *"Must worship him."* There is a fitness, a consistency, a necessity, in this. A Spirit must be worshiped spiritually.

25. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26. Jesus saith unto her, *I that speak unto thee am he.*
 27 Verses 29, 30. 28 Matt. xxvi. 65; Mark xiv. 62; chap. ix. 37.

The woman understood Jesus, in what He said of "salvation" (verse 22), to refer to the Messiah. In order, therefore, to express this intelligence of His meaning, as well as to waive a decision in which she cared not to acquiesce, but was unable to discuss, she proceeds to declare her belief in the near advent of the Messiah (a He-

brew word, which John, for the second time (see i. 42), explains to mean the "Christ," that is, "the Anointed One"), and implies that all doubts of this nature will be effectually solved by Him, at His coming. *I that speak, &c.* The all-important point is now attained. Jesus has announced Himself as Jew, Prophet, MESSIAH. Jacob's *Shiloh* was thus still found at "Jacob's well." (Gen. xlix. 10.) No words of acknowledgment or surprise from this poor woman are recorded, but we can have no doubt that she asked and obtained the living water, and how full her faith that the Teacher had arrived who *can tell us all things*, her energetic and successful mission to her countrymen shows.

27. *And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?* 28. The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29. Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 30. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.—*1 Verse 25.*

Marvelled. So great (however absurd and ill-founded) was the pride of the Jewish literati, that they imagined that to hold discourse with women, on any serious and important matter, would ill suit the dignity and gravity which ought to be uniformly maintained by a rabbi, or doctor of their law. That the disciples were not, in anything, superior to the prejudices of the age, is manifest from the whole of their history. That the woman was a Samaritan doubtless made the matter more astonishing. *Yet no man, &c.* As the reverence of the disciples induced them not to question the propriety of our Lord's conduct—though for the present they could not understand it—so should we act toward Him. He is not bound to give account of any of His matters, and He often requires us to walk by faith, and not by sight. But we know that His work is perfect, His ways are judgment.

Left her water-pot, either, 1, for the use of the Saviour and His disciples, who were just going to partake of their homely fare, or, 2, from indifference, being now so impressed and occupied with infinitely greater and better things, or, 3, because it would have proved a hindrance to her, she could not bear the thought of losing a moment in communicating the knowledge she possessed. *Come, see a man,* that Himself,

without waiting for my questions, regarding too my past as well as present state, *told me all things*, &c. The same shall one day be every one's case, the same Jesus (though in more awful circumstances), shall tell every one of us *all that we ever did*. Say, then, where lies our wisdom, but in a constant endeavor to do that that will bear the telling? Happy are they that pursue this endeavor. (Ps. l. 21; Rom. ii. 16.) *Is not this the Christ?* The form of the question (in the Greek) is a distant, modest way of only half *insinuating* what it seemed hardly fitting for her to *affirm*: nor does she refer to what He said of Himself, but solely to His disclosure to her of the particulars of her own life. What He told her of *herself*, prepared her to believe what He told her of *Himself*. *They went out*, &c. How different from the Jews! and richly was their openness to conviction rewarded.

31. ¶ In the meanwhile his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. 32. But he said unto them, ¶ I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat? 31. Jesus saith unto them. ¶ My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

¶ Jer. xv. 16. ¶ Job xxiii. 12; chap. vi. 33, xvii. 4 and xix. 30. ¶ Heb. xii. 2.

In the meanwhile—the interval while the woman is occupied in going to the city and returning with her neighbors. *Master, eat*. They had so much affection for their Master, that they could not bear to see Him refuse the food they brought Him. *Hath any man*, &c. What wonder if the woman understood not the water? (Verse 11.) The disciples do not yet understand the food. (Matt. xv. 15, 16; Heb. v. 12.) *My meat*, &c. Jesus was too intent upon the souls He was now going to save, to be able to eat. Here was the power and triumph of the soul over the body. When we are going to enjoy a great delight, our appetite is taken away; and so it was with Jesus, His meat was to do His Father's will, and to finish His work. (See Job xxiii. 12; Ps. xix. 10, xl. 7, 8; Heb. x. 7.) What was that will? What was that work? To seek and to save those which were lost; to glorify His Father by the salvation of sinners. (xvii. 4, xix. 30.) O what love Christ had to take delight in saving us His enemies! And shall we spend our lives in doing *our own* will, and seeking *our own* glory?

35. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. 36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. 37. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. 38. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

¶ Matt. ix. 37; Luke x. 2. ¶ Dan. xii. 3; 1 Cor. ix. 19, 23; Phil. iii. 15, 16; 1 Thes. ii. 19.

Say not ye, &c. "It is a common saying among you, when the seed is cast into the ground, in four months we shall have harvest, but lift up your eyes, and say, if, though we have but commenced sowing, it be not harvest already, are not this people really a people prepared for the Lord?" It is likely our Lord refers here not only to what had just occurred, but also to the great success which had attended His labors and those of His disciples, in Judea. *He that reapeth*, that is, the person who succeeds in converting men to the faith of Christ, *receiveth wages*, obtains a glorious reward, and *gathereth fruit*, &c. This either refers to his reward being an eternal one, or rather denotes that those who are converted by his means—the fruits of his ministry—shall be saved everlastingly; so that the sower—he who used means for their salvation, and did not see their complete success—and he that reapeth, that is, who has been the means of their conversion, may, in their everlasting salvation, find a common enjoyment.

One soweth, &c. This proverb was fulfilled in the case of our Lord's disciples—other men had labored, and they had entered into their labors. *I sent you to reap*, &c. It was owing to John's preliminary labors that their preaching had been so successful. This, probably, was said by our Lord to repress the vanity of His disciples, who might be flattered by the great multitudes that in Judea had been induced to submit to baptism.

39. ¶ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.—Verse 29.

Believed on him. Wonderful readiness! They had not yet seen Jesus. (See verse 40.) The woman (who was the first Apostle of Christ in Samaria) must have testified with great power among those thirsting souls, hitherto inexperienced in such things. *He told me*, &c. (See on verse 29.)

40. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

Tarry, always, or at least a long time, all the time He could spare out of His brief ministry. They wanted to know more of Him who had so drawn them to Himself, they wanted to bring their kinsfolk and neighbors unto the same blessedness. We can only suppose that these two days were spent in teaching and preaching the Gospel.

41. And many more believed because of his own word;

This verse shows the sovereignty of God in saving souls. One is called in one way, and another in another. Some Samaritans believed when they heard the woman testify. Others did not believe till they heard Christ Himself. We must be careful that we do not bind down the Holy Ghost to one mode of operation.

42. And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.—*xxvii. 8; 1 John iv. 14.*

Now we believe, &c. John loves to mark the advancing steps of faith, and how those who believe come to believe more strongly (*Comp. ii. 11, xvi. 30, xx. 8.*) This speech of her fellow-townsmen to the woman has nothing rude or offensive about it, rather, indeed, the contrary. "We set our own seals to the truth of thy report." (*See 1 Kings x. 6, 7; 2 Chron. ix. 5, 6.*) *We have heard him ourselves*—the gracious words which He speaks, the authority with which He speaks them, He has so commended Himself to us, with such demonstration of the truth, that we bow to His claims, and, quite irrespective of thy testimony, take Him for what He avouches Himself to be, *the Christ*, &c. May we, if we cannot like these Samaritans, receive the Saviour into our houses, at least welcome Him into our hearts, and, in the diligent and devout use of the means of grace, entertain there that Heavenly Guest, that He may abide with us, not for a time, but forever!

43. ¶ Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. 44. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. 45. Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast. *cMatt. xlii. 57; Mark vi. 4; Luke iv. 21. dff. 23 and iii. 2. eDeut. xvi. 16.*

After two days, literally, "the two days" of His stay at Sychar. *Jesus himself testified*, &c. If Nazareth (which was in Galilee), was Christ's "own country," this statement should be filled up thus: "He went into the region of Galilee, but not, as

might have been expected, to that part of it called "His own country" Nazareth (*see Mark vi. 14; Luke iv. 24*), for He acted on the maxim which He oft repeated, "that a prophet," &c. (*See on Matt. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4; Luke iv. 24.*) The Galileans welcomed Christ, not because they believed in Him as the Messiah, but on account of the miracles which they had seen performed by Him at Jerusalem. They doubtless hoped that He would exercise His wonderful miraculous power, in effecting their deliverance from the Roman yoke, which was particularly galling and oppressive to the Galileans.

46. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.—*fil. 1, 11.*

Into Cana—perhaps to the residence of those at whose wedding He had performed His first miracle. *Nobleman*—one attached to the court of Herod Antipas. What avails all the pomp of life which appears abroad, if, when we shift the gaudy flattering scene, the man is unhappy where happiness must begin—at home? Whatever ingredients of bliss Providence may have poured into his cup, domestic afflictions will render the whole composition distasteful.

47. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

Besought him, &c. The man's application showed faith, but it was limited and imperfect. He believed that Jesus *could* heal his son, but not without coming down to Capernaum to do so. *At the point of death*. The true believer need not dread death. Even an earthly parent is particularly tender and careful of a dying child: much more will God, the great and gracious Father cherish and defend His own children in the hour of death. (*Ps. cxvi. 15; Heb. ii. 14, 15; Rev. xxii. 20.*)

48. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. 49. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. *a1 Cor. i. 22. bPs. lxxxviii. 10, 12.*

Why does our Lord's reply to this application seem less gracious than His usual answers to distressed parents? The reason is most probably this: The faith of this man rested merely upon hearsay in regard to the miraculous works of Jesus; it was naturally weak, and it was

not a religious want, but simple necessity, which had led him to Jesus; that faith in the proper sense was a result of the miracle is shown by verse 53. *Sir, come down, &c.* The words of reproof looked like putting him off; the nobleman, therefore, begs that Jesus would not interpose a longer and critical delay. Who does not hear a groan, and see a hot tear in every word of this? The man, though a very anxiously loving father, not only had not the least idea that Jesus could heal his son unless He went down to Capernaum but neither did he suppose that there was any power in Him to burst the bands of death, and hence his anxiety that He reach the house before the child's death. Christ intends to cure this father of his want of faith, in order to make him worthy to receive the cure of his son, but he is hitherto wholly taken up with the thoughts of that which he is afraid of losing. Alas, how many fathers are there in the world who nearly resemble him!

50. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

More wonderfully than the suppliant anticipated, did the miraculous power of our Lord display itself. *And the man believed*, not only believed that Jesus could cure the child though at a distance, but that He *had* cured him, or at least begun to cure him. *And he went his way*—not in doubt or haste, but leisurely in contrast with the haste and trepidation wherewith he had come. Observe here the double miracle wrought by the word alone of Christ: the one on the distant body of the son, the other on the invisible heart of the father, who is himself cured of his incredulity by believing the cure which he did not see.

51. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. 52. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

Then inquired he, &c. Though he believed from what our Lord had said, that his son would recover, yet as he had only looked for a *gradual* recovery, he inquired of the servants at what time he *began to amend*, doubtless expecting to hear it was the seventh hour; and this we know from his faith he was prepared to hear. The more attentively the works and blessings of God are

inquired into, the greater food and support does faith acquire. (1 Peter i. 12; Ps. cxi. 2.) *At the seventh hour.* By that consideration it appears that the nobleman did not anxiously make haste, because he believed the word of Christ, but went on quietly in his journey, which is an excellent description of true faith. (Isa. xxviii. 16.) *The fever left him*, left him suddenly. The recovery was speedy and complete. Here is a clear and beautiful illustration of the Apostle's words (Eph. iii. 20), that "God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." The nobleman expected an *amendment* or *beginning* to amend: Christ bestowed at once perfect health. Numberless are the instances of God's overflowing grace in this respect. (See Mark viii. 23, x. 13, 16; Luke i. 67, xviii. 14, xix. 4, xxiii. 43.) The fevers which affect the body are generally healthful to the soul, and therefore we ought to be more earnest in praying for a good use of them than for their cure. Those fevers only which affect the soul are obstacles to salvation, and nothing must be spared to obtain their cure.

53. So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

The nobleman's faith was confirmed and increased by the miracle. It was raised into a full belief of Christ's power and goodness. *Before* he believed Christ's word, now he believes in *Himself*. His person, His attributes. And his whole household, his family and servants, to whom he would detail, with all the eloquence of earnest gratitude and in the rapture of new-born faith, these wondrous things, they also become united with him in the same blessed bond of a common faith. Deep affliction is often the means of great good. The father of a family may be the means of the salvation of his children. "To-day is salvation come to this house." (Luke xix. 9.)

54. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

Second miracle Jesus did—i. e., in Cana, done "after He came out of Judea," as the former before. Whence learn, 1. Christ's works, and particularly His more special manifestations of Himself, ought to be marked and kept in memory. 2. Christ's

present works and manifestations ought not only to affect us themselves, but should bring His former works to remembrance.

3. However men may study and strive to

crush Jesus in the world, yet it will be to no purpose, for in one place or other He will be still reaping fruit and manifesting His glory.

1. Why did Jesus depart again into Galilee? 2. To what city did He come? 3. What well was there? 4. Why did the Saviour sit on the well? 5. What does this teach us? 6. Who came to the well? 7. What did Christ ask for? 8. What was the woman's reply? 9. Explain verse 4. 10. Also verses 13 and 14. 11. What is said about the woman's husband? 12. How is God to be worshiped? 13. What did this woman do? 14. What reply did Jesus make when His disciples said to Him "Master, eat?" 15. What are "many of the Samaritans" said to have done? 16. State the particulars of the healing of the nobleman's son.

CHAPTER V.

1 *Jesus on the sabbath day cureth him that was diseased eight and thirty years.* 10 *The Jews therefore cavil, and persecute him for it.* 17 *He answereth for himself, and reproveth them, shewing by the testimony of his Father.* 32 of John, 36 of his works, 39 and of the scriptures, who he is.

AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
Lev. xxiii. 2: Deut. xvi. 2: chap. ii. 13.

This is generally supposed to have been the feast of the passover: yet perhaps none of the Evangelists mention all the passovers which occurred during our Lord's ministry. But subsequent to what was related in the former chapter, several things, recorded by the other Evangelists, are supposed to have taken place before Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Christ made a point of attending the sacred festivals, both because such was the command of God (Deut. xvi. 16), and thus it became Him to fulfill all righteousness, and also because these were grand opportunities for teaching the large number of people assembled on these occasions.

2. Now there is at Jerusalem ^{by} the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.—Neh. iii. 1 and xii. 39.

There is, &c. The inference might be drawn that Jerusalem was standing when the Evangelist wrote; the explanation, however, is, that the pool remained after the destruction of the city, in fact it was still pointed out in the time of Tertullian and even of Eusebius. *By the sheep market*, near that gate of the city which was called the sheep gate. *Bethesda* means "the house of mercy." *Five porches*, little porticos or chambers, for the accommodation

probably of the sick who waited there for healing. Compassion toward the afflicted is a commendable duty. The Jews had now declined, yet, to their great credit, here were accommodations for the sick, either built for them, or now converted to that use.

3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

Impotent folk, infirm, diseased people. *Blind*, by disease, not from birth. (See ix. 32.) *Halt*, crippled. *Withered*. Among these we are to comprehend the paralytic, a class to which, indeed, the sick man whom Jesus cured belonged, for paralysis is sometimes produced by extraordinary debilitation of the muscles; that is, by a *dwindling* of them. The *moving of the water* must have been something that could be seen and observed by persons standing by or looking on. There was no virtue or healing element in the water, until the movement took place. "A great number of diseases and diseased persons," says an old writer, "are necessary to represent the condition to which man is reduced by sin: so miserable is he and full of infirmities from his very birth. How great is the debt which we owe to Thee, O blessed Saviour, for having *moved this water* in our behalf, which hath made us whole. Finish, Lord, what thou hast begun in us." (Isa. i. 4-6; Zech. xiii. 1.)

4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatever disease he had.

An angel, &c. Here is another proof that benevolent spirits are employed as the instruments of good to men, in like manner as wicked spirits are busily engaged in the infliction of evil. There can be no doubt of the miracle, as there were multitudes living when this Gospel was published, who, from their own knowledge of Jerusalem, could have exposed the falsehood of the Evangelist if no such cure had been known there. *At a certain season*, the disturbance of the water was occasional and temporary. *Whosoever then first, &c.* Jesus has opened a pool of Bethesda to all, where not only he that comes first, but he that comes even last, with faith and repentance, may receive health and cleansing.

5. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

An infirmity—probably it was a palsy. *Thirty and eight years.* The length of the time he had been afflicted makes the miracle of his cure the greater. Were we presently cured, so soon as we complained, we should less esteem the danger of our disease. The long smart and tediousness of our misery makes us to consider what it is to sin. God often makes choice of the greatest sinners to show forth in them the greatness of His mercy and the power of His grace. *Saw him lie*, as too weak or sick to be in other than a recumbent position. *And knew*, not as the result of inquiry from bystanders, but by His omniscience. “The unprejudiced reader can find no place for information given to the Lord between *saw*, *knew*, and *saith*, all compacted together in one.” *Wilt thou be made whole?* The impotent man probably had waited so long, and so long waited in vain, that hope was dead or well-nigh dead within him, and the question is asked to awaken in him a new yearning after the benefit, which the Saviour, compassionating his hopeless case, was about to impart. Our Lord thus persuading him to believe in His love, prepared him to believe also in His might, and was giving him now the faith which presently He was about to demand of him.

7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8. Jesus saith unto him *Arise, take up thy*

bed, and walk. 9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

•Matt. ix. 6; Mark ii. 11; Luke v. 24. •ix. 14.

The man's answer is no direct reply to our Lord's question. Perhaps he understood it as an expression of surprise that he lay there so long, when the means of recovery were before him. *I have no man.* He speaks feelingly of the want of a friend. I have not a single friend. What a picture of desertion and loneliness! only able to drag himself along, no one offering to assist him, no money to pay for help. Observe, he did not breathe a syllable against the hard-heartedness of his fellow-men. How good an evidence is it that sickness, and trial, and trouble, have had their perfect work, when the pride of the heart is humbled, and the fretfulness and complaining of the lips are silenced, and we can dwell upon our sorrows without one repining word, or one distrustful thought! *Another steppeth, &c.* To a person of any sensibility this world is a wretched place. There is not a step in life, where we can be sure of not meeting some latent lurking thorn. A hard, selfish, thorough-paced mind goes on, and cares not, but the sensitive, delicate feeling spirit is ever pushed to the wall. To such a spirit, then, what a gentle, blessed relief is afforded by a heartfelt knowledge of Christianity! (See Ps. cxlii. 1-5; Heb. iv. 15; 1 Thes. v. 14.) Let us give an attentive, patient hearing to the poor and needy, when they detail to us their trials and sufferings, their hopes and disappointments. And in our own afflictions, let us take encouragement from the case of the impotent man to “make known our requests unto God,” telling Him all our sorrows. With them, indeed, He is well acquainted: yet He will know them from ourselves. It is only when we confess our misery and call upon Him, that we can expect His mercy. (Ezek. xxxvi. 37; Ps. l. 15.)

Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. We can see four reasons for this command to this sick man. 1. It was to evince the perfection of the cure. His walking, indeed, would prove this, but his taking up his bed, and being able to carry that in which he had been carried, would display it still

more, as it showed his strength, as well as health. 2. It was to teach him to be careful, and to waste nothing. The bed probably was not very valuable, but he was not to throw it away. Christians should avoid closeness and meanness, lest their good be evil spoken of, but they should also avoid profusion, negligence, carelessness. 3. As a memento of his deliverance and duty. This bed, as he looked upon it at home, would remind him of former misery and mercy. 4. To try his obedience. Carrying his bed was a servile work, and it was now the Sabbath, on which day no burden was to be borne. He seemed therefore to oppose the law of Moses, and accordingly the Pharisees were offended, and murmured. But works of necessity and mercy were *always* proper, and the Sabbath was made for man, and the Son of man was Lord even of the Sabbath day. *And immediately the man was made whole, &c.*—"immediately." He *spoke* and it was *done*. *The same day was the Sabbath.* Beyond all doubt this was intentional, as in so many other healings, in order that when opposition arose on this account men might be compelled to listen to His claims and His teaching.

10. ¶ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. 11. He answered them, He that hath made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. 12. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? 13. And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

¹Ex. xx. 10; Neh. xiii. 19; Jer. xvii. 21, &c.; Matt. xii. 2; Mark ii. 24 and iii. 4; Luke vi. 2 and xiii. 14.

The Jews—certain of the Jews, elders or heads of the nation, members of the Sanhedrim. *Said unto him*, probably having met him, on his way home, carrying his couch or bedding as the Lord had commanded. *It is not lawful, &c.* Consider the following texts: Ex. xxxi. 14, 15; Num. xv. 33 to 36; Neh. xiii. 19 (where burdens of merchandise alone are forbidden), Jer. xvii. 21, 22; Mark ix. 16. *He that made me whole, &c.* His meaning evidently was that the order of the person who had healed him was quite sufficient to account for and justify his proceeding. "I have a mighty warrant for carrying my bed, even the command of One who cured me by a single word of my protracted infirmity." We are not to judge the Lord's

commands, but to follow them. His orders may be trying, and in obeying them we may give offense, but we need not regard the revilings of men, while we can plead His authority. *What man is that, &c.* They feign ignorance as to the person who had wrought the miracle. They do not ask concerning that which should win their admiration, but that which might furnish a ground for their calumnious accusation. *Wist not*—knew not, from the old Saxon verb *witan*, to *know*, whence our words *wit* and *wise*. *Conveyed himself away*—quietly and silently glided through the multitude as the excitement at the cure commenced. The man had thus no chance to identify his unknown benefactor. *In that place*—at the porches of the pool. It is difficult to obtain a sight of Christ in a crowd. A crowd is noisy—this sight requires some secret place. He who saw Him not in the crowd, saw Him in the temple. (i. 50; Ex. iii. 1, 2.)

14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. 15. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. 16. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

¹Matt. xii. 45; chap. viii. 11.

In the temple, whither in all probability he had gone to pour out his heart to the Author and Giver of all good things. (See 2 Kings xx. 8.) Many are brought to feel their need of something better than this world can offer, by the pressures of affliction—are led from the bed of sickness to the temple, from the word of God to the Son of God, from bodily health to spiritual cure. *Behold, thou art made whole*: contrast thy present with thy past condition, and realize the blessing. *Lest a worse thing come unto thee*. A worse thing than thirty-eight years of pain and infirmity! What the past sin of this sufferer had been, to which our Lord alludes, we know not, but the man himself knew very well. His conscience was the interpreter of the warning. Though the scheme which should in every case affirm a man's personal suffering to be in proportion to his personal guilt is refuted by all experience (see Luke xiii. 1-5), yet our Lord here intimates that very much of judgment is even now continually proceeding. (See 2 Kings v.

20-27; Acts xiii. 8-11, xii. 23; Job ii. 3, &c.; John ix. 1-3.) *Told the Jews, &c.* It appears from the man's exclusive reference to the *healing*, that, in his simplicity of heart, he conceived that these persons only wanted to know his Healer in order to render Him honor for the great work He had done. But they were only provoked the more. So is it ever with the revelation of the Divine: what it does not draw to itself it drives *from* itself, what it does not win to obedience it arrays in active hostility.

17. † But Jesus answered them, †My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.—*ix. 4, xiv. 10.*

"My Father hitherto, from the creation of the world, has continued to work on the Sabbath day, and I also work on the Sabbath day." Though God on the seventh day rested from the work of creation—the giving being to new orders of creatures, He is continually employed in the preservation and government of the world. The great machine of the universe does not stand still on the Sabbath day, the mighty and the minute processes of nature experience no interruption. "What my Father does," says our Lord, "I do:" He works on the Sabbath day, and I work on the Sabbath day, and who dare call in question His right or mine to do so? Our Lord here obviously claims a two-fold equality with the Father. He does the same works with Him, and like Him, He works perpetually. He puts His own work of power, in the miraculous cure which He had effected, on the *same footing* of consideration as the works of the Deity in the conservation and government of the universe, and *upon this parity* He grounds His right thus to work on the Sabbath day.

18. Therefore the Jews *h*sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making himself equal with God.—*lvii. 19. ix. 30, 33; Phil. ii. 6.*

That God was his Father, meaning that He called God *peculiarly* His Father, in a sense quite different from that in which pious men speak of God as their Father. *Making himself equal with God*, that is, claiming to Himself an authority equal to that of God. Not only His claim of Sonship, but the high position He assigned to that Sonship, both caused and justified their interpretation of His words as making Himself God's equal. The Jews themselves often called God their Father, and

would never have found fault with, much less charged blasphemy upon, any that came to them under the character of a prophet, for using the same style, and therefore they must be supposed to understand our Lord as speaking of God as His Father in a sense superior to any covenant or office-relation, and in a sense so peculiar to Himself as to intimate His partaking of the same nature and perfections with Him, or else there would have been no room for their imagining or suggesting, that, by His claim of relation to God as His Father, He made Himself equal with God.

19. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, †The Son can do *nothing* of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

‡Verse 30, viii. 28, ix. 4, xii. 49, xiv. 10.

Our Lord now reiterates and expands His preceding affirmation of essential unity with the Father. *The Son can do nothing of himself, i. e.*, apart from and in rivalry of the Father, as they supposed. There is no avowal here by Christ of any dependence or subordination of rank or power, but the most entire harmony of will and action with His Father. The meaning is, "the Son can have no separate *interest or action* from the Father." *For what things soever, &c.* "On the contrary, whatever the Father doeth that same doeth the Son," *likewise*, in the like manner. The doings of the Son are the doings of the unknowable Father. And the doings of that Son through His humanity are the doings of the eternal Son, and are the true expression of the eternal Father. The fact of Three Divine Persons in the eternal Godhead is plainly revealed. Man insists upon apprehending the *mode*: in his present state he cannot apprehend it; he therefore denies the fact, and commences unbeliever. "All the objections against the Trinity," says one, "proceed from hence, that men discourse about an Infinite Being, as they would about a finite one, without considering the difference of the subject they are upon, and what an immense disproportion there is." (Isa. xl. 18, 25; 1 Cor. ii. 11.)

20. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

†Matt. iii. 17; chap. iii. 35; 2 Peter i. 17.

Neither is there here implied any supe-

rity in the Father, or any inferiority in the Son, as to their Divine nature and essence. The "love" is meant to show us that unspeakable unity of heart and affection (if such words may be reverently used) which eternally existed and exists between the Father and the Son. The "showing" means that entire confidence and co-operation which there was between the Father and the Son, as to all the works which the Son should do when He came into the world to fill the office of Mediator and to save sinners. The "greater works" which remained to be shown were evidently the works specified in the two following verses—the works of quickening and of judging. That the Jews did "marvel," and were confounded at the works of "quickening," we have from the Acts of the Apostles. That they will "marvel" even more at our Lord's work of judgment we shall see when He comes to judge the quick and the dead.

21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. ^aLuke vii. 14 and viii. 54; chap. xi. 25, 43.

To raise the dead would be a more marvellous work than that performed upon the impotent man. Our Lord's language seems to be applicable either to the quickening of those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1), or to the raising of the dead at the last day. (See vi. 39, 40, 44, 54.) *Quickeneth whom he will*—that is the prerogative of God alone; of God the Father, as in James i. 18; of God the Son, as in Matt. viii. 3, and in this place, of God the Holy Ghost, as in Cor. xii. 11. God, and God only, may do *as He will*. Yet it is certain that the will of God is not arbitrary: for He worketh all things "after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. i. 11), and whatever is done with counsel or wise resolution, has of necessity some reason why it should be done. In every instance where *His will is to vivify*, the result invariably follows.

22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23. That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. ^aHe that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. ^bMatt. xi. 27 and xxviii. 18; verse 27; iii. 35 and xvii. 2; Acts xvii. 31; 1 Peter iv. 5. ^c1 John ii. 23.

The other "greater work" to which our Lord referred (verse 20), is His power to judge. This is His prerogative, no less

than the raising of the dead: and indeed this latter is in order to the former. The judicial office has been committed to Christ, in this matter the Father works entirely by Him: for the Father in His own person *judgeth no man*, &c. *All men*. Observe the universality of the application. All men shall honor the Son, either willingly, being justified by faith, or unwillingly, experiencing the wrath of the Judge. *Should honor the Son, even*, &c. "Is there not here," says *Prof. Stuart*, "an equality of power and honor ascribed to the Father and Son? It is perfectly plain, that, so far as the 'committing of judgment to the Son' is concerned, it must be to the Mediatorial Person, to one who, in respect to office, is subordinate to God. But so far as *qualifications*, requisite to perform the duties that commitment requires, are concerned, the Saviour is Divine, and the honor to be claimed by Him, the same with that which the Divinity claims. Multitudes of prophets, as commissioned by God, have borne His messages of mercy and judgment to His people, but to whom among them all did He grant the privilege of being honored, as Himself?"

24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^aHe that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. ^biii. 16, 18, vi. 40, 47, viii. 51 and xx. 31. ^c1 John iii. 14.

Verily, verily. The usual formula of solemn confirmation. *Heareth* denotes not only the outward act of hearing, but receiving the word in power. *Believeth*. Faith is coupled with hearing, and hearing is put first, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." *On him that sent me*. On the Father, who, in the plan of redemption, is represented as "sending" His Son to save men. (John iii. 17.) *Hath everlasting life*. Our Lord does not use the future, but the present. He does not say, "shall have," but "hath." The future indeed is implied in the present, but such have it even now—they have now the germ which shall be developed into that immortal plant. Faith in God who sent His Son is here represented as being connected with everlasting life. (See on iii. 15, 16, 36.) But there can be no faith in Him who sent His Son, without faith also in Him who is sent. The very

essence of bene. in the Father is, that He sent the Son. *And shall not come*, &c. The same truth, presented in the preceding clause of the verse, is thus expressed, according to John's custom, negatively. The meaning is, that the believer, having *passed from death unto life*, shall not come into that state of final condemnation, in which those who are impenitent and unbelieving will be found at the last day.

25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.
 *Verse 23; Eph. ii. 1, 5 and v. 14; Col. ii. 13.

Verily, verily. (See on verse 24.) Even at the moment Jesus was speaking, He was able to give spiritual life to dead souls. He has been doing this work ever since that hour. We do not see the dead souls arise, but Jesus does. *And they that hear*, &c. How unspeakably encouraging is this declaration! We cannot be more insensible than the "dead," yet even they shall hear. Such hearing is meant as includes reception, belief, obedience.

26. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself: 27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.
 *Verse 22; Acts x. 42 and xvii. 31. *Dan. vii. 13, 14.

The Father hath life in himself, it belongs to His nature, He has received it of no one, it is an essential attribute of His necessarily existing nature. He so has life, that He can impart, withdraw and restore it to whomsoever He pleases. Now, the Son is said to have "life in himself," that is, the Son is a possessor of independent existence. He is equally with the Father the possessor of that independent existence, and that power of giving existence, which is one of the grand characteristics of Divinity. *So hath he given*, &c. It will be observed the expression is not the Father hath given to the Son life in Himself, but He has given to the Son "to have life in himself." The word "give" is often used in Scripture as equivalent to "appoint." The appointment of the Son to be the Messiah is repeatedly expressed by this word. (Isa. lv. 4; chap. iii. 16.) The Father has appointed the Son to have, or hold, life in Himself. The word "given" does not seem to refer to the life itself, but to the manner of *having* or holding it. The Father, as the head of the Mediatorial

economy, appoints the Son to hold and exercise that independent power of conferring life, which is the characteristic property of that divinity of which they are equally possessed. The idea seems materially the same as when it is said that "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." That the words refer to a Divine appointment, having a reference to the Mediatorial economy, is obvious from what follows: *And hath given him authority to exercise judgment also*—to pass and execute final sentence on all intelligent beings. *Because*, &c. The final judgment is to be performed by the Messiah, not only because He is the only begotten Son of God, partaking of the Divine nature, but also because He is the Son of man, and holds a peculiar relation also to the human race. How interesting the thought, that the Saviour and the Judge of men, while on the one hand He is keenly alive to the honor of God, has, also, on the other hand, a most tender sympathy for human beings.

28. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29. *And shall come forth; *they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

*Isa. xxvi. 19; 1 Thes. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 52. *Dan. xli. 2; Matt. xxv. 32, 33, 46.

Marvel not—be not surprised. *All that are in the graves*, &c. In verse 25 the transaction is altogether spiritual, here it is altogether physical. All the actual dead shall hear with their bodily ears the very voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth with such bodies as it shall please their Creator to give them (1 Cor. xv. 35-53), and soul and body shall re-unite and stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive sentence of reward or condemnation, according to the deeds done in the body. (2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xxii. 12.) *They that have done good*, &c. All shall rise to immortality, but not all to the same immortality. They that rise shall be separated into two classes, and it is their conduct *here* that shall determine their separation *there*. The one class—the doers of good—shall rise to what is emphatically life; the other—the practitioners of evil—to that which is worse than death. (See on chap. iii. 16, 36; Dan. xii. 2; Matt. xxv. 31; Rev. xx. 12, 13; Titus ii. 11-14.)

30. *I* can of mine own self do nothing: as *I* hear, *I* judge: and my judgment is just: because *I* seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. 31. *If I* bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. 32. *There* is another that beareth witness of me; and *I* know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

¹Verse 19. ²Matt. xxvi. 39; chap. iv. 34 and vi. 38. ³See chap. viii. 14; Rev. iii. 14. ⁴Matt. iii. 17 and xvii. 5; chap. viii. 18; 1 John v. 6, 7, 9.

Do nothing, i. e., apart from the Father, or in any interest of my own. (See on verse 19.) *As I hear*, &c. "My judgments are all anticipated in the bosom of my Father, to which I have immediate access, and by me only responded to and reflected. They cannot, therefore, err, as I live for one end only, to carry into effect the will of Him that sent me. *If I bear witness of myself*, standing alone, and setting up any separate interest. There is no contradiction between this and the statement in chap. viii. 14, on which see notes. Our Lord, in one of these passages, expresses what was to be admitted as true in the account of men; in the other, what His testimony was in itself. *There is another, i. e.*, the Father, as is plain from the connection. How brightly the distinction of the Persons shines out here! *And I know*, &c. This is the Son's testimony to the Father's truth (See vii. 28, viii. 26, 55.) Thus He cheered His spirit under the cloud of human opposition which was already gathering over His head.

33. *Ye* sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34. But *I* receive not testimony from man: but these things *I* say, that ye might be saved. 35. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

¹Chap. i. 15, 19, 27, 32. ²Peter i. 19. ³Matt. xiii. 20 and xxii. 26; Mark. vi. 20.

Ye sent, &c. The reference is to chap. i. 19, which see. *But I receive not*, &c. That is, "John, by his testimony, added nothing to me: I was what I was, and *I am what I am*, before John testified of me, and since." *But these things*, &c. The anxious desire of Jesus that His hearers might be saved, induced Him to bring distinctly to view the testimony of John, which was happily adapted to convince them that He was the Messiah, and was testimony of which they could easily judge. The words *burning* and *shining* are not used of light undervided or independently possessed, but of that which is lit up and shines from another source. Some lights are shining, but not burning; John was both. Burning he was with the fire of holy zeal, burning, as consumed away in

His Master's service. The minister, or private Christian, who would enlighten others, must be a shining light himself. And if he would affect others, he himself must feel, his own heart must burn with holy ardor. *And ye were willing*, &c. They were the living examples of the stony-ground hearers. They received the word of John "with joy," but they rejoiced for a season, having "no root" of deep conviction. It is our privilege to "rejoice in the Lord," but it is exceedingly dangerous to make comfort a ground of confidence, unless the nature, source and effects of that comfort be considered, for it may result entirely from ignorance and self-flattery in a variety of ways.

36. But *I* have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish: the same works that *I* do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. 37. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. *Ye* have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. 38. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 39. *Search* the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

¹1 John v. 9. ²John 2, x. 25 and xv. 24. ³Matt. iii. 17 and xvii. 5; chap. vi. 27 and viii. 18. ⁴Deut. iv. 12; chap. i. 18; 1 Tim. i. 17; 1 John iv. 12. ⁵Isa. viii. 20 and xxxiv. 16; Luke xvi. 29; verse 46; Acts xvii. 11. ⁶Deut. xviii. 15, 18; Luke xxiv. 27; chap. i. 45.

The works which the Father hath given, &c. Jesus now proceeds to describe the different ways in which His Father witnessed to Him. *First*, by enabling Him to do miracles. Christ's works are speaking testimonies of His glory, and we never rightly appreciate them till we see that they bear witness that the Father hath sent Him, as His own Son, to be the Saviour of the world. *And the Father . . . hath borne witness of me*. Here is the *second* of the three ways referred to, in verse 36. His Father *Himself* had borne witness of Him, by speaking from heaven at His baptism. (See 2 Peter i. 17.) *Ye have neither heard his voice*, &c. This is to be understood as a proof of their ignorance of the Father, of the knowledge of whom they so much gloried. And inasmuch as they might object that though such manifestations were gone, yet they had the word which was delivered by the ministry of Moses to their fathers, and in them to their successors and children, Christ answers that it was not "abiding in them"—had not its due place with them, since they believed not in Him. *Search the Scriptures*, &c. Here is the *third* of the ways mentioned in verse 36. The Father

had borne witness to His Son, in the Scriptures. *Search*—read carefully. *For in them ye think.* It is a sad thing, indeed, and a most unprofitable use of the Scriptures, if we read them, as these Jews did, only to form *opinions* out of them. In what they testify concerning Christ and “eternal life through His name,” there is no place for opinion, all is matter of faith, we must “believe and be sure” that He is “the Saviour of the world.” *Which testify of me.* “If we do not,” says *Cecil*, “see the golden thread through all the Bible, marking out Christ, we read the Scriptures without the key.” (Ps. xxxvi. 9.)

40. ^aAnd ye will not come to me that ye might have life.—^aiii. 11 and iii. 19.

Life. This is of three kinds. 1. Life judicial—that is, pardon, so verse 24. (See xx. 31; 1 John v. 12.) All were under sin, condemned to die the second death, but in Jesus’ hand there was a way of pardon open and free to them all. 2. Life spiritual—that is, inward holiness, spoken of in verse 25. (See Col. iii. 3; Gal. ii. 20.) 3. Life of glory—called “eternal life” and “everlasting life.” (Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 16.) Jesus has eternal life in His hand, ready to give the right to it, the foretaste of it, and itself in due time. (Chap. x.; Gal. vi. 8.) *Ye will not come, &c.* This is the only reason Christ here assigns. He traces the difficulty to their willful and guilty rejection of Him. How will sinners bear the reflection in eternity, that through folly, pride, ignorance, they *would not* come to Jesus that they might have life!

41. ^aI receive not honour from men.

^aVerse 34; 1 Thes. ii. 6.

Our Lord points out the reason why they were unwilling to connect themselves with Him. It was because He appeared in a style which crossed their prejudices, traditions and carnal desires, because He disclaimed human honor, and made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, seeking not His own glory as man, nor a kingdom which is of this world, but the glory of His Father in heaven.

42. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43. I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive. 44. ^aHow can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

^axii. 43. ^aRom. ii. 23.

I know you. By this ray Jesus penetrates

His hearers’ hearts. He means this: *I know* the Father (verse 32), and *I know* that you are strangers to Him. This was spoken by Him most compassionately. They were not actuated in anything which they did by a desire to promote God’s glory. Their ends and aims were all selfish. *In my Father’s name*, or authority. “There is proof that under a profession of piety, ye have not the love of God in you, for if you had, you would receive me by faith as sent by Him, with credentials so clear that they cannot be reasonably questioned. Yet if an impostor come and promise you empire and earthly glory, him ye will receive.” *How can ye believe, &c.* Than these words what can be a stronger proof of the *believing*, here spoken of, being a moral disposition of the sublimest kind, since our Lord in these expressions makes it imply, essentially, both the most heroic dereliction, and the most spiritual preference, that could be made by man in this world? We should indeed honor all men. But the excited ambition of these Jews, unable to gratify itself in triumph over foreign nations, exhausted itself in exacting and exchanging honors with each other. *The honor that cometh from God only* is alone eternal, enduring with our immortal existence.

45. Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. 46. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

^aRom. ii. 12. ^aGen. iii. 15, xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxii. 18 and xlix. 10; Deut. xviii. 15, 18; chap. i. 45; Acts xxvi. 22.

Do not think, &c. “It is not necessary that I accuse you, for, even now, Moses, in whom ye trust, your great lawgiver and patron, is, as it were, your accuser before God, and charges you with being regardless of him as well as of me.” *Had ye believed Moses, &c.* Here Jesus presses the Jews with this, that, if they did believe the writings of Moses and their other Scriptures, they must of necessity believe Him also. This is the sense of the New Testament concerning the Old Testament. Supposing therefore the truth of the New Testament, the Divine authority of the Old Testament is to be acknowledged. (Luke x. 26, xxiv. 27, 44; Acts xiii. 18, x. 23, xxiv. 14, xxvi. 27.) *But if ye believe not his writings, &c.* “If ye do not really believe what your honored lawgiver Moses wrote

—and it is plain that you do not—it is not likely that you will believe what I say.” It appears that our Lord’s discourse effectually confounded the Jews, for they went away without replying; a proof that they had nothing to say.

1. What pool was at Jerusalem? 2. What is said of it? 3. What did Jesus say to the man who had an infirmity? 4. What was the man’s reply? 5. What was the result? 6. State the interview between the Jews and the man that was cured. 7. Explain verse 17. 8. Also verse 19. 9. To whom is all judgment committed? 10. Who hath everlasting life? 11. Whose voice shall be heard by all that are in the graves? 12. What shall occur when it is heard? 13. Had Jesus greater witness than that of John? 14. What is said about searching the Scriptures? 15. What is said of the “writings” of Moses and the “words” of Christ?

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ feedeth five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes.* 15 *Thereupon the people would have made him king.* 16 *But withdrawing himself, he walked on the sea to his disciples:* 26 *reproveh the people flocking after him, and all the fleshy hearers of his word:* 32 *declareth himself to be the bread of life to believers.* 66 *Many disciples depart from him.* 68 *Peter confesseth him.* 70 *Judas is a devil.*

AFTER these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.

^aMatt. xiv. 15; Mark vi. 35; Luke ix. 10, 12.

After these things—an indefinite expression, not meaning immediately after the things mentioned in the preceding chapter. The clause, *which is the sea of Tiberias* (literally, of Tiberias), is added probably by John, because at the time he wrote his Gospel, this sheet of water was more generally known to the people of other countries by this name. Our Lord went to a private and desert place near Bethsaida.

2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

A great multitude—partly of Capernaïtes and partly of passengers to the approaching Passover at Jerusalem. *Followed him.* This they might easily do by going round the head of the lake, to the point where Bethsaida was. *Because they saw, &c.* The miracles of Christ were designed, 1. To excite inquiry. 2. To convince men that He was the promised Messiah. 3. To teach us to place our trust in His power. 4. To dispose our hearts to obedience. Surely, if we really believe these wonderful works, we cannot but desire to obey Him who is thus Lord of all creatures, and it is remarkable that as faith leads to obedience, so there is nothing like obedience for increasing faith.

3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

Literally “into the mountain,” so designated, either because it was the one mountain which stood there, in contradistinction to the more level ground composing the district, or because it was “that particular hill” to which our Lord was in the habit of going when He visited that district. *Dr. Thomson* expressly says that there is a “bold headland” here, with “a smooth, grassy spot” at the base, “capable of seating many thousand people.” There Jesus sat, as teachers do, in the chair of instruction; He sat as one having authority—whoever would, might come, and find Him there. He sat with his disciples, condescended to take them to sit with Him, to put a reputation upon them before the people, and give them an earnest of the glory in which they would shortly sit with Him. (See Eph. ii. 6.)

4. ^bAnd the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

^bLev. xxiii. 5, 7; Deut. xvi. 1; chap. ii. 13 and v. 1.

Our Evangelist accounts in part for the ready assembling together of such multitudes of people, by informing us that the Passover, a feast of the Jews (as he explains for the sake of his Gentile readers), was nigh, when much people (xi. 55) were gathered together from the various villages to the principal cities or centers, previously to setting out for Jerusalem.

5. ^cWhen Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? 6. And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

^cMatt. xiv. 11; Mark vi. 35; Luke ix. 12, on which see notes.

Whence shall we buy, &c. Let us not think that we have acted as the followers of Jesus, if we have sent the people away in want of the common necessities of life, without an effort on our part to supply their wants. *To prove him, i. e.,* to make trial of the Apostle's faith, to prove what manner of trust he had in Him, whom he had already acknowledged the Messiah (John i. 45.) Philip had seen our Lord's miracles, and ought to have trusted Him for supplying all that was wanted. There was in him a certain slowness of heart to recognize the Godhead of the Incarnate Son. (See xiv. 7-11.) His reply at this time shows that he dreamed of nothing less than of a display of miraculous power. *For he himself knew, &c.* "Christ's relief of bodies," says *Baxter*, "was in love to bodies and souls. Christ's questions were to instruct the hearers, and not Himself."

7. Philip answered him, "Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." 8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, 9. There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but what are they among so many? 10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

⁷See Num. xi. 21, 22. ⁸2 Kings iv. 43.

Two hundred penny-worth—a sum variously estimated from \$28 to \$30. A considerable quantity of bread, yet not enough, Philip thinks, as he glances at the gathering multitudes, to give even a taste to each. There is not so much as a hint of his trust in Divine power. "When men judge by sense or reason," says an old writer, "and look to likelihoods and probabilities, and not to Christ's power, they will soon be at their wits' end in extremities, and unable to answer doubtful cases, for so much doth this answer of Philip teach."

Andrew saith unto him, &c. As he, as well as Philip, was a native of the district of Bethsaida, where all these things happened, there was an obvious propriety in his speaking and giving information on the present occasion. John is the only writer who mentions that these were *barley* loaves. Barley was a cheap kind of food; much used by poor people. *Fishes.* This word in the original literally means something *boiled, i. e.,* meat, flesh, eaten with bread, hence, any sauce or condiment eaten with bread to give it a relish

or flavor. Fish was the chief dainty of the Athenians, and thus the word came gradually to be used for a sauce or relish. The fact that a *lad*, a little boy, could carry all that Andrew mentions, is a plain proof that the loaves could not have been large, nor the fish of great size. "Idle and indecent application of sentences taken from the Scriptures," says *Dr. Johnson*, "such as 'loaves and fishes,' is a mode of merriment, which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity." *What are they among so many?* The order of the words in the original is much more emphatic: *But these—what are they for so many?* Five loaves and two small fishes are more than enough in His hands who continually multiplies the corn of the earth a hundred-fold. Whoever is faithful in adoring and praising God for all the benefits He does us by the ordinary methods of His providence, will not find his faith and confidence stagger when he stands in need of extraordinary assistance.

Make the men sit down, recline, as was usual at taking a meal. Christ may see fit to engage His people in what seems to them strange service, and to give them commands that seem absurd to sense and reason, and yet give a good account of all in His time. And it is a commendation of faith that it obeys His precepts without reasoning. *Now there was much grass, &c.* (See on verse 3.) This is one of those graphic touches which help us to picture to ourselves the scene. *So the men, &c.* Men would of course form the largest proportion of a paschal caravan, as it was only the *males* who were commanded to appear in the holy city.

11. And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down, and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. 12. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. 13. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. 14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

¹Gen. xlix. 10; Deut. xviii. 15, 18; Matt. xi. 3; chap. i. 21, iv. 19, 25 and vii. 40.

Giving thanks was the piety of His human nature, but the *blessing* came from the virtue of His Divine nature. We ought to give thanks for our food, for we have it from the hand of God, and must *receive it*

with thanksgiving. (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.) And the disciples to them that were set down. Here is a lively emblem of the work which a true minister of the New Testament is meant to do. He is not a mediator between God and man. He has no power to put away sin, or impart grace. His whole business is to receive the bread of life which his Master provides, and to distribute it among the souls among whom he labors. He cannot make it soul-saving or life-giving, to any one.

When they were filled. They had come "taking no thought," for three days at least, of "what they should eat, or what they should drink," only anxious to hear the Word of Life, only "seeking the kingdom of heaven," and now the meaner things, according to the promise of the Saviour (Matt. vi. 33), were "added unto them." (Ps. xxxvii. 3.) *Gather up the fragments, &c.* Though Jesus was able miraculously to furnish any amount of food, He strictly forbade wastefulness. We ought to be neither anxious about the future (Matt. vi. 25), nor regardless of those present advantages which may supply our necessities in time to come.

Filled twelve baskets, &c. This is an extraordinary instance of our Lord's power. These were probably large baskets, such as were usually slung from the shoulder. The disciples lost nothing by giving their services for the good of others, at the command of Christ. There was a basketful for each of the twelve, after all they had given away. *This is of a truth, &c.* This expresses the popular expectation of the Messiah, based on Deut. xviii. 15-19. "In this matter of miracles," observes an ancient writer, "we do much abuse ourselves. For why was it a greater miracle that our Saviour once turned a little water into wine, than every year in so many vine trees to turn that into wine in the branches, which being received at the root was mere water? Or why was it more wonderful for Him once to feed five thousand with five loaves, than every year to feed the whole world, by the strange multiplication of a few seeds cast into the ground?"

15. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

On verses 15-21, see on Matt. xiv. 22-33.

The miracle at first made an overwhelming impression upon the people. Under the dominion of earthly expectations regarding the Messiah, they wished now to take Jesus with them to Jerusalem, in order to make Him a king. Observe, 1. The Saviour's omniscience—He *perceived, &c.* As God, He possessed a perfect and universal knowledge of the human character in all its depths (ii. 25). 2. The Saviour's freedom from ambition—He declined the honor which they sought to force upon Him. "The acceptance of an earthly kingdom," says *Bishop Horsley*, "had been inconsistent with the establishment of His everlasting Monarchy, and He declined the danger of popular tumult and private assassination, that He might die in the character of a criminal by a judiciary process and a public execution." (xii. 33.) 3. The Saviour's love of solitude. How often do we read of Him being alone! Solitude familiarizes the soul with God and Divine things, elevates the mind above the world, prepares for fresh trials and sorrows, and by the Divine blessing meetens us for the heavenly inheritance.

16. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, 17. And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.
Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi. 47.

When even was now come, &c. Rather, "And when the evening was come, His disciples had gone down to the sea, and having entered the ship, were going over the sea to Capernaum." *It was now dark, &c.* It must needs be dark in our souls when Jesus does not come. But why does infinite love delay? May it not be for this wise and gracious purpose, that in the obscure night of our afflictions the failure of every earthly help and comfort, and the disappointment we thence experience may serve, as the dark foil, to commend His goodness and faithfulness, and to show us more of His glory? (Deut. xi. 6, xxi. 3, 4; Ps. xxvii. 14; Hab. ii. 3.)

18. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

Arose—was beginning to run high. *A great wind.* The position of this lake, with its high hills on either side, exposed it to sudden and violent wind-storms. How lively an image of the Church "tossed with waves" did that ship with its

little company present! The small progress effected, in spite of the incessant labor, and the opposition continually experienced, as well as the storm patiently sustained, are all circumstances which suggest their own interpretation.

19. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

Five and twenty, &c.—about four miles. They were detained till toward morning by the storm. *They see Jesus, &c.* But they did not know that it was He. It was too early in the morning for them to see distinctly. (Matt. xiv. 25.) How, says the querist, was this miracle performed? We suppose that both the miracle of walking the sea and moving the ship to land (verse 21), was performed just as a writer moves his pen, by an act of will—of a will supernaturally, Divinely powerful. Gravitation, so far as we can see, is the immediate effect of the Divine volition holding the spheres in their places. That same volition could hold the water solid beneath the feet of Jesus, or cause His body to glide over the undisturbed surface. *And they were afraid.* Christ, even when He comes to deliver His people in a remarkable way, may be mistaken, and even mercies may be matter of fear and terror to them. It is acceptable service to God to oppose faithless fears in trial.

20. But he saith unto them, It is I, be not afraid. 21. Then they willingly receive him into the ship; and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

It is I, &c. This utterance by One who at that moment was “treading upon the waves of the sea” and was about to hush the raging elements with His word, what is it but the voice which cried of old in the ears of Israel, seeking to “gather them” in the days of Moses, “I AM.” “I, EVEN I, AM HE!” These same words of our Lord, which now freed the disciples from fear, on another occasion filled the hearts of His enemies with consternation. (xviii. 6; Ex. xiv. 20; see on xxi. 7, 12.) It is a sufficient deliverance to the Lord’s people, if, when they are in greatest extremities, they be delivered from slavish fear. *Willingly.* As they had before dreaded His approach, so now they are eager to receive Him on board. *And immediately, &c.* (See on verse 19.) Before they had time to

realize their deliverance, they find themselves, by the mighty power of their Lord, at land. There was a double miracle: the wind ceased suddenly, and they arrived at their destination presently. This manifold exercise of Christ’s power illustrates the fullness of the riches of His grace to our souls, and assures us of our heavenly rest, if we abide in the ship. (See i. 29; Jude 24; Acts xvii. 31.)

22. ¶ The day following, when the people, which stood on the other side of the sea, saw that there was none other boat there, save that one wherinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone: 23. Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks: 24. When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. 25. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

The people, which stood, &c. Not the whole multitude that had been fed, but only such of them as remained over night about the shore, *i. e.*, on the east side of the lake, for we are supposed to have come, with Jesus and His disciples in the ship, to the west side, Capernaum. *Saw that there was none, &c.* The meaning is, the people had observed that there had been only one boat on the east side where they were, namely, the one in which the disciples had crossed at night to the other, the west side, and they had also observed that Jesus had not gone on board that boat, but His disciples had put off without Him. *Howbeit, &c.* This parenthetical and express mention of these “other boats,” was necessary in order to explain how the multitude had it in their power to cross the sea in boats, when they went to the western side, seeking for Jesus. These boats, in their passage up the lake, were probably by the same wind which was contrary to the disciples (Mark vi. 48), driven near to the place where Jesus had fed the multitudes, and where those of the people who had kept together still remained. *Tiberias*, a town so-called in honor of Tiberius Caesar, on the southwest part of the Sea of Galilee. *Given thanks.* (See on verse 11.) The particularity with which this is here noticed, shows the important connection of this act of devotion with the great miracle which followed.

Took shipping, &c. Finding that Jesus was not there, they followed Him to

Capernaum, which was the ordinary place of His residence. *Rabbi, when comest thou hither?* Hooker says on this question: "The disciples, when Christ appeared to them in a far more strange and miraculous manner, moved no question, but rejoiced greatly in that they saw. For why? The one sort beheld only that in Christ which they knew was more than natural, but yet their affection was not rapt therewith through any great extraordinary gladness: the other, when they looked on Christ, were not ignorant that they saw the well-spring of their own everlasting felicity: the one, because they enjoyed not, disputed; the other disputed not, because they enjoyed. (xxi. 4-7, xx. 28.)

26. Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

Jesus did not satisfy their curiosity by answering their inquiry, but proceeded to unveil their hearts, and to expose the selfish, earthly motives that led them to seek Him so earnestly. They did so, not because they saw in His miracles the evidences of His being "that Prophet that should come into the world (verse 14), but because they hoped to reap temporal advantages from His miraculous power—"loaves" being here put generically for all the temporal blessings which they hoped to enjoy as the followers of a personage possessed of such miraculous power. Learn, 1. Jesus is not pleased, nor can He be deceived, with the fairest show of respect to Him. 2. He is so tender, even to hypocrites, that He will not abruptly put them away, but deal with them in great compassion. 3. The true difference between time-servers and sincere professors is not always indicated by their outward diligence. (Ps. lxxviii. 34-37; Isa. lviii. 1, 2.) 4. Christ, in trying men, looks not only to their diligence, but chiefly to their ends and principles. "Holy intention is to the actions of a man that, which the soul is to the body, or form to its matter, or the root to the tree, or the sun to the world, or the fountain to the river, or the base to a pillar."

27. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but ^hfor that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: ^hfor him hath God the Father sealed.

^hVerse 54, iv. 14. ^hMatt. iii. 17 and xvii. 5; Mark i. 11 and ix. 7; Luke iii. 22 and ix. 35; chap. i. 33, v. 37 and viii. 18; Acts ii. 22; 2 Peter i. 17.

Labor not, &c. This prohibition must not be understood absolutely, but comparatively. (See 2 Thes. iii. 10.) Our Lord's meaning is, labor not in the first and chief place for earthly things—they either perish in our hand, or we perish ourselves in the midst of them. It is certain that our salvation must be wrought out, something must be done for it, though we have it not for anything we can do. We must "sow in righteousness," before we can "reap in joy." It was Naaman's fault that he thought to be cured of his leprosy by sitting still, and it is our folly, and will be our misery, too, to dream of blessedness, without having that faith which evinces its existence by works. (Rom. ii. 7; Heb. iv. 11; James ii. 22.) There are promises in the Scriptures to help our weakness, but none to overcome our willfulness. (Heb. vi. 17, 18; 2 Cor. vii. 1.) *Which endureth, &c.* (Prov. ix. 5; Isa. lv. 2.) This is the true food of souls. (See verse 51.) From the sacrificial death of Christ flows, 1. Our pardon, in which the true life of the soul begins. 2. From this flows love, which is the mighty agent in giving life to the soul. 3. From this flows purity, which is strength. We are strong in proportion to its increase, because we are made more and more partakers of the Divine nature. *Shall give.* While he bids them *work* for this, He yet promises to *give* it to them. Heavenly food is the gift of the Son of man. *Sealed.* Among the seals put upon the claims of our Lord, were: 1. The impress of Divinity on His doctrine. 2. Miracles. 3. Fulfilled prophecy. 4. The striking events of His crucifixion. 5. The seals of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, of both which great events the gift of the Holy Ghost was the public confirmation.

28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29. Jesus answered and said unto them, ^hThis is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.—†1 John iii. 23.

Our Lord had spoken of *working* for something: the people suppose He was recommending to them some legal works, that God had bidden this Prophet to propose to them certain additional ceremonies; and so they ask what these might

be, and ask apparently with a readiness to perform. For they, like many in modern times, were willing to do some things, like Herod, after hearing John the Baptist, were willing to do many things, provided this did not particularly interfere with that whereon their hearts were set. *This is the work of God, &c.* This is the same as saying, "this is the first and greatest of all duties, and without it no other duty can be acceptable." Faith is called "the work of God," for three reasons: It is the work of His efficiency (Eph. i. 19; Col. ii. 12), the work of His commanding, and the work of His approbation. Believing is not a work of merit, for it is the beggar coming to the king for alms, the criminal suing to the judge for mercy. It is no easy matter for a man to believe. Such an one must not only receive Christ as a Saviour, but as a Lord too. He must renounce all to have Him; he must take Him on His own terms. He must deny the world and all, looking beforehand what it will cost him. (Eph. i. 19; Col. ii. 12.)

30. They said therefore unto him, ¹What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? 31. ²Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, ³He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34. ⁴Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

¹Matt. xii. 38 and xvi. 1; Mark viii. 11; 1 Cor. i. 22. ²Ex. xvi. 15; Num. xi. 7; Neh. ix. 15; 1 Cor. x. 3. ³Psa. lxxviii. 24, 25. ⁴Iv. 15.

What sign, &c. The carnal belief in miracles is insatiable, it craves miracle after miracle. *Our fathers, &c.* Here was an intimation that, as Moses fed their fathers in the wilderness, who were no less than six hundred thousand persons, with excellent manna from heaven, and this for forty years together, they had more reason to believe Moses than Christ. *Moses gave you not*—Moses did not give that bread, *he did not create it*: nor was it living bread; it would not give life to the dead, or even preserve the life of the living. *But my Father, &c.* The expression must not be supposed to imply actual reception on the part of the Jews. It rather means "giving" in the sense of "offering" for acceptance a thing which those to whom it is offered may not receive. "It is," says one, "a very remarkable saying,

and one of those which seems to me to prove unanswerably that Christ is God's gift to the whole world—that His redemption was made for all mankind—that He died for all, and is offered to all. It is like the famous texts, John iii. 16; 1 John v. 11." *Lord, evermore give, &c.* Though our Saviour had spoken to them of heavenly food, they, still cleaving to earth, cannot comprehend Him, but supposing that He offers something better than the manna, yet withal earthly, they desire to be always supplied with it: as the Samaritan woman, in a somewhat parallel conversation asks Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." (iv. 15.)

35. And Jesus said unto them, ¹I am the bread of life: she that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. ²I Verses 48, 58. ³Iv. 14 and vii. 37.

Henceforward it is "I" "me" throughout the discourse. *The bread of life* is equivalent to "the life-giving bread." Our Lord here affirms that He is the author of true happiness, that He, that He alone, can make men truly and permanently happy. *Hunger and thirst*, are here used figuratively for that restless and dissatisfied state which rises out of the want of what is necessary to our happiness—a sense of that want—and a craving desire to have that want supplied. That is the state of all men in their natural condition.

He that cometh to me—relies on my atonement as the only expiation of guilt, and implicitly submits to my authority as the great Teacher of truth and holiness. *Shall never, &c.* "Every one that believing comes to me for happiness shall obtain it. After having tasted the happiness which I have to bestow, he will not expect to find it anywhere else. He will find in me alone, that truth which will satisfy his understanding, that atoning righteousness which will pacify his conscience, that sanctifying influence which will transform his character, that soul-satisfying portion which will fill his heart."

36. ¹But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.—I Verses 26, 64.

Our Lord here upbraids them because of their unbelief. He had already told them (v. 33, 43), and now He repeats the charge, that though He had given them every proof, even ocular demonstration,

testifying not merely to faith, but unto sight, that He was the Sent of God, yet they would not believe.

37. *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. [†]Ev. 45. [‡]Matt. xxiv. 24; chap. x. 28, 29; 2 Titus ii. 19; 1 John ii. 19.

As if to derive consolation to His own soul, amidst so discouraging an aspect as that referred to in the preceding verse, the Saviour adds, *All that the Father, &c.* (Rom. v. 11.) If our Divine Master could draw consolation from this high source, surely the weakest of His servants may well be permitted to do the same. *Him.* Observe the particularity of the promise: although our Lord began the sentence with "all," He changes the person in that portion of it which He intended especially for the sinner's heart, and says, "*him that cometh,*" &c. It is the soul that Jesus would have to come. Whosoever and whatever he be, though he may long have been the most hardened rebel, though he may be the readiest slave of Satan, still let him come, and he shall find a blessed welcome. *In no wise, &c.* Here is a double negative. "I will not, no, I will not cast out." None shall be excluded on account of their age, or their situation in life, or their ignorance and slowness to learn, or the number, magnitude, or aggravation of their sins. "Though they are but some," says *Bishop Beveridge*, "that God hath elected, yet His promises are made to all 'Come unto me, all ye who are weary,' &c., 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish,' &c. In the application of which and the like promises, we must not have respect to the eternity of God's purpose, but to the universality of His promise. His promises are made to all, and therefore all are bound to lay hold upon His promises; and, as we are to receive His promises, so are we also to obey His precepts, as made to all. So that in all our doings the will of God is to be followed, as we have it expressly declared to us in His Word, not considering whether God elected me from eternity, but whether I obey Him in time: if I obey Him in time, I may certainly conclude, that He elected me from eternity."

33. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but

should raise it up again at the last day. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

[†]Matt. xxvi. 39; chap. v. 30. [‡]iv. 34. [§]ix. 28, xvii. 12 and xviii. 9. [¶]Verses 27, 47, 54; iii. 15, 16 and iv. 14.

Our Lord proceeds to confirm His previous position, by saying that there is no opposition between Him and His Father. *For* would be better translated "inasmuch as." *Came down*, the tense of the verb is perfect—*have come down. Not to do, &c.* The "Messenger of the Covenant" came down from heaven to do the will of the Father, which is indeed His own will, for they are one. (See on chap. v. 30; also Ps. xl. 9, 10, with Heb. x. 5, 7.) *This is the Father's will, &c.* This verse expresses more distinctly what was the will of the Father. It refers back to the covenant brought to view in verse 37, and confirms its merciful provision in regard to the recovery from sin and death of those who are embraced in it. *Of all, &c.* A reference to God's amazing love in choosing some of this guilty world, who should certainly be to the praise of His glory. (See xvii. 6; Eph. i. 5, 6.) *I should lose nothing*—let nothing of such be lost. *But should raise it up again.* The neuter "it" conforms to the gender of "all," and is in like manner to be taken in a collective sense of all Christ's people. They shall, though they die in this world, be raised up again to a happy state, this being the contrast of *losing nothing*. The day of judgment is called *the last day*, for days, weeks, months and years, the revolutions which now measure, time shall then be swallowed up in an unchangeable eternity. The saints shall be forever with the Lord. (1 Thes. iv. 17.)

That every one which seeth, &c. Our Lord had (verse 39) referred to the redeemed *collectively*, as being given to Him of the Father, and as being made partakers of everlasting life, now as to their souls, and resurrection life hereafter as to their bodies. He now refers to the redeemed *individually*, pointing to that whereby they come to be partakers of the blessing, faith in the Son of God. "Faith," says *Scougal*, "hath the same place in the Divine life, which sense hath in the natural, being, indeed, nothing else but a kind of sense or feeling persuasion of spiritual things. It extends

itself unto all Divine truths, but in our lapsed estate, it hath a peculiar relation to the declaration of God's mercy and reconcileableness to sinners through a Mediator, and, therefore, receiving its denominations from that principal object, is ordinarily termed faith in Jesus Christ." (xii. 21; Heb. xi. 27; Matt. xxvii. 55; Luke x. 18; chap. xvii. 24; Acts iii. 16; Heb. viii. 6.) "Every one," is the expression. No one can say he is excluded. "Seeing and believing" are the only things required. No one can say that the terms are too hard. *And I will raise, &c.* (See on verse 39.) These words are repeated in order to make it sure that the glorious resurrection referred to will take place.

41. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42. And they said, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?'
 *Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3; Luke iv. 22.

Murmured—muttered. *How is it then, &c.*
 "What can this mean? Do we not know all about him—where, when and of whom he was born? And yet he says he came down from heaven." (See on Matt. xiii. 55; Luke iv. 22.) The obscurity of Christ's temporal birth renders the greatness of His eternal birth incredible to carnal men, as the majesty of His Divine being has made others question the reality of His human nature. Reason is always mistaken when it pretends to judge by itself, or to make the senses judges of the mysteries of religion, instead of having recourse to the authority of the Word of God.

43. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.
 *Cant. i. 4; verse 65.

"The point of our Saviour's reply is," says Luther, "that all dispute about His person is fruitless, until the internal sense of want is experienced." In what this consists, we are told (verses 45, 46), you wish to subject me to measure and square, and judge my word by your reason, but I say unto you, that is not the right way and path—you will not come to Him till the Father opens to you His great mercy, and Himself teaches you that from His fatherly love He sent Christ into the world." *Can come*—not simply come outwardly, but with the heart. "Drawing" is tantamount to having "learned of the

Father," in verse 45. But it is not every one that has been objectively instructed by the preaching of the Gospel who comes to Christ; it must therefore be such an instruction and drawing as is peculiar to true believers. In this drawing, which is rendered necessary by men's ignorance, as well as their perversity toward God, no violence is done to the mental or the moral powers of a man, but the influence of God is harmonious with both, and renews the heart in such a manner that the person is conscious of no interruption of his own free choice and action. God draweth with His Word and by His Spirit, but man's duty is to *hear* and *learn*, that is to say, receive the grace offered, consent to the promises, and not resist the God that calleth. *And I will raise, &c.* (Comp. xvii. 2; see on verses 39, 40.) The pronoun "I," is emphatic. Jesus thus reminds them of His Divine power.

45. 'It is written in the prophets. And they shall all be taught of God. 46. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.
 *Isa. liiv. 13; Jer. xxxi. 34; Mi. iv. 2; Heb. viiii. 10 and x. 16. 47. Verse 37.

The prophets—that section of the Old Testament popularly styled *the prophets*. The quotation is probably from Isa. liiv. 13. *Shall all be taught, &c.* This teaching is part of the great process of the Father's drawing to Christ. (See on verse 44.) *Every man therefore, &c.* We here learn, 1. That faith in Christ is not a mere notion or belief, but *such* a belief as is accompanied with an application to Him for all the purposes of salvation. (See on verse 37.) 2. The reasonableness of faith. It is not the offspring of presumption or ignorance: it flows from instruction, from Divine teaching. 3. The entire importance of the Lord Jesus. We here see that all the teaching of God, both in the revelation of the Word and in the work of His Spirit, is designed to make us feel our need of Christ, and to induce us to desire Him, and repair to Him. This is telling us plainly enough, that there is salvation in none other, that in Him all fullness dwells, that He is all, and in all.

46. 'Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.
 *18 and v. 37. 47. *Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22; chap. i. 18, vii. 29 and viii. 19.

Not that, when He bade them hearken

to the Father's teaching, He would have them expect any personal direction from the Father to believe in the Son. (See Rom. x. 6, 8; Deut. xxx. 12, 14.) God who spake in time past unto their fathers by the prophets, was now speaking unto them by His Son. *He which is of God*—the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. As the Son sees the Father, through His essential and eternal union with Him (i. 14), so do we see the Son (verse 40), through a mystical union with Him by faith. And, as we see the Father in His Son (xiv. 9), so, by a mystery of grace, the Father seeth us in His Son likewise. (Eph. i. 1-7; chap. xvii. 21.)

47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, «He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

«iii. 16, 18, 35; verse 40, on which see notes.

Our Lord repeats, with solemn affirmation, that blessed truth, the substance of which He had already uttered (verse 40), only now applying it directly to Himself. *He that believeth*. Observe, that the very foundation of all that follows, is Faith. *Hath everlasting life*, because he hath the present right to it, and because He hath already entered upon the present enjoyment of that which will become everlasting life hereafter. (xvii. 3.)

48. «I am that bread of life. 49. «Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50. «This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

«Verses 33, 35. «Verse 31. «Verses 51, 53.

I am that bread of life. "You did not misapprehend me, when you thought I appropriated to myself the appellation, "the true bread," "the bread from heaven," "the bread of God. I am that *life-giving bread*, I am the procurer and bestower of immortal happiness." The Saviour goes on to compare or contrast Himself with that bread which the Jews were accustomed to call "the bread from heaven," the manna. There is one great difference in the parallels: the manna gave but a transient earthly life, this true manna gives heavenly and eternal life. *That a man may eat, &c.* This clause contains the reason why this bread from heaven was given to man—as a remedy and preservative against death, both spiritual and eternal. The resurrection of the body to a condition of glory and blessedness is also comprised in the gift.

51. I am the living bread [which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and «the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. «iii. 13. «Heb. x. 5, 10.

To mark the importance of the sentiment in verse 50, our Lord repeats it. *I am, &c.* Eating is that which in consequence of the natural constitution of things, is necessary to our deriving the advantage from bread, which it is intended to communicate—that is, bodily nourishment. To "eat" the bread of life is just, by the faith of the truth, to obtain a personal interest in the blessings of Christ's salvation. (See on verse 53.) *And the bread that I will give, &c.* The "flesh" of our Lord is plainly just equivalent to His body, or Himself as embodied. To "give His flesh," is, to devote Himself as a sacrifice—voluntarily to lay down His life. "The world" is just equivalent to mankind, without distinction, Gentiles as well as Jews, and "to give his flesh for their life," is either "to give Himself, to devote Himself, in their room—to lay down His life for their forfeited life—to give His soul as a ransom for their souls—to die in their room, in order to save them from the death which they deserved," or, what comes materially to the same thing, "to lay down His life in order to obtain life—happiness—for them."

52. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, «How can this man give us his flesh to eat? «vii. 13, ix. 16 and x. 19. «iii. 9.

Some of the hearers see clearly that Christ cannot, in the literal sense, give His "flesh" as food, whilst others have more correct views of the spiritual nature of this food, hence there is a conference as to the real meaning of the word. As Jesus saw that, in general, it was not *comprehension* but *candor*, which they needed, He was pleased not to enter into any further explanation, but (as before, at verse 44), gravely repeats, with stronger asseveration, what He had before said.

53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. «Matt. xxvi. 28, 29.

The language of our Lord here is certainly metaphorical, but it is founded in truth, and designed to convey an important reality. We live spiritually by the dying of the Lord Jesus, and the allusion refers to His Mediatorial offering for our

sins, and teaches us, that faith is necessary to our deriving benefit from His sacrifice. The resemblance between this eating and drinking, and the exercise of faith, which they represent, appears in four things. 1. Appetite. The Saviour speaks of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Such are the desires which all believers feel toward the Lord Jesus. 2. Application. In eating there is an actual refection of the food into the animal system, and in believing we receive Christ Jesus the Lord. 3. Satisfaction. As food is essential to our subsistence, and there is immediate gratification in receiving it, so the reception of Christ is not only indispensable, but free and delightful. 4. Nourishment. This is the design and effect of food. And "the just shall live by faith." Blessed Jesus! Thy flesh is meat indeed, and Thy blood is drink indeed! Evermore give us this food.

Though the Eucharist had not yet been instituted, yet we probably have the idea of it, and a kind of anticipative allusion to it, in this chapter: though we may not restrict our Lord's words solely to that holy mystery. The whole passage in fact, looks at the passion of our Lord. (See verse 51.) There is a glancing at His heartless betrayal. (Verses 70, 71.) There is the anticipation of His atoning sacrifice, allusion to His cross and passion, though not yet accomplished, and therefore, together with it, to the sacred Supper, as the memorial of His body broken and His blood shed, for the life of our souls, and as the outward sign of the manner in which we feed on Him in our hearts by faith, with thanksgiving, as a public profession of our inwardly receiving His atonement, and as a pledge to all true believers of everlasting life.

54. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55. For my flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed. 56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58. "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

^aVerses 27, 40, 63, iv. 14. ^b1 John iii. 24 and iv. 15, 16. ^cVerses 49, 50, 51.

Whoso eateth, &c. The preceding verse declares the necessity of this spiritual food,

to the acquisition of eternal life. This verse reaffirms the promise made in verse 40, on which see notes. *Meat indeed drink indeed, i. e.,* truly, really in the very highest sense. "In all ages," says *Latimer*, "the devil hath stirred up some light heads to esteem the sacraments lightly, or, to be empty and bare signs." "The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood," observes *Hooker*, "is not to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament." *Dwelleth in me, &c.* As the branches are very members of the vine, so are believers of the Lord Jesus. This is the secret of their life. They have eternal life because they are partakers of Christ, because they are legally and spiritually united to Him who is "the Prince of life." (See Eph. iii. 17; Col. i. 27; Rom. viii. 9-11; Gal. ii. 20; also 1 John iii. 24, iv. 13, 15, 16.)

The expression *the living Father* is plainly equivalent to "the life-giving Father, the possessor and communicator of all life and happiness, the source and fountain of existence, intelligence, activity and enjoyment." *Hath sent me, &c.* It is plain that Christ here speaks of Himself as Mediator. The general thought in this verse, seems to be this: the intimate connection between believers and the Saviour is so close, as that His life secures their life (see xiv. 19), and He illustrates this thought by comparing the connection which subsists between believers and Him, to the connection which subsists between Him and His Father, and the security which their connection with Him affords for their life, to the security which His connection with the Father affords for His life. (1 Cor. xi. 3, iii. 23.) *This is that bread, &c.* This is a sort of summing up of the whole discourse, on which let this one further remark suffice: that as our Lord, instead of softening down His figurative sublimities, or even putting them in naked phraseology, leaves the great truths of His person and office, and our participation of Him and it, enshrined for all time in those glorious forms of speech, so when we attempt to strip the truth of these figures, figures though they be, it *goes away* from us, like water when the vessel is broken, and our wisdom lies in raising our own spirit, and

attuning our own ear to our Lord's chosen modes of expression.

60. *Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is a hard saying, who can hear it? *Verse 66; Matt. xi. 6.

Disciples. By this word here are meant the persons who had lately attended on the instructions of Jesus, though their hearts had not become attached to Him. *A hard saying*—an address hard to be understood and believed. This is a strange way of speaking, thought they, that a mere man, whose father and mother we know, should tell us that He has come down from heaven (verses 41, 42), and that He can give us His flesh to eat. *Who can hear it?* Who can stop and listen to this? It seemed to them literally absurd. They conclude Him beside Himself (x. 20). The words of eternal truth are hard sayings, but they are such only to those who have a hard heart. The most saving words are not to all persons words of salvation. The school of Christ is not to all His disciples a school of light and truth. It is to every one of us such as our heart is, because the heart itself is this school.

61. When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

Knew in himself. By giving them this proof that He knew their hearts, Jesus also proved that He was God. *It, i. e.,* what He had declared, that He had come down from heaven, and that in order to have life, they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. *Doth this offend you?*—does it prove a stumbling-block to you?

62. *What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? *iii. 13; Mark xvi. 19; Acts i. 9; Eph. iv. 8.

The first thing that the Jews "murmured" about, was our Lord's saying that He "came down from heaven;" the second thing, that He would "give them His flesh to eat." Instead of humoring them in their objections by lowering His tone, or qualifying His expressions, Jesus dares their further *offense* by adverting to a greater mystery respecting Himself, to a truth still more difficult to their carnal conceptions. He asks them what they would think if they saw His body "ascending up" into heaven. Even then, after His ascension, they would have to "eat his flesh and drink his blood," if they desired

eternal life. What would they think of that? Would they not find it even more difficult to receive and believe?

63. *It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.—*2 Cor. iii. 6.

Our Lord here further reproves them for that carnal interpretation which they put upon His spiritual sayings. Even if it were possible for them to partake of the literal flesh of the Lord, it would profit them nothing, seeing it is the spirit alone that quickeneth, the flesh to that end contributeth nothing. (Comp. Rom. i. 3, 4; 1 Peter iii. 18.) All the quickening power ascribed to our Lord's flesh, or human nature, flows from His Godhead, to which it is united. *The words that I speak, &c.,* that is, the words that I have now spoken, concerning eating of my flesh, are to be understood in a spiritual sense of a spiritual eating and drinking, and by that means, and that only, a true eternal life is to be obtained. "We should," says *Leighton*, "aspire to know the hidden rich things of God, that are wrapped up in His ordinances. We stick in the shell and surface of them, and seek no further; that makes them unbeautiful and unsavory to us; and that use of them turns them into an empty sound." (Verse 39; Jer. xxxi. 33; 1 Peter i. 10-12, iii. 21.)

64. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. *Verse 36. *ii. 24, 25 and xiii. 11. *Verses 44, 45.

There are some of you, &c. "I know that some of you—that many of you—notwithstanding your professions, do not really believe me to be a Divine messenger, for you are not disposed to receive as true whatever I declare to be so; you receive my doctrine only so far as it coincides with your preconceived opinions." *For Jesus knew, &c.* He was never imposed upon. When He called Judas to be an Apostle, He knew that He would be the traitor. *Therefore said I unto you.* For this reason I told you (verse 44) *that no man can come unto me, &c.,* because I know that the prejudices of corrupt nature lie strongly against me and my doctrine, and that nothing but Divine grace will subdue them. The degree of men's depravity—their moral impotency in their fallen state

—is such, that they cannot come to Christ as a Saviour, until the Father has given them grace. It cannot be doubted that the doctrine of this verse has often furnished unbelievers with an *excuse* for not coming to Christ. His reason for declaring it, however, was that He might convince man of his danger and helplessness, and many have been alarmed from hearing it, and have been led to cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?" See verse 40, from which it is plain that it is the revealed will of Christ that every one who hears the Gospel should come to Him for life.

66. ^bFrom that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.—Verse 60.

The word *disciple* means *learner*. It was applicable to the followers of Christ, because they were *taught* by Him. It does not imply of necessity that those to whom it was given were real Christians, but simply that they were under His *teaching*, were professed learners in the school of Jesus. The Son of God, did not escape giving offense to many of His disciples. Even, therefore, though very many shrink back from a pure doctrine, it is not right to suppress it. "None," says *Gurnall*, "will have such a dreadful parting with the Lord at the last day, as will those, who by profession went half way with Him, and then left Him." (1 Peter ii. 20-22.)

67. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68. Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.
^cActs v. 20. ^dMatt. xvi. 16; Mark viii. 29; Luke ix. 20; chap. i. 49.

When the multitude went away, and walked no more with Him, the Good Shepherd was grieved, for He never yet saw a lost sheep running on to destruction but His heart bled for it. But when His own believing disciples were in danger of being led away, He speaks to them, and, as we may well suppose, in a tone of tenderest affection. *Will ye also*, &c. "Will ye whom I have chosen, washed, sanctified and filled with hopes of glory, will ye also go away?" Observe, Christ keeps His disciples from backsliding by putting this question to them. The words went to the heart of the frank and generous Peter, and drew from him (on behalf of the rest as well as himself) this earnest declaration: *Lord, to*

whom shall we go, &c. Three reasons are here given why the believer cleaves to Christ. 1. *To whom go*. None of the founders of religions, or philosophies, or priesthoods, can fill His place. 2. *Thou hast the words*, &c. To unconverted minds the words of Christ are hard sayings (verse 60), to His own, they are tried words—words of eternal life. The very thing that drives the world away from Christ, draws His own disciples closer and closer to Him. 3. *We believe and are sure*, &c. It is this that rivets the believing soul to Christ—the certain conviction He is a Divine Saviour. We believe and are sure that He is the *Son of the living God*, and therefore, we know that He is a sufficient surety for us. To whom else can we go for pardon? To whom else for a new heart? To whom else for a title to, and meetness for, the inheritance of heaven?

70. Jesus answered them. Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71. He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.
^eLuke vi. 13. ^fxiii. 27.

Our Lord intimates to Peter, that his charity was something too large in promising so much for them all, for there was one traitor among them, of whose perfidiousness He now gives them warning. *Chosen*, selected to be my Apostles, and to enjoy a more intimate acquaintance with me. *A devil*. The disposition of Satan, as the adversary of Christ, might well be said to have been possessed by Judas. The best thing corrupted is worst. A bad man is the worst of all creatures, a bad Christian the worst of all men, a bad professor the worst of all Christians, a bad minister the worst of all professors. *Judas Iscariot*. (See on Matt. x. 4; Luke vi. 16.) *Should betray him*, literally, *was about to betray him*, for it was *he* who at that time began to harbor this execrable purpose. *Being one of the twelve*. How much is implied in this short sentence. It is a very solemn irony. One of those who witnessed his Master's miracles, heard His discourses, companied with Him, walked with Him, sat with Him in the fishing-boat on the Galilean Sea, sat at His frequent board—what a fall was here! From that height of favor to this depth of degradation! Numbered with the twelve, by base and heinous transgressions

Judas fell, that he might go to his own place. (Acts i. 17, 21.) As he stood so well in the esteem of his fellow-Apostles, as to be intrusted with the bag containing their little all, we ought not to solace ourselves with the thought that the best of men approve us, if our hearts are conscious that we do not *love* the Saviour.

1. Why did the multitude follow Jesus? 2. Where did He go? 3. State the particulars of the miracle of feeding the multitude. 4. What did Christ do when the people proposed to make Him a king? 5. What did He say to His disciples as He walked on the sea? 6. Explain verse 27. 7. What is said of the "bread from heaven?" 8. Who is the bread of life? 9. Will Christ in any wise cast out those who come to Him? 10. How are we to understand verse 41? 11. How verses 43-55? 12. What did Jesus say to the twelve? 13. What did Peter reply? 14. What is said about Judas?

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Jesus reproveth the ambition and boldness of his kinsmen, 10 goeth up from Galilee to the feast of tabernacles: 14 teacheth in the temple. 40 Divers opinions of him among the people. 45 The Pharisees are angry that their officers took him not, and chide with Nicodemus for taking his part.*

AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.—*v.* 16, 18.

The Saviour went about from place to place in Galilee, preaching and working miracles, as was His custom. (Acts x. 38.) Although ministers and private Christians may be secluded from many places and parts of their calling, yet they have no warrant to be idle, but ought still to be doing good. *Jewry*. This term is retained in this place alone from the oldest English translation. It signifies a place or quarter where Jews reside. *Because the Jews, &c.*—meaning principally their rulers. (See verse 13.) Though Jesus might otherwise, by supernatural means, have secured Himself from the effects of malice, He was pleased to choose this ordinary method. For there is a manifest economy in the Divine dispensations, which teaches us that where ordinary means suffice, we are not to look for extraordinary supplies. Faithful ministers may for a time withdraw themselves from personal danger, yet they should not do this out of a slavish fear, but should use this means of self-preservation as a duty warranted by Christ's example.

2. ^vNow the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. ¹Lev. xxiii. 34.

The *feast of tabernacles* was one of the

three great annual feasts which every Jew was required to attend at Jerusalem. It is here noticed by the Evangelist as the *Jews' feast*, for the sake of His Gentile readers. It was celebrated in Autumn, from the 15th to the 23d of Tisri (October), the 23d being the chief day of the feast (Lev. xxiii. 34-42; John vii. 37.) It commemorated the sojourning of the Israelites in the wilderness, and is a lively emblem of the sweet issue of the wandering of the godly, when they shall enter out of the wilderness of this world into their heavenly Canaan. It was intended also as the feast of the ingathering of all the fruits of Autumn, by which it was testified that present mercies had not produced forgetfulness of former trials.

3. ^cHis brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. 4. For *there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly.* ^dIf thou do these things, show thyself to the world.

^eMatt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 31; Acts i. 14. ^fxviii. 20.

His brethren, i. e., His natural brethren. (See on Matt. xii. 47, xiii. 55.) Among the Jews kinsmen in various degrees were called brethren. *Depart hence, &c.* The worldly spirit which this address reveals, is much to be noticed. They were far from entertaining just views of the nature of Christ's mission, and were too much actuated by low and unworthy motives in urging Christ to make a public avowal of His claims to the Messiahship, as here related. They manifested too little of that goodness which seeks "the honor that

cometh from God only." (v. 44.) As little did they know of that heavenly method which our Saviour was at this very time pursuing—in gathering together the outcasts, and bringing home the wanderers from the fold, extending His kingdom upon earth by methods which seemed to men foolishness, building up His Church out of the "base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not." (1 Cor. i. 28.) They were ambitious of human honor, and thought all lost which was done in secret. (See on verse 5.) *Show thyself to the world.* "The world," observes an ancient writer, "is the great theater on which men act a part; but behind the scenes they may be seen in their proper persons, without any studied appearances. Our domestic behavior is therefore the main test of our virtue and good nature." (1 Sam. xv. 30, xix. 9, 10.)

5. For neither did his brethren believe in him.
cMark iii. 21.

(See on verse 4.) This cannot be taken universally of our Lord's kindred, for three of His kinsmen, at least, were found in the number of His Apostles—Simon, and Jude, and James the Less, who is expressly called the Lord's brother. This is a very surprising announcement, but it is very instructive. 1. It favors the truth of Christianity. Had all our Lord's relations recommended and followed Him, His case might have looked human and suspicious. 2. It shows us what evidence may be resisted, and what means may be rendered ineffectual, by the depravity of human nature. 3. It proves that none will be saved by mere relationship. It is a mercy to have pious connections: but religion is a personal thing, and if we refuse to tread in their steps the blessing will be turned into a curse—whilst they are admitted into the kingdom of God, we ourselves shall be shut out. *Believe in him.* "Observe," says Wordsworth, "the imperfect: they were not believing in Him; they were not steadfast in faith. They had made, as it were, 'an act of faith' at Cana, there they (ii. 11) 'believed' when they saw His miracles, but it had not ripened into a *habit*."

6. Then Jesus said unto them, *My time is not yet come:* but your time is always ready.
fil. 4 and viii. 20; verse 8, 30.

Great as is the want of respect shown in

the words of His brethren, the reply of Christ displays the wonted character of elevation. *My time*, &c., a suitable, proper time for me to be going up to the festival. His time for going was not while the roads were thronged, and there was a concourse of the people, but privately, when the way was comparatively clear, lest the hostility of His enemies should break forth prematurely. (See on verses 7, 8.) We must be extremely careful not to anticipate God's appointed time, especially in undertaking the more eminent and remarkable actions. The Christian, who is desirous to perform the will of God, waits till He is pleased to make it known to him, and then makes it the spring of all his activities. *But your time*, &c., any time was suitable for them. There were no special reasons in respect to them for preferring one time to another. The world could not hate *them*, or show any hostility to them, for they had given it no cause. What absurdity and madness mark those, who because they imagine that, in regard to securing salvation, their "time is always ready," waste the passing and precious days, and months, and years.

7. *The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth,* ^bbecause I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.
exv. 19. fil. 19.

The world—to which (verse 4) ye so ambitiously bid me show myself. *Cannot hate you.* The immediate relatives of Jesus were not so different from other men in religious respects, as to be exposed to their ill will. *But me it hateth*, &c. The true reason of the enmity of many of the Jews against Christ is here distinctly indicated. That adultery, covetousness and hypocrisy were rife and common among the leading Pharisees, is evident from many expressions in the Gospels. It was our Lord's witness against these darling sins that enraged His enemies. (See iii. 19–21.) Whatever be the hazard, Christ's servants are bound, in their stations, to bear testimony against the evil practices of the world. Whatever pretenses of zeal persecutors of Jesus and His followers may have, yet the true cause of their hostility is the opposition that is made to their wickedness and hypocrisy.

8. *Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast,* ^bfor my time is not yet full come. 9. When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.—lviii. 20; verse 6.

Christ bade them, for the reason stated in the preceding verse, go up at once, if they would, with all the bustle and excitement of the public journey. As for Himself, He said, *for my time is not yet full come, i. e.*, was not fully completed. *Tholuck* says on these verses: "At other times Jesus invariably appeared at the beginning of the feast; here He declares that he will not yet go to *this* feast, because the proper time had not yet come; if He came unexpectedly, and did not appear until in the midst of the feast, the disturbance would be less. That the fear of disturbance was not groundless, is seen in the picture given us of the state of feeling at Jerusalem."

10. ¶ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

When his brethren, &c. (See on verses 6-9.) Then went he, &c. Jesus attended the Jewish feast, according to the command of God. (Ex. xxiii.) Being made under the law, He showed a punctual obedience to the law, and fulfilled it in His own person. *Not openly*. Not with the ordinary pilgrim caravans by the ordinary route on the east side of Jordan. *As it were in secret*—not by any actual concealment, but informing no one except His Apostles, and taking the cross route through Samaria. This private method of going was adopted rather for fear of giving offense, than of receiving injury. If the work of God be done effectually, it is best done when done with *least noise*. The kingdom of God need not come *with observation*. (Luke xvii. 20.) We may do the work of God *privately*, and yet not do it *deceitfully*.

11. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? 12. And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people. 13. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

Jxi. 56. Kx. 16 and x. 19. 1Matt. xxi. 46; Luke vii. 16; chap. vi. 14; verse 40. 1ix. 22, xii. 42 and xix. 38.

Where is he? The Jews, perhaps from hatred, forbore to name Him. There was much *murmuring*, or private discussion among the multitude, on the point whether He were even a good man, or deceiver of the people. "Censure no man," says one, "detract from no man, praise no man before his face, traduce no man behind his back. Observe thyself as thy greatest

enemy, so shalt thou become thy greatest friend." (viii. 4; Rom. i. 30.) The record here made of the various impressions of the people in reference to our Lord, shows the impartial fidelity of the sacred historian, and affords a fair presumption of his veracity. *For fear of the Jews*—of the Jewish rulers, whose policy at this time was to slight Jesus, to treat Him with contempt, in the vain hope that the popular excitement regarding Him would die out. Fear is the main rock upon which most men split their faith, their honor, and their integrity. Concession of principle has been in every age the bane of good men, and the policy of bad.

14. ¶ Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. 15. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

1Matt. xiii. 54; Mark vi. 2; Luke iv. 22; Acts ii. 7.

About the midst of the feast. (See on verses 8, 9.) Went up into the temple, &c. Henceforward in Judea and Galilee, Jesus could only show Himself in safety by suddenly stepping into a great assemblage of the people, and exercising His ministry there. In such situations, the spirit of reverence which animated many of the people toward Him, still for a while sheltered Him against His enemies. *Letters*, learning. (Acts xxvi. 24.) *Having never learned*—at any rabbinical school; as Paul under Gamaliel. These rulers knew well enough that He had not *studied* under any human teacher—an important admission against ancient and modern attempts to trace our Lord's wisdom to human sources. Probably His teaching on this occasion was *expository*, manifesting that unrivaled faculty and depth which in the Sermon on the Mount had excited the astonishment of all.

16. Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

1viii. 11, viii. 28, xii. 49 and xiv. 10, 24. 1viii. 43.

My doctrine—my teaching. *Is not mine*—is not mine alone. *His that sent me*. As much as to say, "I do not proceed upon any authority or power distinct from that of my Father: my plans and actions are inseparable from His, my doctrine, works and glory are His, and His are mine." The great truth of Christ's own inseparable and mysterious union with God the Father is here once more pointed at. *If any man*

will, &c. If any man *sincerely* wish to perform the will of God, he shall discover the Divine original and descent of the doctrine the Saviour taught. The knowledge in question is not in the first instance suspended upon the cordial voluntary performance of God's will, but purely upon the purpose to perform it when once discovered, a qualifying condition for this great gift of knowledge, much more merciful, because much more limited. "As the expansion of air, that is about us, doth not preserve life, but that part which we breathe in, so 'tis not the compass of our knowledge and belief (though it were equal to the whole revealed will of God) that is vital to the soul, but that which is practiced by us."—*Bates*. "The way to judge of religion is by doing of our duty: and theology is rather a divine life than a divine knowledge. . . . No man understands the Word of God, as it ought to be understood, unless he lays aside all affections to sin."—*Jeremy Taylor*. "If it be certain that the unfeigned desire to serve God is necessarily attended by a knowledge of His truth in Christ, it must be equally certain, by strict and inevitable consequence, that a *rejection* of the faith, or, by similar reasoning, a disparagement of the faith, or a neglect of the faith, or a carelessness about its influences, its advancement, its perpetuation—must arise from an absence of solicitude to please God in His chosen form, or any God in any form—that is, from a radical atheism of the heart."—*William Archer Butler*.

18. *He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him, 19. *Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? *Why go ye about to kill me? 20. The people answered and said, *Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? sv. 41 and viii. 50. *Ex. xxiv. 3; Deut. xxxiii. 4; chap. i. 17; Acts vii. 38. *Matt. xii. 14; Mark iii. 6; chap. v. 16, 18, x. 31, 39 and xi. 53. *viii. 48, 52 and x. 20.

He that speaketh, &c. If I speak so as to procure my own glory—to gratify vanity, or secure and promote any worldly interest, then reject me as a false prophet. But if I act only to promote the glory of God, to induce all men to love and obey *Him*, you cannot help acknowledging me at least for a *true* prophet, and if you add to this the proofs which I have given you of my mission and power, you must acknowledge me as the mighty power of God, and

the promised Messiah. *But he that seeketh*, &c. Consider this in connection with v. 44. *The same is true*. Here our Lord attributes to a character thus free from self-seeking, the predicates of truthfulness and of moral purity. *Did not Moses*, &c. The hearers are designated as those who do not make even the doing of the will of God their law, entirely in accordance with v. 45, also viii. 37. As a proof of this, the extremest transgression of the law is adduced, the murderous designs of the officials, but the multitude of those who are at the feast, regard this suspicion as so extravagant, that they attribute it to the inspiration of the spirit of lies. In viii. 48, there probably lies a retrospective reference to this reproach.

21. Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel, 22. *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers, and ye on the sabbath day circumsise a man. 23. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? 24. *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. *Lev. xii. 8. *Gen. xviii. 10, xv. 8, 9, 16. *Deut. i. 16, 17; Prov. xxiv. 23; chap. viii. 15; James i. 1.

Our Lord proceeds further to show the unreasonableness of the opposition of His enemies. "Work" is a term by which our Evangelist very frequently names the miracles, and it is eminently significant. (See x. 25, 32, 38, xiv. 11, 12, xv. 24, also Matt. xi. 2.) "The *wonderful* is, in His eyes, only the natural form of working for Him, who is dwelt in by all the fullness of God: He must, out of the necessity of His higher being, bring forth these works, greater than man's. They are the periphery of that circle whereof He is the center. The great miracle is the Incarnation; all else, so to speak, follows naturally and of course. It is no wonder that He whose name is *wonderful*, does works of wonder, the only wonder would be, if He did them not. . . . These miracles are the fruits after its kind which the Divine tree brings forth, and may, with a deep truth, be styled *works* of Christ, with no further addition or explanation." (Ps. lxxii. 18, civ. 24.) *One work*. The reference is to the healing of the impotent man on the Sabbath. (v. 8, 9.) *Moses therefore*, &c. The word "therefore" should stand in the preceding verse, as having reference to the work there alluded to, so that the last clause of

that verse would be as follows: "And ye all therefore (on account of it) marvel." The argument of the Saviour is: "If, or, inasmuch as, a man may be circumcised on the Sabbath day, without the Sabbath being thereby broken, it is unreasonable in you to be angry with me, if, in place of wounding by circumcision, I have made a man perfectly well, and thus the more capable of enjoying the promised rest. Are ye angry at me because I have done upon a man a work, not of the ceremonial law, but of mercy, by making him altogether sound on the Sabbath day?"

"Judge not, &c. Judge not the deed I did according to the appearance. It was done on the Sabbath, but it was an act of necessity and mercy, and therefore an act as lawful to be done as circumcision, which you yourselves perform on the Sabbath day. Judge fair, and just, and righteous judgment. Man, who sees not the heart, ought to be very cautious in judging his brother. It is unjust to form our judgments upon the outward appearance of any action, or by the love or hatred we bear toward the person who has done it. To judge uprightly and justly we must love justice: and since our love for it is but small, let us never judge but when it is absolutely necessary, and let us then do it with fear and caution.

25. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? 26. But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. 27. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? 28. Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

^aVerse 48. ^bMatt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3; Luke iv. 22.

Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? Why do they not do it? Who hinders them? They say they are determined to get Him out of the way, and yet, *lo, he speaketh boldly*, &c. Here two things are slyly insinuated, to exasperate the rulers against Christ. 1. That by conniving at His preaching, they brought their authority into contempt. Must a man that is condemned by the Sanhedrim be permitted to speak boldly, without a check? 2. That by the course they were pursuing they were bringing their judgment into suspicion. *Do they know indeed that this is the very Christ?* If so, if, as would seem from their utter remissness, they have undergone some change of purpose or opinion,

and are coming round to acknowledge and adopt Him, how came they to change their minds? What new discovery have they made? *Howbeit we know, &c.* (See on next verse.) There was a notion prevalent that the Messiah's origin would be veiled in obscurity, and that He would burst suddenly upon an astonished world. Observe the unreasonableness, inconsistency, self-contradictions of these men who were not willing to believe in Jesus, though they say here, "We know this man whence He is," they say elsewhere, "As for this fellow we know not from whence he is." (ix. 29.)

28. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself; but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. 29. But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me. ^{eviii. 14.} ^{dv. 43 and viii. 42.} ^{ev. 32 and viii. 26;} Rom. iii. 4. ^{vi. 18 and viii. 55.} ^{fMatt. xi. 27; chap. x. 15.}

Cried Jesus, with a loud voice, consequently with special emphasis. (vii. 37, xii. 44.) In His words, as in viii. 14, 23, the majesty and the indignation of a king whom his subjects refuse to recognize, find utterance. Christ raises His voice, to teach His ministers that it is a dishonor to Divine truth to preach it in a timorous manner. *Ye both know me, &c.* These words may be taken as declaring them to know Christ, and yet to be ignorant of Him, in different respects. They knew Him and whence He was, as man (though even in that they erred if they supposed Him to be the carpenter's son), yet they knew not the Father nor Him, as God, proceeding from the Father, and sent by Him. *He that sent me is true.* I am no unauthorized person, but I have a commission. The matter here impressed on them is the *genuineness*, the *reality* of the fact, that Jesus was sent, and there was *One who sent Him*. *True—objectively*, not *subjectively*, "really existent," not "truthful," which the word here rendered *true* will not bear. *But I know him, &c.* Jesus adds, that He was comforted in this, that whatever they thought of Him, yet He knew that He was sent from the Father, and however they knew not the Father, yet He knew Him, as being from Him, and sent by Him into the world.

30. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. 31. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?

^aMark xi. 18; Luke xix. 47 and xx. 19; verse 19; chap. viii. 37. ¹Verse 41; chap. viii. 20. ^bMatt. xii. 23; chap. iii. 2 and viii. 30.

The enemies of Jesus seem to have been greatly exasperated by what had been said (verses 25-27, on which see notes), probably also by the emphatic declaration which He had made of His having come from God as His accredited messenger. *But no man laid hands, &c.* He laid invisible hands on their power, for it is He who hath said to the sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther." The *hour* here, means the grand point of time in the life of our Lord, the time of His passion and death. (xvii. 1.) Learn, 1. That Christ's sufferings were undergone voluntarily. He did not go to the cross because He could not help it. 2. That nothing can hurt God's people except and until He permits. Then let them work on confidently. They are immortal till their work is done. (Ps. xxxi. 15.) *Believed on him*, expressed a conviction that He was the Messiah. *When Christ cometh, &c.* The word "more" probably means not only more in number, but "greater" in character. The question raised by these people was a fair and reasonable one, "What greater evidence could any one give that He is the Christ, than this man has given? He could not work greater miracles, even if He worked more numerous ones. What are we waiting for? Why should we not acknowledge this man as the Christ?"

32. † The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. 33. Then said Jesus unto them, ¹Yet a little while am I with you, and ²then I go unto him that sent me. 34. Ye ³shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ⁴thither ye cannot come.

¹xiii. 33 and xvi. 16. ²Hos. v. 6; chap. viii. 21 and xiii. 33.

Heard. Though these bystanders had not the nerve to apprehend Jesus, they had the spirit to carry the news of His preaching, and its effects to these Pharisees. *Officers*—the beadles or attendants of the Sanhedrim. Jesus had no enemies so watchful for evil against Him as the most outwardly religious people among the Jews. *To take him.* Bloody and violent persecution is the last refuge of hypocrites. When Satan and his instruments come to this, it is an evidence that they are vexed and at their last gasp. *Yet a little while.* Scarcely half a year elapsed before the Passion. *I go unto him that sent me.*

The idea of His Divine mission is ever prominent with the Saviour. His followers are here taught that they should be so familiar with thoughts of mortality, that they may willingly obey the summons to depart whenever it may come. *Ye shall seek me, &c.* In the days of their distress they would in vain seek the Messiah, who had been among them and been rejected by them. The expression seems to designate a seeking of aid when the right time has passed away. (Comp. Amos v. 11, 12, viii. 12; Prov. i. 28; Hos. ii. 7; Isa. lxxv. 1. *Where I am*—that is, in God's presence. "The present tense," says *Alford*, "is used in the solemn sense of chap. iii. 13 and chap. i. 18, to signify *essential truth*." *Thither ye cannot come*—that is, so long as they continued in their present temper, and refused to believe in Him, they could not come. (See viii. 21, 22, 24.)

35. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and ¹teach the Gentiles? 36. What ²manner of saying is this that he said, ³Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ⁴thither ye cannot come?

¹Isa. xi. 12, James i. 1; 1 Peter i. 1.

Whither will he go, &c. Instead of making use of Christ's admonition, these wicked men carped at His expressions, wondering what He meant by them, or if His intention was to leave them and go where those Jews abode who were scattered among the Gentiles, and living in Gentile countries. *What manner, &c.* The Jews were not able to get over the enigmatical saying of Jesus in verse 34. It was as if they dimly felt that the words implied some grave mystery in reference to themselves. Men betray their corrupt dispositions, when they cavil at doctrine as obscure, and yet never come to Christ or the means He has appointed for its elucidation.

37. ¹In the last day, that great ²day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

¹Lev. xxiii. 36. ²Isa. lv. 1; chap. vi. 35; Rev. xxii. 17.

Christ returns no answer to their malicious carping, but makes this large offer to them all. This *feast* was the feast of tabernacles. (See on verse 2.) On the *last*, or eighth day of this feast, the ceremonies performed were characterized by more than ordinary impressiveness and solemnity. Opportunities should be the more carefully improved, because they are so

soon likely to pass away. Every day with us is as our last day. (xii. 35, 36; 1 Cor. xv. 31.) *Jesus stood*, perhaps elevated above the dense multitude around Him, most of whom had refused to hear Him during the days that had gone. *Cried*, said with much emphasis and earnestness. There must have been something exceedingly solemn in that attitude, and that voice. He "stood," where all might see: He "cried," that all might hear. The truth of God ought to be proclaimed with courage, fervency, and zeal. *If any man thirst*, &c. It was doubtless in allusion to the pious ceremony they had witnessed day by day for the last seven days, that our blessed Lord now calls and invites almost in the words of their prophet. (See Isa. lv. 1, 2.) The invitation is universal—"any man,"—it extends to all persons without distinction of nation or of privilege, without respect to previous character, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, high and low, rich and poor, the morally correct, and the vicious and abandoned, all who desire the salvation of the gospel. To "thirst," is to supremely and sincerely desire the blessings which are proposed—under dissatisfaction with the world and its enjoyments, to long for happiness in the favor of God. *Let him come unto me*, &c. To "come" to Christ is to believe in Him. The faith required is that act of the heart and mind which corresponds with the act of drinking. Just as the weary traveler assuages his thirst from the cool stream, feeling that he must do this or perish, so the sinner must look to Christ, and receive Him, and rest upon Him alone for the salvation which He needs. The exceeding appropriateness of the representation here made of the blessings of the gospel-covenant under the emblem of water, will be more clearly perceived, by the transfer of ourselves in imagination to the regions of the East, in which the nature of the climate, and the general aspect of the country, require numerous fountains, not only to assuage the thirst of the inhabitants under the intense heat of the sun, in a cloudless sky, but to refresh them by the verdure, shade and coolness which they produce.

38. ¶He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39. (¶But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)
 ¶Deut. xviii. 15. ¶Prov. xviii. 4; Isa. xli. 3 and xlvii. 3; chap. iv. 14. ¶Isa. xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28; chap. xvi. 7; Acts ii. 17, 33, 38. ¶xii. 16 and xvi. 7.

Believeth on me. (See on verse 37.) *As the Scripture hath said.* Who does not recur at once to such passages as Isa. xli. 18, xlv. 3, lviii. 11; Joel iii. 18; Ezek. xlvii. 1-12? *Shall flow.* "To this day," says a modern traveler, "there exists a spring in the heart of the Temple rock, from which flows the living water into the two pools of Siloam, whence (as at this time) the water was brought to the temple service." So from out the hearts of the believers in Christ should issue those fruits of the Spirit, which in their nature, influences and effects, whether as regards themselves, or those around, or the world at large, may well be likened to "living water." Genuine religion is something more than a notion; it does not consist in a dormant creed, or a dead confidence, but it is active, it is a principle, full of life, energy and influence. *They that believe.* By faith we lay hold of Christ in the Word, and, through our union with Christ, we obtain the Spirit. Always according to the measure of the Spirit, and according to the measure of faith, is the measure of Christ in us. (vi. 35, 36; Gal. iii. 14.) *Holy Ghost was not yet given.* All the good ever before this was owing to His influences, but He had not been shed forth in that plentiful measure, in those copious streams, as inaugurating a new era, as fulfilling the prophecies referred to. (See on verse 38; see also xiv. 26, xii. 16, xvii. 5; Luke xxiv. 26; 1 Peter i. 11; Phil. ii. 6-11.) *Jesus was not yet glorified.* The word "glorified" is here used advisedly, to teach the reader not only that the departure of Christ to the Father was *indispensable* to the giving of the Spirit, but that this illustrious Gift, direct from the hands of the ascended Saviour, was God's intimation to the world that He whom it had cast out, crucified and slain, was "His elect, in whom His soul delighted," and that it was through the smiting of that Rock that the waters of the Spirit—for which the Church was waiting, and with pomp at the Feast of Tabernacles proclaiming its expectation—had gushed forth upon a thirsty world.

40. ¶ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is *the Prophet*. 41. Others said, *This is the Christ*. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42. ¶ *Had not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?* 43. So there was a division among the people because of him. 44. And some of them would have taken him, but no man laid hands on him.

⁴⁰Deut. xviii. 15, 18; chap. i. 21 and vi. 14. ⁴¹lv. 42 and vi. 69. ⁴²Verse 52; i. 46. ⁴³Ps. cxxxiii. 11; Jer. xxxiii. 5; Mi. v. 2; Matt. ii. 5; Luke ii. 4. ⁴⁴1 Sam. xvi. 1. 4. ⁴⁵Verse 12; xix. 6 and x. 19. ⁴⁶Verse 30.

Many people were there, and they expressed different opinions concerning Jesus. *The Prophet*, or the messenger that was to be sent before Christ, to prepare His way. (Mal. iii. 1.) *The Christ*, or the Messiah. Another party objected to this belief. They imagined that Jesus had been *born* in Galilee, though He had only been *brought up* there, and they did not know that He was of the family of David. *So there was a division, &c.* Christ's own prophecy began already to be fulfilled, that He came to send division upon earth. (See Luke xii. 51; 1 Cor. xiv. 33; also chap. ix. 16, x. 19 and xii. 42.) An ancient writer says: "In all quarrels and contentions about truth, the Church is the gainer; they stir up more diligent inquiries, bring forth more judicious resolutions; heresies are but the file and furnace of truth, making it shine more clearly. Vehement shakings make the deeper rootings. We have no truths so settled as those that have been most violently opposed." (See 1 Cor. xi. 19, xv. 12.) And yet it is said there should be division of opinion concerning Christ, and that the seamless robe of His doctrine should be rent into so many different pieces, and that endless sects and schisms should mar and mutilate the faith once delivered to the saints. As there is but "one body, and one spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, we should ever pray and labor, and labor and pray, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. *And some of them would, &c.* (See on verse 30.)

45. ¶ Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46. The officers answered, *Never man spake like this man.* 47. Then answered them the Pharisees, *Are ye also deceived?* 48. *Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?* 49. But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. ⁴⁵Matt. vii. 29. ⁴⁶xii. 42; Acts vi. 7; 1 Cor. i. 20, 26 and ii. 8.

Then came the officers, who were dispatched, as narrated in verse 32, and who were obliged to make their official return to the rulers, the Sanhedrim, under whose orders they were acting. *Brought him.* He was clearly to be arraigned for trial. These men would, if possible, have anticipated the "hour" of His death. *Never man spake, &c.* The officers confess that they have been held back from any act of force by the transcendent power of Christ's words. The conviction forced itself upon them, in spite of their readiness to believe to the contrary, that He was something more than man, that there was something superhuman about Him. Jesus, in the communication of truth, showed that there was One in the tabernacle, greater than the tabernacle. He gave demonstration that a more than human voice spake, and a more than human mind poured forth its wisdom. No human orator can be named, whose eloquence has produced effects which equal those that followed His, either in persuading, or in confounding, in comforting, confirming or conciliating the hearts of mankind, and in subduing them by its astonishing exhibitions and irresistible charms. What He said attested that in Him were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Are ye also (as well as the multitude) *deceived?* *Have any of the rulers, &c.* "Rulers" was the general name for the members of the Sanhedrim. This question was asked, not to procure information, whether any of the principal men had acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, but, as containing a satisfactory reason why those officers should not allow themselves to be influenced in His favor? *Are you wiser than they?* They thought to carry the matter by the weight of authority. Great men are not *always* wise. (1 Cor. i. 27; see chap. xii. 42. Yet even in this council there was a Nicodemus (verse 50). *But this people*, literally, "multitude," meaning the ignorant rabble, who knoweth not the law, i. e., by school learning, which only subverted it by human traditions, *are cursed*—a cursed set (a kind of swearing at them, out of mingled rage and scorn.) "What availeth knowledge without the fear of

God? An humble ignorant man is better than a proud scholar who studies natural things, and knows not himself. The more thou knowest, the more grievously thou shalt be judged. Many get no profit by their labor, because they contend for knowledge rather than for holy life; and the time shall come, when it shall more avail thee to have subdued one lust, than to have known all mysteries." (Ps. cxix. 97-104.

50. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them.) 51. *Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*—iii. 2. *Deut. i. 17, xvii. 8, &c., and xix. 13.*

When Nicodemus had but little faith, he "came to Jesus *by night*"—he durst not openly appear for Christ, but afterward, as he grew in grace and knowledge of Christ, so he grew in courage for Him. At this time, though alone and altogether unsupported in that formidable assembly, he is not deterred from doing his duty. *Doth our law, &c.* Soft as these words are, there is a severe sting in them. This question confounded these unjust judges, and for the present prevented the accomplishment of their design. *Judge, condemn.* The chief men had, by their manner of speaking, denounced Jesus as a deceiver. *Before it hear him, &c.* (See Deut. xix. 15-18; Lev. xix. 15, 16.) "Men's moral probation," says *Bishop Butler*, "may be, whether they will take due care to inform themselves by partial consideration; and, afterward, whether they will act, as the case requires, upon the evidence which they have. And this, we find by experience, is often our probation in our temporal capacity." (Num. xxii. 20, 21.

52. They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth

no prophet. 53. And every man went unto his own house.

Isa. ix. i. 2; Matt. iv. 15; chap. i. 46; verse 41.

They knew that Nicodemus was not of Galilee, but they meant to ask whether *he* also had become a follower of the despised Galilean. *Out of Galilee, &c.* Now Galilee had produced four, or, perhaps, five great prophets, as Jonas (2 Kings xiv. 25), Nahum, Habakkuk, Amos, and, as some indeed maintain, Elisha. Hence several commentators attribute this false assertion to the ignorance or forgetfulness of the priests, or the hurry of anger. Their falsification of historic facts is what might be expected from men who did not hesitate to employ false witnesses (Matt. xxvi. 59, 60; Mark xiv. 55-57) in order to compass the death of Jesus.

And every man went unto his own house, some, perhaps, like Ahab, to eat and to drink, some to suffer the condemnation of a guilty conscience, and some, it is to be hoped, like Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 41, 42), to cast themselves down before the Lord, and wisely consider of His doing. Quietness under one's own roof, and quietness in our own conscience (viii. 9) are two substantial blessings, which whoever barters for show and pomp will find himself a loser by the exchange. Abroad we must more or less find tribulation, yet, as long as our home is a secure and peaceful retreat from all the disappointments and cares, which we meet with within that great scene of vexation, the world, we may still be tolerably happy; but, if that which should be our main sanctuary from uneasiness becomes our principal disquietude, how great must our uneasiness be! (2 Sam. vi. 20; Prov. iii. 33; Luke ix. 58.)

1. Why would not Jesus walk in Jewry? 2. What feast was at hand? 3. Describe it. 4. What did our Lord's brethren say to Him? 5. What was His reply? 6. Where did Jesus teach? 7. What was the effect of His teaching? 8. How may we know of the doctrine, whether it be of God? 9. How did Jesus answer the accusation that He had a devil? 10. Why did not His enemies lay hands on Him? 11. What did Jesus cry on the last day of the feast? 12. What did He mean by "living water"? 13. What report of Christ did the officers make to the chief priests and Pharisees?

CHAPTER VIII.

1 Christ delivereth the woman taken in adultery. 12 He preacheth himself the light of the world, and justifieth his doctrine: 33 answereth the Jews that boasted of Abraham, 39 and conveyeth himself from their cruelty.

JESUS went unto the Mount of Olives. 2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him, and he sat down, and taught them.

The first verse should have closed chapter viii. On the evening of the last day of the feast of tabernacles, while all the people "went unto their own houses," Jesus, who had no home to go to, went to the Mount of Olives, where it is not unlikely he spent the night in solitary devotion. *Early in the morning*, &c. This was redeeming the time—this was diligence in His business, this was doing good to all, as He had opportunity. It is a certain sign that our hearts are set upon a work, when the thoughts of it cause sleep to depart from us, and we awake readily, constantly, and *early*, to the performance of it. What is a slothful sinner to think of himself when he reads concerning the Holy Jesus, that "*in the morning*," &c. (Mark i. 35.) Jesus chose so early an hour that He might have an opportunity of once more addressing His countrymen, before they left Jerusalem to retire to their respective homes. *All the people*—a great crowd. *Sat down*—the ordinary attitude of teaching among the Jews.

3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5. *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?—Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22.

Brought unto him a woman, &c. The object in bringing her was insidious, and might be two-fold, according to the event. If our Saviour had condemned her, He might be said both to have usurped a civil jurisdiction, and to have sanctioned a breach of the Sabbath, and if He had refused to condemn her, He might be said to have countenanced the crime. *Adultery*—a work of darkness (Job xxiv. 15; Prov. vii. 7. See also Matt. v. 27, 28 and xix. 18; Mark x. 19; Luke xvi. 18, xviii. 20; Rom. ii. 22; James ii. 11; Rev. ii. 22.) "Where the law of Moses is referred to," says *Scott*, "the word 'adultery' always supposes the woman to be the wife of another man, and never denotes the case

of a married man lying with a woman, neither married nor betrothed to another. But the New Testament rule considers this also as adultery." *In the midst* of the people who were then in attendance upon His teaching. *They say unto him, Master*, &c. Observe how the hypocrisy of these Pharisees was gilded over with an appearance of sanctity: they pretended to be great lovers of chastity, and haters of uncleanness, but all this was done only to tempt Christ. (verse 6.) Thus a smooth tongue and a false heart often accompany one another. *Now Moses in the law commanded us*, &c. *but what sayest thou?* "Thou who pretendest to have an authority greater than that of Moses"—referring probably to Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32, xii. 8, xix. 9. *Should be stoned*. (See Deut. xxii. 24.) Or, the "command" referred to, may have been the ancient gloss of the scribes on Lev. xx. 10, which only declares that the guilty parties shall "be put to death," without specifying how. This mode of punishing adultery appears, however, to be alluded to in Ezek. xvi. 38, 40.

6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground *as though he heard them not*. 7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

*Deut. xvii. 7; Rom. ii. 1. *Rom. ii. 22.

Tempting him. (See on verse 4.) *Wrote on the ground*, marked on the ground, perhaps, without writing any words. "Of such power," says one, "was that writing, that each of them knew it to contain his own sins." (iv. 29; Mark xiv. 19.) Jesus wished, by this symbolical action, which was common among the Jews and wise men of old, to show that He would not be drawn into useless disputes. He thus also drew away the attention of the people from the woman to Himself, and prepared them for the very appropriate and solemn remark which, as He sat or stood erect, He was about to make. *He that is without sin*, &c. Our Lord did not mean that no man ought to act as judge or witness in a criminal cause, who is not wholly exempt from sin in his own conduct, because that would

disannul civil government, which is "the ordinance of God." (See on verse 10, 11.) "Before thou reprehendest another," says an ancient writer, "take heed thou art not culpable in what thou goest about to reprehend. He that cleanses a blot with blotted fingers, makes a greater blur." (Ps. l. 16, 17; Rom. ii. 17-22.) "It is the will of God," says another, "that those who punish sin in others should be sensible of their own failings, and that the sense of their own sins make them tender toward others."

And they which heard it, &c. These men seemed righteous, and desired to be so accounted; but our Lord could "a tale unfold," and of this they seemed conscious, and thought it prudent to retire. And so they did, one and all, from the most case-hardened old scribe down to the most forward young Pharisee: while Jesus resumed His former occupation, giving them thus, with generous consideration, an opportunity of retreating with the less confusion. Thus were these ashamed and confounded that sought after His soul to destroy it; thus were they turned backward and put to confusion that wished Him evil. (Ps. xl. 14, lxx. 2.)

Learn, 1. That we are not always obliged to answer those who have a design to ensnare us. We may evade it by some innocent artifice, and such is never wanting when we keep our hearts open to the Spirit of God. 2. That every conviction of conscience is not saving, nor is every one in a state of grace whose conscience finds the edge of the word to make him ashamed of sin. 3. That it is sure evidence of an unsound awakening of conscience when men's convictions make them flee from Christ, and shun either His future convictions or comforts. 4. That we ought not to be ashamed to confess we have been in the wrong. It is but owning what we need not be ashamed of, that we now have more sense than we had before, to see our error, more humility to acknowledge it, and more grace to correct it. 5. That all the plots of wicked men against Christ will at last tend to their own visible and open shame. 6. That it is both prudent and charitable to give persons an opportunity to extricate themselves, without noise and

confusion, out of a business in which they have rashly engaged themselves through passion.

10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

^aLuke ix. 56 and xii. 14; chap. iii. 17. ^cv. 24.

Saw none but the woman. The accusers, conscience-stricken, had departed (Rom. ii. 1, 16-24), and of those concerned in that conference, none remained but He whom the accusers would in mockery have made a judge, and she whom from no hatred to her crime they had accused. These were surrounded by a group, probably, of the disciples and such of the people as might have been listening to His teaching when this unseemly interruption occurred. And in their hearing and in their midst, He says: *Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? &c.*

"It seems to have essentially belonged to our Lord's mission," says one, "not to act judicially in any respect." "I am come," says He, "not to judge the world, but to save the world." His business was exclusively moral, not judicial. Hereafter He was to come as a judge. As incarnate, and a sojourner on earth, He was to perform the office, not of a judge, but of a Saviour. He therefore in the case of the woman confines Himself to the gracious purpose, for which He had become man. But He does this in such a manner, as to put the moral bearing of the case out of all possibility of doubt: for to His words of mercy He adds those of weightiest admonition—*Go, and sin no more.* Here our Lord guards His leniency against the slightest shadow of misconception. He tells her she had sinned; and this was to say everything. David's confession (which afterward expressed itself at large in Ps. li.) was confined in the first instance to these strong words: "I have sinned against the Lord." Full as his heart at the moment was, this simple acknowledgment did justice to his feelings. In truth, the term sin in Holy Scripture is replete with meaning. It is the opposite, the contradictory to God's pure and perfect nature; and therefore, if not subdued and expelled, the pledge of endless misery to its victim. *Sin no more,* was therefore at once the deepest accusa-

tion, and the most awful warning. It was to tell her, that she had done infinitely more than expose herself to the being stoned to death; that she had exposed herself to the infinitely more dreadful judgment of God; but that she had now further time of trial, on her use of which must depend whether her present escape would be a gain, or an aggravation. (v. 14; Luke xii. 14 and xviii. 13.)

12. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, ¶ I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
fi. 4, 5, 9, iii. 19, ix 5 and xii. 35, 36, 46.

As it was early morning when the Lord returned to the temple, it is probable that He borrowed the image of the sun, which, we may well imagine, was coming forth out of his chamber in the east. (See Isa. xlii. 6, xlix. 6.) How fitly does light represent Christ. 1. It is the first object of sight, and Jesus, who is "God over all, blessed forever," is the prime object of the understanding. 2. All things are seen by light, and it by itself. Thus is Christ among spiritual things (Eph. v. 13). 3. As light makes all other things that are in themselves visible to become actually visible, so by the words of this substantial *Word*, Jesus Christ, all things in religion are tried and discovered. (Isa. viii. 20.) 4. Light visits many impure places, and yet remains most pure and undefiled. So Christ sees and takes notice of all the enormities and sinful pollutions in the world, yet He is never stained by them in the least degree. His precious blood is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; sinners are purified by it, and it is not defiled by them. 5. The light of the sun is neither parted nor diminished, by being imparted to many people and nations that behold it at one time, nor is the righteousness of Christ, who is the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. iv. 2), either lessened to Himself, or to individual believers, by many partaking of it at once; it is wholly conferred upon each one of them, and remains whole in Himself. 6. The sun has a vivifying power. So Christ is at once the light and the life of men. (John i. 4.) 7. As darkness disappears before the sun, so it was Christ's arising in the world that made the day break and the shadows fly away. The types and shadows of the law

were then abolished. It was His light that dispelled the mists of ignorance and idolatry, and He also delivers the soul from the night of sin and misery produced by it. *He that followeth me*—believes the truth with regard to Christ as the light of the world—the Saviour of men. *Shall have the light of life*—the knowledge, holiness and happiness which Jesus communicates. Continued faith is the appointed means of the continued enjoyment of the Christian salvation.

13. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, ¶ Thou bearest record of thyself: thy record is not true. 14. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go, but ye cannot tell whence I came, and whither I go. 15. Ye judge after the flesh, I judge no man. 16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17. ¶ It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

ev. 31. bvi. 28 and ix. 29. ivii. 24. Hii. 17. xii. 47 and xviii. 36. iVerse 29. xvi. 32. ¶ Dent. xvii. 6 and xix. 15; Matt. xviii. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 1; Heb. x. 28.

Jesus had shown that, although He dealt in mercy with the sinner (verse 11), He yet did not give His followers encouragement to continue in sin, any more than the light gives encouragement to deeds of darkness (verse 12); this the Pharisees called bearing witness of Himself. *Not true*—or, not valid, alluding to the rule laid down in Deut. xix. 15, also probably to Christ's own words. (v. 31.) *I know whence I came, &c.* I speak from my own certain knowledge, and have already shown that I come with a Divine commission, and therefore you ought to admit my testimony, for the most evident demonstrations of my Divine origin have been given you, both in the nature of my doctrine and in the miracles which I have wrought among you, *but ye* are so perverse, that as often as I have hinted or declared it, ye know not from whence I come, and whither I am going. *After the flesh*, according to the maxims of flesh and sense. *I judge no man, i. e.,* I descend not to the low level of human judgments, of man upon man, or, I judge no man as yet, that function of my Messianic office being reserved for the future. But if I should judge, *my judgment is true and right*, for *I am not alone*, my consciousness is illuminated by the Divine consciousness of the Father. I do not bear witness *alone* of myself in what I say, *but I and the Father*

that sent me, as we are in other respects inseparably united, do evidently concur in the testimony that I give. *Written in your law*, &c. (Deut. xvii. 6 and xix. 15.) *I am one that bear witness of myself*, in a fact, the truth of which I cannot but certainly know, and the *Father that sent me* is another, who also bears His testimony to me, thereby asserting the truth of every doctrine I teach, and the justice of every sentence I might pass.

13. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, *Ye neither know me, nor my Father: for if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.—*Verse 35; xvi. 3. xiv. 7.

The question of the Jews, *Where is thy Father?* was probably asked in a sneering and sarcastic tone. *If ye had known me*, that I was the image of the Father (Heb. i. 3), and sent of Him into the world, *ye should have known my Father also*. It is here taught that ignorance of Christ and ignorance of God are inseparably connected. The man who thinks he knows anything rightly of God while he is ignorant of Christ is completely deceived.

20. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, for this hour was not yet come. 42Mark xii. 41. xvii. 30. xvii. 3.

These words, &c. This sentence seems meant to mark a pause or break in the discourse, and to show also how publicly and openly our Lord proclaimed His Messiahship. *The treasury* was a certain part of the women's court, where the chests were placed for receiving the offerings of those who came to worship, and consequently a place of great concourse. See how exact, how circumstantial is our Evangelist! *No man laid hands*, &c. (See on vii. 30, 8.)

21. Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. 47vii. 34, xliii. 33. *Verse 24.

Under the name of "departing" (or as the word is here rendered, "going His way") our Saviour speaks of His approaching death and resurrection, thus indicating that submission to death was the act of His own free will. *Die in your sins*, repeated in verse 24, and explained by our Lord Himself. *Whither I go*, &c. As if Jesus had said, "I go to my Father, if He were your Father also, then you might follow me: but since you have received the spirit of the world (see verse 23), as long as you are governed by this spirit, ye

cannot come where I go." Let those who above all things love the world, consider this, and tremble.

22. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23. And he said unto them, *Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world. 24. *I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: *for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

*viii. 31. *xv. 19, xvii. 16; 1 John iv. 5. *Verse 21. *Mark xvi. 16.

Will he kill himself? The Jews seem to have regarded this as a not uncommon termination to the career of disappointed adventurers. The case of Ahitophel (2 Sam. xvii. 23) and others will occur to the reader. They did not venture to put this question to the Lord Himself, but consulted with each other on the subject. He knew their thoughts, and by His reply showed that He had alluded to His death. *Ye are from beneath*, earthly, not spiritual in your dispositions and purposes. *I am from above*—from heaven, and my exposition and aims correspond to my origin. (See Col. iii. 2.) Let us not flatter and deceive ourselves with vain appearances of superficial piety, which float upon the surface of our souls, but be assured that if we find them chiefly fixed upon this world, or any creature in it, we may stand "gazing" with "the men of Galilee," we may contemplate and admire the ascension of our Saviour, but all in vain; whither He goes, we cannot follow Him. *I said therefore unto you*. Christ points out the reason and ground of His sad sentence—their corrupt and earthly disposition—and intimates that this is also a cause of their ignorant mistake of their own danger. "*If ye believe not*," &c. There is a merciful "*if*." *Ye shall die in your sins*, that is, unless renewed by the grace of God, ye shall die in the guilt of your sins, under the power, and undergoing the punishment of your sins. Though our Lord is now upon one particular subject, unbelief, He yet uses the plural "*your sins*," as hinting the manifold consequences, the number of sins and sorrows in which unbelief would leave them tied and bound, the brood of errors bound up in that one pregnant mischief unbelief. (See chap. iii. 16-18, v. 24, 25, also xii. 46-48.) *For if ye believe not*, &c. As the moral change which they needed could only result from the belief in Him as the Messiah, their rejection

tion of Him proved the truth of His declaration, that they would die in their sins, and this is here distinctly affirmed. *That I am he*. The italic word *he* is unnecessarily supplied by the translators. The enemies of Christ knew well enough what He meant.

25. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, *Even the same* that I said unto you from the beginning. 26. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but *the* that sent me is true, and *I* speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.—vii. 28. ciii. 32, xv. 15.

Even the same, &c. The words “the same,” are unnecessarily supplied in our common version, and doubtless arose from a wrong translation of the word rendered *from the beginning*, and the verb “said,” which does not refer so much to what is once spoken or said, as to general speech or discourse. In the original, the word rendered *even*, is so collocated as to belong to the verb. The conjunction *that*, in our English translation is in the original a pronoun, and should be rendered *what* or *that which*. The translation should therefore be: *first of all* (i. e., in very truth), *what I am also saying unto you*, i. e., the very person I have ever declared myself to be, or, as *Alford* says, “in very deed the same which I speak unto you.” *I have many things to say*, &c. As if our Lord had said, you require me to speak and to pronounce about *myself*, but I have rather for the present to speak and to pronounce concerning *you*. Again Christ appeals to His Divine mission, showing that He has the highest authority for what He does.

27. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. 28. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. 29. And *he* that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him. d.ii. 14, xii. 32. eRom. i. 4. iv. 19, 30. ciii. 11. xxiv. 10, 11. i verse 16. kiv. 34, v. 30, vi. 33.

They understood not, &c. Some of them, for it is scarcely possible to suppose that they could all be, so stupid, did not understand who it was that our Lord referred to when He spake of Him who sent Him. *When ye have lifted up*, &c.—a reference to our Lord's crucifixion. (xii. 32, 33.) This is a prediction that, after His crucifixion, many of those who had taken an active part in it should come to be persuaded that He was indeed the Messiah. *But as my Father*, &c. “Christ,” as one has re-

marked, “has taught us to say, ‘Our Father,’ a form of speech which He never used Himself. Sometimes He calls Him ‘The Father,’ sometimes ‘My Father,’ sometimes ‘Your,’ but never ‘Our.’ He makes no such conjunction of us to Himself, as to make no distinction between us and Himself; so conjoining us as to distinguish, though so distinguishing as not to separate us.” (See chap. xx. 17.) *The Father hath not left me alone*. See on verse 16.) *For I do always*, &c. “In everything I conform myself to the Father's will.” Whatever opinion men might form of His doctrines or His conduct, He knew that in all He said, and all He did, He was the Father's elect servant, upheld and delighted in by Him—“His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased.”

30. As he spake these words, many believed on him. vii. 31, x. 42, xi. 45.

Many believed Him to be the Messiah. With some, as the following context shows, this was a transient impression, which was soon displaced by unbelief and open opposition. Their hearts were warmed for a little time with the Saviour's discourse, but like the stony-ground hearers (Matt. xiii. 20, 21), they had no root in themselves, and dured only for a while. In the case of others, their faith was but weak, and, therefore, though their hearts had been strongly impressed, yet there was need that such impressions should be strengthened, which the wisdom of Christ effected, by turning His discourse especially to them.

31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; 32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. eRom. vi. 14, 18, 22 and viii. 2; James i. 25 and ii. 12.

Continue in my word, be steadfast in adhering to my doctrine. We must not “despise the day of small things.” (Zech. iv. 10.) But we must not forget that to begin is one thing, and to go on is quite another. Patient continuance in well-doing is the only sure evidence of grace. (See xv. 9; Luke xxii. 28; Col. i. 23.) Disciples indeed, i. e., my true followers. *Ye shall know the truth*, ye shall have a right discernment of what is true, concerning myself, my nature, my mission, and my gospel, and you will inwardly *feel* this truth. (See Ps. cxix. 113, 131, 165; comp. vii. 17.)

And the truth, this truth, shall make you free. "It will give you spiritual liberty—freedom from the fetters of ignorance, error, guilt, and depravity: in plain words, it will make you wise, good, and happy—it will invest you with a freedom incomparably superior to any which man can bestow on man—a freedom which will end in "the glorious liberty of the children of God." To this priceless boon *Couper* thus beautifully refers:

"But there is yet a liberty, unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confederate, take away:
A liberty which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind,
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more,
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from heaven,
Bought with His blood, who gave it to mankind,
And sealed with the same token."

33. They answered him, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?" 34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." 35. And the servant abideth not in the house forever; but the Son abideth ever. 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37. I know that ye are Abraham's seed, but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. 38. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

1 Lev. xxv. 42; Matt. iii. 9, verse 39. 2 Rom. xvi. 16, 20; 2 Peter ii. 19. 3 Gal. iv. 30. 4 Rom. viii. 2; Gal. v. 1. 5 vii. 19, verse 40. 6 iii. 32, v. 19, 30, xiv. 10, 24.

We be Abraham's seed, and therefore not servants, but freemen. Let us beware of trusting in the flesh, and as little let us presume that we are blameless, because sentence against our evil works may not have been executed speedily. Delay, as in the case of the unbelieving Jews, may only result in the more terrible destruction. *Were never in bondage*, &c. The Jews did not take our Lord's words in the sense He meant, but let the sentence be taken in their own sense, and a more absurd re-acton of pride is not easy to be imagined. "Never in bondage to any man!" What! had they not the Roman governor, with a division of the imperial guards, in their metropolis? To the latter part of their boastful question our Lord calmly replies: *Whosoever committeth sin, i. e.*, liveth in the commission of sin. The verb is in the continuous present, expressing what is persistently done. (See 1 John iii. 8; Matt. vii. 23.) *Is the servant of sin, i. e.*, the bond-servant, or *slave* of it, for the question is not about free service, but who are in *bondage*. (See 2 Peter ii. 19; Rom. vi. 16.) The great truth here expressed was not unknown to heathen moralists, but it

was applied only to *vice*, for they were total strangers to what in revealed religion is called *sin*. "Every man in his natural state yields himself unto sin. All his senses, members and faculties, are its handmaids and ministers. The eye watches for it, the ear listens to it, the tongue pleads, and the hands toil for it. Fancy is the painter that draws its picture, memory is the recorder that keeps its secrets, the will is its charioteer that drives furiously through all restraints, the passions and appetites are the providers that hunt for its prey. (Rom. vi. 15-23.)

And the servant abideth not, &c. Whatever a man may boast himself, whatever his parentage, whatever his privileges, the commission of sin undoes him. The son of Abraham becomes the servant of sin. He is thereby degraded from a state of sonship to a state of servitude. He is no longer the heir, but a servant. Not now Isaac who shall inherit, but Ishmael, who is cast out. For the Lord was, beyond all doubt, referring to that allegory, that typical teaching of these Scripture characters, which Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians more largely sets forth. (Gal. iv. 21-31.)

If the Son therefore, &c. "If I, the Son of God, make you free, in the sense of delivering you from the guilt, burden and dominion of sin, then you will be free, indeed!" This was the freedom that He wished them to obtain from Him, whose peculiar office and privilege it is to enfranchise forever all who come to Him. Liberty, like this, is the portion of all true Christians in the day that they flee to Christ by faith, and commit their souls to Him. That day they become free men, in reality, *indeed*. (See Luke i. 12; Rom. viii. 14; Phil. ii. 15.) Liberty, like this, is their portion forevermore. Death cannot stop it. The grave cannot even hold their bodies for more than a little season. Those whom Christ makes free are free to all eternity. Let us never rest until we have some personal experience of this freedom ourselves. Without it all other freedom is a worthless privilege. Free speech, free laws, political freedom, commercial freedom, national freedom—all these cannot smooth down a dying pillow, or disarm death of his sting, or fill our consciences

with peace. Nothing can do that but the freedom which Christ alone bestows. He gives it freely to all who seek it humbly. Then let us never rest until it is our own.

I know that ye are Abraham's seed—literal descendants. Our Lord thus reverts to their boast in verse 33, and He is about to convict them of that sinfulness which He laid to their charge in verse 34. This He does distinctly in verse 40. *Ye seek to kill me, &c.* It is a dismal omen when a person is *regardless* of the truth of God, it is more so to be *provoked* against it, but to persecute and endeavor to destroy those who preach it, is the last degree of perverseness and obstinacy. *With my Father*, that is, God. *With your father*, that is, Satan. (See verse 44.) As if Jesus had said, While the instructions which I communicate are in perfect accordance with the will of my Father, you act in accordance with the will of Satan, in disliking and rejecting my instructions. In respect to character, my Father and your father are entirely opposite, just as I and you are entirely opposite. Jesus was thus gradually bringing them to see that He regarded them as exceedingly sinful, and utterly opposed to God, and resembling the evil one.

39. They answered and said unto him, *Abraham is our father.* Jesus saith unto them, *¶ If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.* 40. *¶ But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.*

¶ Matt. xiii. 9; verse 33. ¶ Rom. ii. 28 and ix. 7; Gal. iii. 7, 29. ¶ Verse 37. ¶ Verse 26.

Abraham's children, in the sense in which Paul subsequently employed this expression (Rom. iv. 11, 12, ix. 7, 8), as denoting Abraham's spiritual seed, or those of like spirit and temper with him. *Ye would do the works of Abraham*, ye would imitate his character and ready obedience to God. Mark how our Lord, who elsewhere bases everything like His Apostle Paul, *upon faith*, here lays also stress, like James, *upon the evidence of works!* *But now ye seek, &c.* "In this passage, as in verse 37," says *Tholuck*, "the lust of murder is characterized further by a reference to its motive; *only through this motive* does it attain to the character of the diabolical."

41. *Ye do the deeds of your father.* Then said they to him, *We be not born of fornication, we have one Father, even God.*

¶ Isa. lxix. 16 and liv. 8; Mal. i. 6.

Ye do the deeds, &c. Ye act as under the influence of the devil as your true father, and in communion and concert with him, a very sure evidence that ye are not the genuine and believing children of Abraham. *Fornication* is most probably not to be taken literally, but as denoting idolatry, which is frequently in the Prophets called fornication or adultery. (See for instance Jer. ii. 1–20 and iii. 1–3.) They labor to prove that they were not born in an idolatrous state, but in the true Church, nor were idolaters themselves, but worshiped God according to His word, and therefore were His children.

42. Jesus said unto them, *¶ If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself, but he sent me.* 43. *¶ Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.* 44. *¶ Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* 45. *And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.* 46. *Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?* 47. *¶ He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.* 48. *¶ John v. 1. xvi. 27 and xvii. 8, 25. cv. 43 and vii. 28, 29. 4viii. 17. ¶ Matt. xiii. 38; 1 John iii. 8. ¶ Jude 6. ex. 23, 27; 1 John iv. 6.*

If God were your Father, &c. Can God be your Father, who reject Him whom He sent? *For I proceeded forth, &c.* The full sense is, "I proceeded forth (from God) and am come into the world (as His Legate). The former part of the expression has reference to the character of Jesus as the *eternal Son of God*; the latter to His character as *Legate and Mediator*. *Neither came I of myself, &c., i. e.,* without being commissioned and sent of God. (See on v. 43, vii. 28, 29.) *My speech*—my discourse. *Because ye cannot hear my word.* "Ye cannot hear, listen to, accept my doctrine, there is another relish of things with you, it cannot enter into you." (See verse 37.) "The grossness of our apprehensions in spiritual things, and our many mistakes which we make about them," says an old writer, "proceed from those dull and foggy steams which rise up from our foul hearts, and becloud our understandings." (See on vii. 17.)

The lusts of your father ye will do. "Satan," observes *Fuller*, "hath no impulsive power; he may strike fire, till he be weary (if his malice can weary); except man's corruption brings the tinder, the match cannot be lighted. (Acts v. 4; James i.

13-16.) *He was a murderer*, &c. That the devil was their spiritual father, Christ proves in general from their imitating of him and being actuated by him. Here we have a plain declaration of the *personality* of Satan, if we adopt the Unitarian hypothesis of substituting the principle of evil for the devil, how utterly inexplicable is the representation here made! *When he speaketh a lie*, &c. Not only was Satan a murderer, inspiring hate, anger, malice, murder, inspiring these Jews to slay Jesus even as he urged Cain to kill his brother, but he is also *a liar*; this is his state, his condition, his nature, *because there is no truth in him*. When he utters falsehood, it is not as a thing alien to his nature, with shame and blushing, as one whose heart is not yet altogether hardened, or his conscience seared, but as a thing proper to his evil nature, glorying in his shame, crying, "evil, be thou my good." Such is Satan, a liar, and the father of lies, and so the father of all liars—of all who love falsehood and hate the truth.

And because *I tell you the truth*, &c. Monstrous disaffection of men's hearts to divine truths, even because they are truth, and because they are divine! *Which of you convinceth me*, &c. The interrogation is equivalent to, "Who of you impeaches my testimony, by convincing me of any sin?" (See xviii. 23.) "Do not," says *Jerome*, "arm thyself with that vulgar and trivial saying, 'it suffices me that my conscience is clear, and I care not what all the world says;' thou must care what the world says and thinks. Christ Himself had that respect, even toward the scribes and Pharisees." (Acts xxi. 20-24; 2 Cor. i. 12, 17, 18.) The expression, "to be of God," is only a short elliptical expression for being born or begotten of Him. "You therefore receive not His words, because you are not born of God." The plain reason why men do not believe the truth, is that they do not like it.

48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49. Jesus answered, I have not a devil: but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. 51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. 52. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. 1. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. 53. Art thou greater than our father Abra-

ham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

¹vii. 20 and x. 20; verse 52. ²iv. 41 and vii. 18. ³xv. 24 and xi. 26. ⁴Zech. i. 5; Heb. xi. 13.

To call our Lord a *Samaritan*, was to give Him the most contemptible and odious of all names. It was especially to reproach Him as an enemy of the holy nation, and they not only give Him this name, but affirm that He richly deserved it—*say we not well?* "Is it any reproach? Who, but a sworn foe of our nation, could have represented us, free-born Israelites, as slaves? us, the seed of Abraham—us, the children of God—as the children of the devil?" But, as if no malignity, however great, in connection with a sane mind, could have induced a person to cast out such opprobrious imputations, they represent Him as a demoniac, as well as a Samaritan. *I have not a devil*. Though Christ used some sharpness in reproving the Jews, yet He answers with wonderful mildness and meekness when He refers to the reproaches cast upon Him. In any instance of injustice or oppression to which we may be exposed, let us endeavor to imitate our Master's patience and forbearance, to be ready rather with the soft answer that turneth away wrath, than with those grievous words which stir up anger. *I honor my Father*—He honors the Father in attributing all that is divine in Himself to Him, and vindicating *Him* from all pater-nity to them. *Ye do dishonor me*—in attributing my divinity to the devil. *There is one that seeketh*, i. e., "that seeketh my glory," requiring "all men to honor the Son, even as they honor the Father," and giving to Him (vi. 37) such as will yet cast their crowns before His throne, in whom He "shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." (Isa. liii. 11.) *Keep my saying*—my whole doctrine—hold it fast as the rule of life. Having asserted His own nature as God's Son, Jesus now concentrates into one sentence the object of His mission as Son, *eternal life* to all who accept Him. *Nerer see death*—even in dying he shall not die but live. (See v. 12, vii. 37, 38; comp. vi. 50, 54, 57, 58.) *Now we know that thou hast a devil*. Previously they had spoken with some doubt (verse 48), but now to Jesus' solemn assertion (verse 51), they oppose this declaration. *Art thou*

greater than our father Abraham, &c. They misunderstood our Lord's words, as if He meant a freedom from temporal death, and promised a privilege which neither Abraham nor the prophets enjoyed.

54. Jesus answered, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: 55. Yet ye have not known him, but I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you; but I know him, and keep his saying. 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. 57. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"
 ev. 31. ev. 41. xvi. 14. xvii. 1; Acts iii. 13. evii. 25, 29. Luke x. 24. Heb. xi. 13.

It is my Father, &c. As the Jews had inquired before, "Where is thy Father?" Jesus now adds this: "God is my Father, and Him who is indeed my Father, ye vainly boast to be your God. Ye profess to know Him, but in works ye deny Him. But I know Him, and in that special sense in which I alone can say this (see chap. i. 18), even as a Son with His Father: and if, in deference to your clamor, I were to waive this my just claim and prerogative, I should be lowering myself to your level, the teacher of truth would become the son of falsehood. How then can I give up my claim to be the Son of God, though it expose me to your unreasonable charge of blasphemy, to your murderous attempts upon my life? For indeed I know Him in a sense in which neither ye nor any man can know, and I keep His saying, which ye might do but will not. Yea, in this my claim, I am only carrying out His instructions, doing His will, fulfilling His pleasure. I keep His saying, as I am urging you to keep mine." (See verse 52.) *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.* By "my day," we are to understand the time of Christ's incarnation or appearance on earth. Our Lord expresses yet more distinctly that very thing which was so offensive to these Jews, His superiority over Abraham. Abraham received prophecies in regard to the Messiah (Gen. xvii. 16, xviii. 18, xxii. 16, &c.), and from these proceeded his rejoicing. He rejoiced at the prospect of that at the realization of which those who boasted to be his sons were so enraged. (See Heb. xi. 13-16.) There was no true joy under the Old Testament, but only in the hope of the coming of Christ. The piety of the patriarchs, prophets and other holy persons before the incarnation,

consisted in desiring, praying and looking for the Saviour who was to be born, and in earnestly striving to have a share in the favor and blessing of His coming.

Thou art not yet fifty years old, &c. Thou hast not seen half a century, much less the many centuries since the day in which Abraham lived. Some have inferred from these words that Jesus seemed prematurely old, either from the marks of enduring sorrow in His features, or from His apparent precocious maturity of mind. He was not yet thirty-three, and the *fifty* here named is simply an even sum to measure off the intervening centuries. *Hast thou seen Abraham?* as thou must have done, if Abraham has seen thee. By such a perversion of the plain import of His words, they seek to convict Him of an absurdity, such as no sane man could have uttered. Nothing short of a willful misunderstanding could have led them to suppose that by the term "my day," Jesus intended to convey the idea of His actual abode on earth during the patriarch's lifetime. They, however, in trying to exaggerate His words into absurdity, really elevate them into a higher truth.

58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.
 Ex. iii. 14; Isa. xliii. 13; chap. xvii. 5, 24; Col. i. 17; Rev. i. 8.

When Christ's enemies were enraged at His speech, He gently seeks to draw them to the consideration of His Divinity, that thus they might be pacified. *Verily, verily.* (See on verse 34.) *Before Abraham was, I am.* The sentence is at variance with the laws of grammar, the present time is represented as preceding the past. From this apparent confusion, there is no possibility of extricating the words, but by the sublime and mysterious doctrine of the immutable existence of the speaker in His superior nature. "I AM" is the name of God, and it imports, that in His existence the distinctions of past, present, and to come, have no place. Hence our Lord did not say *I was* before Abraham, for in this manner an angel might have spoken of himself, but *I AM*, intimating that in reference to His duration, the two thousand years which had elapsed since the days of the patriarch were annihilated. (See 2 Peter iii. 8; Ps. cii. 26, 27, also on verse 59.)

59. Then they took up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, 'going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

*x. 31, 33 and xl. 33. †Luke iv. 30.

Our Lord's answer (verse 58), signified eternal existence, which is nothing short of a claim to Divinity (see Ps. xc. 2, and chap. xvii. 5), the Jews therefore take up stones, some probably lying about in that outer court of the temple for the purpose of building or repairs, and proceed to execute upon Him the punishment for the crime of blasphemy. "Satan's kingdom," says an old writer, "stands upon four props especially: railing (v. 48); hypocrisy (v. 53, *Our father Abraham*); sophistry (v. 52)—construing that of death natural, which Christ uttered of eternal; tyranny (v. 59); when reason failed, they came to violence.

(James iii. 14, 16)." *Had himself, &c.* He who, when His hour was come, yielded Himself as a sheep to His shearers, and was led as a lamb to the slaughter, now, inasmuch as His hour was not yet fully come, withdraws Himself awhile from their ungovernable fury: retired probably at once into the surrounding multitude, and so was lost in the crowd, and departing unobserved amongst the stream of people, for this time escaped the fury of His enemies. "It is," says *Bishop Taylor*, "an office of prudence to serve God so that we may at the same time preserve our lives and our estates, our interest and reputation, for ourselves and our relations, so far as they can consist together." (Matt. ii. 13, x. 23.)

1. Where did Jesus go? 2. Who was brought before Him? 3. What disposition was made of her case? 4. What was our Lord's answer to the charge of bearing record of Himself? 5. What did He reply to the question, "Where is thy Father?" 6. Why did no man lay hold on Him? 7. State the reply of Christ to the question, "Who art thou?" 8. Who is the servant of sin? 9. Who are "free indeed?" 10. What did Jesus say to the claim, "Abraham is our father?" 11. In what sense shall the man who keeps Christ's saying never see death? 12. What is said of Abraham seeing the day of Christ's appearing? 13. Explain verse 58.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *The man that was born blind restored to sight.* 8 *He is brought to the Pharisees.* 13 *They are offended at it, and excommunicate him:* 35 *but he is received of Jesus, and confesseth him.* 39 *Who they are whom Christ enlighteneth.*

AND as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

In the interval between the occurrence with which the preceding chapter closed, and the event here narrated, with its appended discourse, those events took place recorded in Luke x. 25-42, xi. 1-24. Our Lord appears to have returned again to the city (on the supposition that He had left it temporarily, for the reason given in viii. 59), and resumed His public instruction. The rage of His enemies had so far subsided, or their prudence had so resumed its control of their actions, as to render it safe for Him to appear again in public.

Passed by, i. e., passed along through the city. *Blind from his birth.* The sad history of this man may have been already fa-

miliar to the disciples, as he was evidently a well-known beggar in Jerusalem, one with whose story many were acquainted (verse 8), or it may have been one of his ways of stirring pity and compassion in the passers-by, to announce that his calamity reached back so far, and thus it may have come to the knowledge of the disciples, and proved the occasion of their question. More of our Saviour's miracles are recorded as having been wrought on blindness than on any other form of human infirmity. The minute and particular records of His cures wrought on blindness are four in number. (See Matt. ix. 27-31; Mark viii. 22-26; Matt. xx. 29-34; Mark x. 46-52; Luke xviii. 35-43.) Indeed, the record may be said to extend to six cases in all. (See Matt. xii. 22 and xxi. 14.) In like manner the Prophet Isaiah will be found to hint at the recovery of sight to the blind, more frequently than to any

other act of mercy, symbolical of the Day of Christ. (See Isa. xxix. 18, xxxii. 3, xxxv. 5, xlii. 7.)

2. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, ^{who} did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?—verse 34.

In the judgment of some commentators, the belief of a metempsychosis; according to others, the belief of a pre-existence of souls; according to others still, a belief of the possibility that the embryo could sin, is to be imputed to the disciples. "But," says *Tholuck*, "it is doubtful whether we have good reason for supposing such opinions to be current among the people. It seems to us that verse 34 puts us on the track to the true view. The Pharisees, in that verse, say that the man was '*altogether*,' and consequently, in soul and body, '*born in sins*.' As among us, the people have the phrase, '*such a man was born with a mark on him*,' may not this (though, indeed, not clearly expressed), have been the meaning of the disciples?"

3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.—verse 4.

Our Lord does not deny that this man and his parents had sinned, but that they had sinned as the cause of his being born blind. He thus turned away His disciples from that most harmful practice of diving down with cruel surmises into the secrets of other men's lives, and, like the friends of Job, guessing for them hidden sins in explanation of their unusual sufferings. "Wise men," says *Cecil*, "will regard the entrance of evil as a man views a fire, already begun in his house. It is now too late to ask, '*How came this?*' or, '*Whence did the fire begin?*' His single question will be, how he, and his family, and his property, can be secured." (Gen. xix. 17; Luke xiii. 23, 24.) But that the works, &c. This blindness, Jesus would say, is the chastening of no *peculiar* sin on his own part, or on his parents.' He here asserts the high end for which suffering is sometimes permitted in the world, namely, for the benefit of the individual, and for the manifestation of the glorious works of God. (See xi. 3, 4.)

4. ⁴¹ I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. 5. As long as I am in the world, ⁴¹ I am the light of the world.

41v. 34, v. 19, 33, xi. 9, xii. 35 and xvii. 4. 41. 5, 9, iii. 19, viii. 12 and xii. 35, 46.

Our Lord proceeds to heal this poor blind man. The malice of His enemies will soon bring His day to a close, will shortly bring on the night that shall shut in His day for going about doing good. Had the Son of man His set and appointed time? His words here may enforce to us the solemn admonition, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." *As long as I am in the world*, &c. Thus Jesus hints that He will not be in the world long, and He will let His light shine before men all the days of His appointed time.

6. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

⁴²Mark vii. 33 and viii. 23.

The clay and the spittle were only conductors, not in themselves needful, but which Jesus willingly assumed to be the channels for the conveying of His power, for we observe at other healings of the blind no intervention of such means finding place. (Matt. xx. 30-34.) "Probably," says *Trench*, "the reasons which induced the use of these means were ethical, it was, perhaps, a help for the weak faith of the man to find that something external was done." At all events, Christ magnified His power in making a blind man to see by that method which one would think more likely to make a seeing man blind.

7. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent. ⁴³He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

⁴³Neh. iii. 15. ⁴² Kings v. 10, 14.

Wash—the eyes only. The *pool of Siloam* is a small pond, in an oblong form, at the lower end of the valley of Jehoshaphat, overlooked by the wall of Mount Zion. Its sides are built up with stones, and a column stands in the middle, indicating that a chapel was once built over it. It is in length fifty-four feet, by eighteen in breadth. It is fed, probably, by water from the temple mount. *By interpretation, Sent.* Jesus selected this pool because its name was significant. As Christ Himself is the *fountain, sent* from God, by which our nature is purified, so Siloam is the *fountain, sent* from the mount of God's temple, by which the man is washed from

both his blindness and his clay. The man was *sent* by the Sent to the *Sent*. *He went his way*—of course conducted by some one to the pool. How implicit his faith! How prompt his obedience! (2 Kings v. 10-14.) *Came seeing*, returned to all appearance to his own house, it does not seem that he came back to the Lord. The immediate power of using the eyes was no small part of the miracle. When people recover sight now after surgical operations, it requires a considerable time to learn the use of the newly acquired sense. "What," says an ancient writer, "did this man think when his eyes were now first given him! What a new world did he find himself come into! how did he wonder at heaven and earth! Lo, thus shall we be affected, and more, when the scales of our mortality being done away, we shall see as we are seen, when we shall behold the blessedness of that other world! Let us be obedient to Christ in the use of the means He prescribes, and however simple, we shall find them effectual for good."

8. ¶ The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9. Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. 10. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11. He answered and said, ¶ A man that is called Jesus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. 12. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. 13. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.
1. Verses 6, 7. 2. v. 9, 10; Matt. xii. 1, 14; Mark ii. 23, 25; Luke vi. 1, 11 and xiii. 10, 17.

Begged—the man was very poor as well as blind. *Some said, This is he*, &c. To explain these doubts and questionings, respecting the man's identity, it has been well observed, that the opening of the eyes must have altered the character of the whole countenance. "The miraculous cures of God," says *Bishop Hall*, "work a sensible alteration in men, not more in their own apprehension, than in the judgment of others." *I am he*. The man when he heard people doubting his identity and looking at him with hesitation, says, "I assure you that I am he who used to sit at the temple-gate and beg." No truths have received so full proofs as those that have been questioned. *Said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam*, &c. It is observed by the learned that our Saviour for the most part never cured any man, but He straight en-

joined him some duty, as to the lepers, "Go show yourselves unto the priests," to another, "Give God praise," to a third, "Sin no more." (iv. 50, v. 11, vi. 10.)

And I went and washed. The soul is constituted to see through the body, as through its glass; and that glass at present is very dark; but when once that glass shall come to be brightened, so soon as the soul shall be discharged from the grossness of flesh, and the cloud of passion, and the stains of sin, it will need no other elevation to behold the face of God, no other capacity to comprehend all the treasures of wisdom, no other strength to bear the weight of Eternal Glory. (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) There is one minute feature in this simple story, which it may be well to observe. The man speaks only of the clay, not of what was mingled with it. For, being blind, he could not see what our Lord *did*, he could only feel what He *applied*. This little coincidence is a great mark of truth. It is one which could not come by design. It may also be observed, that the man's answer, "I know not," to the question, "Where is He?" proves how impossible was any collusion, how little the Lord sought honor from man. *It was the sabbath*, &c. The mention just at this place of the day on which the healing was accomplished, seems inserted as the explanation of their having found it necessary to bring the case before their ecclesiastical rulers—the *Pharisees*.

15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him, how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Again the man is interrogated: this time officially, and with a view to making him criminate himself, or at the least implicate and injure Jesus. *He put clay*, &c. The man mentions only the clay; not having been able to see how the Saviour "spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle." This statement furnishes proof of the accuracy of the narrative.

16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. 17. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, ¶ He is a prophet. 18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. 19. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? 20. His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21. But by what means he now seeth, we

know not, or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, ask him: he shall speak for himself. 22. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

13. Verse 33, iii. 2. 14. Verse 33, iii. 2. 15. Verse 33, iii. 2. 16. Verse 33, iii. 2. 17. Verse 33, iii. 2. 18. Verse 33, iii. 2. 19. Verse 33, iii. 2. 20. Verse 33, iii. 2. 21. Verse 33, iii. 2. 22. Verse 33, iii. 2. 23. Verse 33, iii. 2. 24. Verse 33, iii. 2. 25. Verse 33, iii. 2. 26. Verse 33, iii. 2. 27. Verse 33, iii. 2. 28. Verse 33, iii. 2. 29. Verse 33, iii. 2. 30. Verse 33, iii. 2. 31. Verse 33, iii. 2. 32. Verse 33, iii. 2. 33. Verse 33, iii. 2. 34. Verse 33, iii. 2. 35. Verse 33, iii. 2. 36. Verse 33, iii. 2. 37. Verse 33, iii. 2. 38. Verse 33, iii. 2. 39. Verse 33, iii. 2. 40. Verse 33, iii. 2. 41. Verse 33, iii. 2. 42. Verse 33, iii. 2. 43. Verse 33, iii. 2. 44. Verse 33, iii. 2. 45. Verse 33, iii. 2. 46. Verse 33, iii. 2. 47. Verse 33, iii. 2. 48. Verse 33, iii. 2. 49. Verse 33, iii. 2. 50. Verse 33, iii. 2. 51. Verse 33, iii. 2. 52. Verse 33, iii. 2. 53. Verse 33, iii. 2. 54. Verse 33, iii. 2. 55. Verse 33, iii. 2. 56. Verse 33, iii. 2. 57. Verse 33, iii. 2. 58. Verse 33, iii. 2. 59. Verse 33, iii. 2. 60. Verse 33, iii. 2. 61. Verse 33, iii. 2. 62. Verse 33, iii. 2. 63. Verse 33, iii. 2. 64. Verse 33, iii. 2. 65. Verse 33, iii. 2. 66. Verse 33, iii. 2. 67. Verse 33, iii. 2. 68. Verse 33, iii. 2. 69. Verse 33, iii. 2. 70. Verse 33, iii. 2. 71. Verse 33, iii. 2. 72. Verse 33, iii. 2. 73. Verse 33, iii. 2. 74. Verse 33, iii. 2. 75. Verse 33, iii. 2. 76. Verse 33, iii. 2. 77. Verse 33, iii. 2. 78. Verse 33, iii. 2. 79. Verse 33, iii. 2. 80. Verse 33, iii. 2. 81. Verse 33, iii. 2. 82. Verse 33, iii. 2. 83. Verse 33, iii. 2. 84. Verse 33, iii. 2. 85. Verse 33, iii. 2. 86. Verse 33, iii. 2. 87. Verse 33, iii. 2. 88. Verse 33, iii. 2. 89. Verse 33, iii. 2. 90. Verse 33, iii. 2. 91. Verse 33, iii. 2. 92. Verse 33, iii. 2. 93. Verse 33, iii. 2. 94. Verse 33, iii. 2. 95. Verse 33, iii. 2. 96. Verse 33, iii. 2. 97. Verse 33, iii. 2. 98. Verse 33, iii. 2. 99. Verse 33, iii. 2. 100. Verse 33, iii. 2.

This man is not of God, &c. Not a word, it will be observed, about the miracle, not a word about the mercy, not a word about the good done, not a word about the power shown. Their little minds seem fixed only upon the imaginary transgression. This appears to have been the opinion and sentence of the majority. *Others said, &c.* Men think differently of the same thing, because the state of their minds is different. (vii. 40, 41.)

"There is," says *Bishop Hall*, "no word, or action, but may be taken with two hands, either with the right hand of charitable construction, or, the sinister interpretation of malice and suspicion: and all things do succeed as they are taken. To construe an evil action well, is but a pleasing and profitable deceit to myself; but to misconstrue a good thing is a treble wrong—to myself, the action and the author." (Rom. xiv. 10.) *What sayest thou of him, &c.* As they could not get him to deny that Jesus had opened his eyes, they hoped to be able to extort from him some statement derogatory to his Benefactor, something which might give some supposed color to their monstrous position:—"Through the prince of the devils casteth He out devils." *He is a prophet*—a prophet at least. This was what, at the first blush, he supposed Him to be. He could be nothing short of this. That was what the Samaritan woman at first perceived Him to be (iv. 19.) Afterward (verses 35–38), like her, he believed and confessed Him to be the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. God has promised "to him that hath shall be given." Those who follow the convictions of their consciences shall receive more grace.

Is this your son, &c. Failing in their attempt to draw out something from the man, on which they could legally convict Jesus, they seek to impair his testimony, by denying that he had ever been blind. How ungenerous was the conduct of the beggar's parents! They showed no grati-

tude for the benefit conferred upon their son, nor were they willing to run any risk in order to shield their own offspring from disgrace, but left him to stand alone against the host of his enemies. They sought to escape disgrace, but they have incurred the deepest. *Put out of the synagogue*, be excommunicated. The Jewish excommunication was a severe punishment. There were three degrees of it. The first excluded the person from intercourse with the people, even with his own family, for the space of thirty days, he was not allowed to approach a Jew at a distance nearer than four cubits. If he gave no signs of penitence, the time could be doubled, and even trebled. The second separated the person from all sacred meetings, was accompanied with dreadful curses, and forbade all intercourse with others. The third was still severer, and was regarded as a final and total exclusion of the person from the community.

24. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

This they said, not wishing him to own even to the praise of God, that a miracle had been wrought upon him, but to show more regard to the honor of God than ascribe any such act to one who was a sinner.

25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

Not that the man meant to insinuate any doubt in his own mind on the point of His being "*a sinner*," but as *his opinion* on such a point would be of no consequence to others, he would speak only to what he *knew as fact* in his own case. The corporeal change with which this poor man had been blessed, is the spiritual experience of every real Christian—he was blind, but now he sees. And like him too the Christian may *know* it. Observe a resemblance in the *limitation* of the knowledge itself—it extends to "one thing," but this is the main thing, and to know this is to know enough. It is not necessary to know the precise time of the change, any more than it is necessary to know precisely when the day begins, in order to know that it is dawn—it is day. Neither is it necessary to be able to know the particular instrumentality employed, whether an afflictive

event, or a good book, or the admonition of a friend, or the preaching of the word. The manner of conversion is very different. In some cases it is more sudden, in others more slow. The Lord addresses one man in thunder, He whispers to another in a small still voice.

I know, &c. Remark what a confidence this man derived from the consciousness of this one thing. These unbelievers wished and endeavored to confound him, but their questions and their cavils had no weight with *him*. He had, he felt, one invincible, undeniable argument—"this," says he, "is sufficient for me. I know what He has done for me, and cannot be mistaken." So he that believeth hath the witness in himself. Like this man, has a satisfaction derived from experience. He has received the truth in the love and efficiency of it. He has felt its power and blessedness. He has a certainty, out of which he can neither be laughed nor reasoned. This qualifies him for dealing with others in Divine things. It excites his zeal, and enables him to speak with earnestness, because he can speak without hesitation.

26. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? 27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

Said they again—proceeding, apparently, to cross-question him, in order to detect some refutation of the miracle. This cross-questioning the man indignantly and sarcastically declines. He refers them to his explicit narrative in his former examination, which they endeavored to slight, and he ironically imputes their zealous questioning to a desire to become His disciples. The keenness with which skeptics scrutinize the Gospel often surpasses the earnestness of its believing students. And it is a striking fact that critical attacks have stimulated Christian scholars to a profounder study of the Word of God, and have thus resulted in a truer understanding of its depths of meaning, and clearer demonstrations of its infinite truth.

I have told you already wherefore would ye hear it again? Infidelity can only go round and round the same topics in an eternal circle, without advancing one step

further. It produces no new forces, it only brings those again into the field which have been so often baffled, maimed and disabled, that, in pity to them, they ought to be dismissed and discharged from any further service. (Acts xix. 28, 34.) *Will ye also* (as well as I, and others to whom I have told the circumstances of my cure) *be his disciples?* The emphasis given in the original to the pronoun *ye*, opposes with the keenest irony the reference here made to their discipleship, to the judgment which in verse 24 they declared themselves to have formed in regard to the character of Jesus. If this were truly a legal court, it may be doubted whether the man did not commit a faulty disrespect, for which the want of self-respect in the court furnishes no full excuse. Yet, when we consider that he was a poor, uncultivated mendicant, we can excuse this single error and still wonder at his martyr-like constancy.

28. Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. 29. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.—viii. 14.

The man's answer stung them to the quick. They felt all the force of his just irony. They were too conscious of deserving all that it implied. They withdrew to the shelter of authority, from whence, as all such debaters under the circumstances usually do, they discharged a shower of abuse, and loaded him with undignified and unmeaning reproaches. *We know that God spake unto Moses, &c.* Their partiality here was inexcusable, for if they believed the mission of Moses, on evidence of *miracles*, credibly attested, indeed, but performed two thousand years before they were born, it was much more reasonable, on their own principles, to believe the mission of Jesus, on at least equal *miracles*, wrought daily among them, when they might, in many instances, have been eyewitnesses to the facts, and one of which, notwithstanding all their malice, they were here compelled to own, or at least found themselves utterly unable to disprove. *We know not from whence he is*—we know not the source whence he obtained His commission, nor the ground of His pretensions to be sent of God.

30. The man answered and said unto them, *Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from

whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. 31. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. 32. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33. *If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. 34. They answered and said unto him, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out."

*iii. 10. *Job xxvii. 9 and xxxv. 12; Ps. xviii. 41, xxxiv. 15 and lxxvi. 18; Prov. i. 28, xv. 29 and xxviii. 9; Isa. i. 15; Jer. xi. 11 and xiv. 12; Ezek. viii. 13; Mi. iii. 4; Zech. vii. 13. *Verse 16. *Verse 2.

The man answered, &c. This man shows not only a spirit of downright, and, what we should almost term dogged honesty, combined with great boldness, but very considerable shrewdness and sagacity. May not this last confirm the old proverb, "*The eyes of the blind see best.*" He seems, moreover, to have already received some of the spirit of wisdom and patience, which marked the conduct of the Saviour, in whose cause he was arraigned; for he made no answer whatever to their personal reviling (verse 28), but only vindicated the honor of that God who *heareth not sinners*. (viii. 48, 49; Isa. xxxvi. 21.) Some have unnecessarily stumbled at the words "God heareth not sinners." Vain, indeed, is the prayer that comes from a divided heart. Vain the petition for pardon, when we have determined not to part with the sin. With what countenance can we ask to be forgiven for any sin past when we intend to go and act that sin over again? But there is nothing in these words to deter any penitent from prayer, any who are grieved and wearied with the burden of their sins. In this sense God *does* hear sinners. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Nay, His ear shall be attentive to the prayer of those who desire to fear His name. (See Neh. i. 11, also Jonah ii. 1, &c., and Isa. xxvi. 8.)

Thou wast altogether born in sins. They allude to the man's natural defect, and taunt him with having come into the world with the penalty of sin branded on his entire person, in that he was born blind. They forget that if blindness were, indeed, the sign of sin, then, to remove blindness proved a power to remove the penalty of sin. *Dost thou teach us?* The man's clear and forcible eloquence is met by one argument alone, namely, "Thou art a sinner, but we are righteous; thou art

ignorant, and we are learned in the Law; we sit in Moses' seat, thou art the blind follower of this Galilean deceiver." So much, then, for *evidence*, as a means of convincing men of the truth of Christianity! Here had been a judicial inquiry, and it was attended with this result! A change of heart, not more light in such matters is the thing needed. The perception of truth is a moral rather than an intellectual act. *And they cast him out*, excommunicated him, not only thrust him bodily from the court-room, but from the synagogue and temple, and from all worship therein. (See on verse 22.) Thus he suffered the loss of all things for his Saviour's sake. He is the *first* whose name is recorded as openly disgraced for confessing Christ. He is the *first* of a glorious train, some of whom suffered reproach, others imprisonment, and others death, because they would not deny Jesus. *If we* are ashamed of Christ before the world, how does the conduct of this poor beggar condemn us?

35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

*Matt. xiv. 33 and xvi. 16; Mark i. 1; chap. x. 36; 1 John v. 13.

When he had found him. By accident? Not very likely. Sympathy in that breast could not long keep aloof from its object. *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* A question stretching purposely beyond the man's present attainments, in order the more quickly to lead him—in his present teachable frame—into the highest truth. The importance of this question may be inferred from the character of the inquirer, and from the nature of the case itself. Faith in Christ is the principle of all religion. Without it, there is no justification, or sanctification, or consolation, in a word, no salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

36. He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and yet is he that talketh with thee. 38. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.—xiv. 26.

Who is he, Lord, &c. His reply is affirmative, and believing by anticipation, promising faith as soon as Jesus shall say who He is. "What a beautiful exemplification," says one, "of the heavenward tendency of a mind simple and truth-loving, the

guileless and sincere, as the doctrine is stated in this Gospel at i. 47, iii. 21, viii. 47, x. 16, 27." Docility opens the heart to faith: but it is God who gives both. To desire to be instructed in order to believing, is agreeable to the prudence which faith itself requires. When a man begins to inquire about Christ, and asks who He is, it is always a hopeful symptom of his state of soul. *Thou hast both seen him, &c.* We should carefully notice the extraordinary fullness of the revelation which our Lord here made of Himself. In no case but this, and that of the Samaritan woman, do we find Him so unreservedly declaring His own Divinity and Messiahship. So true is it that "the meek He will guide in judgment," and that things "hid to the wise and prudent are revealed to babes." *And he said, &c.* The lowliness and yielding spirit of the man toward Jesus, is in touching contrast with the defiant bearing he maintains toward the leaders of the people. He had been gradually brought into that state of humble belief in the power and goodness of his unknown benefactor, that he no sooner heard the precious and important truth just announced, than his heart yielded assent, and with a simple confession of faith, *Lord, I believe*, he prostrated himself before the Being, who had stooped in such wondrous condescension to one of his low and miserable condition, and endowed him with the twofold blessing of natural and spiritual vision.

39. † And Jesus said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind."
 iv. 22, 27; see iii. 17 and xli. 47. *Isa. vi. 9, 10; Matt. xlii. 13.

The meaning is, the Gospel should make the poor, ignorant, humble, teachable, who are reckoned to see nothing, wise and knowing in the things of God, but that it should make those who are wise in their own conceit, know less than they did before. In the two characters of the Pharisees, and the person they thus cast out, we have a pattern of the believer and the unbeliever, which will hold true to the end

of the world: where the temper of the Pharisee is, there will Christ be unknown or rejected; where the other temper is, of the man that was born blind, there will Christ be valued, and nowhere else. (See on Luke ii. 35.) Let us seek so to live that, if the world should cast us out, we may be found of Him whom the world crucified, that, having followed the light of His truth in this world, we may, through His own merits and mediation, have with Him the Light of Life in the everlasting glory of the world to come. (Ps. xliii. 3.)

40. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? 41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth.—Rom. ii. 19. *xv. 22, 24.

By their own proud boast, "*We see*," they cut away any plea of ignorance from under their feet. And so their sin remained, witnessing against them. And so long as they remained in that state of wilful and proud prejudice, able to see but unwilling, they were in a state of sin, which was in danger of increasing, proceeding to more ungodliness, even to the killing of the Prince of Life. Let us learn, from what the Lord here teaches, to walk according to the light we have, to do faithfully what we know of our duty. This is the way to know and to receive more of His good gifts. "He that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have." If we would prevent any fatal event of sins flowing from ignorance, we must take care, that our ignorance itself be not criminal: and that it will not be, if our hearts be sincerely disposed to our duty, and if we use moral diligence to know it, if we be impartial, humble and honest, and have that concern for the knowledge and practice of our duty, that is in some sort proportionable to the importance of it. The more we know, and the better we understand, the more severely shall we be judged, unless our life is more holy.

1. What did our Lord's disciples ask Him about the man blind from his birth? 2. What was His answer? 3. State the particulars of the miracle He wrought. 4. How did the Pharisees regard this miracle? 5. What did the blind man's parents say to them? 6. What did he say himself? 7. What did the man who had been blind say when he was reviled? 8. What did Jesus ask him after he had been cast out? 9. State his reply. 10. Explain verse 39.



SHEEP FOLLOWING THEIR SHEPHERD.



CAMEL GOING THROUGH A NEEDLE'S EYE.

CHAPTER X.

¹ *Christ is the door, and the good shepherd.* ¹⁹ *Divers opinions of him.* ²⁴ *He proveth by his works that he is Christ the Son of God:* ³³ *escapeth the Jews,* ⁴⁰ *and went again beyond Jordan, where many believed on him.*

Our Lord had intimated that the Pharisees, though they thought themselves both clear-sighted and far-sighted in spiritual matters, were indeed blind, and therefore ill-fitted for the office of teachers of religion, into which they had intruded themselves (ix. 39-41.) Now, by a sort of parabolic representation, He makes a discrimination between true and false shepherds, and shows that these self-constituted guides of the people were false teachers and unworthy of confidence.

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

The sheep-fold in that age and country, where more protection against beasts of prey was needed than with us, was very different from ours. It was enclosed within high walls, and was entered by a door. This door was kept by a porter, who would of course open it to none but those who had a right to go in. Whoever pretends to feed and guide the flock of God, to teach and instruct His people, and yet does not come to them in that way which God has appointed, but follows the method of his own inventing, according to his own fancy or corrupt inclination, is certainly, notwithstanding any pretenses of zeal or authority, an enemy and a hinderer of man's salvation. Only intending to elevate and enrich himself, so he compasses that, he cares not how many souls perish by his means, or through his neglect. Every one that sincerely, and without worldly designs, intends to teach and instruct men in the way of salvation, will proceed by that method only which God shall think fit to appoint, and will submit entirely to His directions.

² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. ⁶ This parable spake Jesus unto them, but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

In the latter part of the allegory or par-

able (v. 11, 14), Jesus styles Himself "the Good Shepherd," but here, when He says, *he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep*, He is probably speaking of an under-shepherd, a minister of the Gospel. *To him the porter openeth*. These words might signify, generally, that to such a person the obstacles that stood in the way of his becoming an overseer of the flock of Christ are removed in a regular manner, and he is, after the due order, introduced as a shepherd into the fold. This explication goes on the principle that the admission by the porter, through the door into the fold, refers to an original call to, and investiture with office in Christ's Church, and this is the ordinary mode of viewing the figure. But, it would seem that the reference here is not to an original call to, and investiture with, a new office, but to the ordinary exercise of the functions of an office already possessed. The person introduced as entering by the door is already a shepherd, may have been long a shepherd, and is here represented as performing his daily work. Ere the sun rises, he goes to his much-loved occupation. He arrives at the gate of the fold. He does not leap over the wall. He finds no difficulty in getting admission—the porter opens, he passes through the gate, utters the pastoral cry, and returns again through the gate followed by his own flock, whom he leads out and feeds, and when night comes he conducts them back again to the fold.

Taking this view of the matter, the natural explication of the allegory seems to be "the genuine pastor performs all his duties under the guidance of Divine influence, and with a constant regard to the mediation of the Saviour" It then follows, *the sheep hear his voice, i. e., they attend to—they understand—they believe His doctrine*, not because it is *his*, but because it is not *his*, but his and their Lord's. It is one mark of a genuine Christian pastor, that real Christians cordially approve of his teaching. *His own sheep*. A real shepherd, according to Eastern custom, knowing *his own flock*, calls them at once by their names, and proves his relation to

them by so doing. *Leadeth them out*—from the pen-fold into the open pasture, verse 9. "There is no one of God's children," says *Bishop Hall*, "whom He doth not both know and call by his name. What a comfort is this to a poor wretched man to think. Here I walk obscure and contemptible upon earth, in a condition mean and despised of men, but the great God of heaven is pleased to take such notice of me, as even from heaven to call me by my name, and to single me out for grace and salvation, and not only to mention my name from above, in the gracious offer of His ordinances, but to write it in the eternal register of Heaven. What care I to be inglorious, yea, causelessly infamous with men, whilst I am thus honored by the King of Glory?"

He goeth before them, &c. This verse is simply a continuation of the description of a true and faithful shepherd. Whenever such an one takes his flock out to pasture, he walks before them, as an Eastern shepherd always does, never requiring them to go where he does not first go himself. (See Num. xxvii. 16, 17; Ex. iii. 1; Ps. xxxiii. 2.) Such a pastor is an "example to the flock"—*the sheep*—the truly pious, those who are taught of God, and are influenced by His Spirit, follow him as he follows Christ, *for they know his voice*, they know that what he says corresponds with what Christ is saying to them in His Word, and with what, too, He is working in them by His Spirit. *And a stranger will they not follow, &c.* It was a fact well known to all our Lord's hearers, that sheep accustomed to one shepherd's voice would not obey a stranger's voice, but would rather be frightened at it. Just so true Christians have a spiritual taste and discernment by which they distinguish a false teacher, and will not hear him. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things." (1 John ii. 20.) Poor and illiterate believers often illustrate this in a very extraordinary way. *But they understood not, &c.* So dull of understanding were they, that they did not perceive the point or application of this illustration of our Lord.

7. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the

sheep did not hear them. 9. *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.—xiv. 6; Eph. ii. 18.

Verily, verily, the usual formula the Saviour employs when anxious to impress a very solemn truth upon His hearers. *I am the door of the sheep.* Jesus here declares that He Himself is the door through whom, and by faith in whom, both shepherd and sheep must pass, if they would go inside God's fold. (See on verse 9.) The "sheep" here spoken of, are the true people of God, the real servants of Christ. They are not, therefore, the mingled throng of evil and good that are found in the visible Church of Christ on earth. They are the "Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven"—the mystical body of Christ—the "Lamb's bride." Their place of safety—the fold which shelters them, where they can rest in peace—which surrounds them on every side—which keeps off all that would harm them—is the everlasting power of Jehovah.

All that ever came before me, &c. They "came," they were not sent. The reference is to those who were false prophets, not as claiming the prerogatives of Messiah, but as perverters of the people from the way of life. *Thieves and robbers*, not true shepherds, careful for the welfare of the flock, but intent on their own gain and emolument. (See on v. 1.) *The sheep did not hear them*—the instinct of their divinely taught hearts preserving them from seducers, and attaching them to the heaven-sent prophets, of whom it is said that "the Spirit of Christ was in them." (1 Peter i. 11.) If for a while any of them were unhappily deceived or led astray, they did not continue in that error, but repented and returned.

I am the door. In common folds there might be different flocks with their several shepherds, but in the spiritual fold to which Jesus refers, there is but one flock and one shepherd. He is "*the door*." (xiv. 6.) The expression is metaphorical. A door is the medium of passage, and Jesus stands between God and us. He is the Mediator of the new covenant. God comes to us through Him, and conveys all His blessings to us by Him. And we ap-

proach God through Him. *By me*—there is salvation in none other than in Him, who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. In the Lord alone have we righteousness and strength. “If *any* man”—this door is not for righteous, but for sinners—not for those who need no salvation, but for those who do. It is open for one and all who apply for admittance. Any poor sinner that cries sincerely, and knocks heartily, shall enter in and be saved. It is as good for the persecuting Saul as for the loving John, and it is as needful for John as for Saul. It stands as wide for the penitent robber expiring on the cross as it did for the inquiring Nicodemus, who came privately to Jesus, and Nicodemus must look at it as steadily, and enter it as humbly, as the penitent robber. And what are the advantages the man obtains who thus enters in? 1. Safety—he *shall be saved*—saved from the curse of the law, the wrath to come, the roaring lion who goeth about seeking whom he may devour, from the king of terrors, a world lying in wickedness, an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God—saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. 2. Liberty—he *shall go in and out*. Sheep, under the care of a good shepherd, go in at night for protection, and in the morning go out for food. The expression denotes that what is done for the Christian's safety, does not compromise his liberty. He knows the truth, and the truth makes him free: and he is free indeed—free to go wherever he pleases in Immanuel's land—free to partake of all the privileges of God. (See Ps. cxliii. 8; Jer. xxviii. 20.) 3. Plenty—and *find pasture*. Said one who realized this: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters.” So Isaiah, “They shall feed in the ways”—the ways of God's commandments, ordinances and dispensations.

I am come that they might have life, &c. It was the infinite dignity of Christ's person, which derived that infinite merit on His sacrifice, whereby it became an equivalent to the infinite demerit of our sins. Nay, of such an infinite value and worth was

His sacrifice, that it not only countervailed for the punishment due to our sins, but did abundantly preponderate it; upon which account God engaged Himself, not only to remit that punishment, in consideration of it, but also to bestow His Spirit and eternal life on us; both which are as well the purchase of Christ's blood, as is the remission of our sins. For God might have remitted our punishment, without superadding the gift of His Spirit and eternal life to it: and therefore, since in consideration of Christ's blood, He hath superadded these gifts to the remission of our punishment, it is evident that His blood was equivalent to both; that is, that it was not only a valuable consideration for the pardon of our sins, but also for the assistance of His Spirit, and our eternal happiness. (Heb. ix. 13, 14; Rom. v. 15–21.) We have life more abundantly than Adam. His life was suspended on the fallible will of man, but this life can never be destroyed; because Jesus lives, His people shall live also. Had Adam remained innocent, though he would never have died, yet must he have experienced a change before he could have been capable of enjoying the blessedness which the poorest Christian expects, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. We have life more abundantly than the *Jewish Church*. They derive their life from the same source with us, and it was essentially the same with ours. But we have it more plenteously as to knowledge, liberty and enjoyment. Christians are not satisfied without increase in the Divine life. More is desirable. More is attainable. Vital religion, though imperfect, is growing and progressive. Under the influences of the Holy Spirit, we go from strength to strength in our course, and are renewed day by day in our experience.

¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. ¹² But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. ¹³ The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.
¹⁴ Isa. xl. 11: Ezek. xxxiv. 12, 23 and xxxvii. 24: Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 25 and v. 4.

How endearing is the relation in which Jesus stands to us! The very figure under which He describes His office (that of Shepherd), and the title which He claims

so justly to Himself (the good Shepherd), are peculiarly winning and attractive, and His own immediate hearers would probably see still more of this tender and winning character in His words than we generally perceive in them. In that country the flock is often assailed by the wolf and other beasts of prey, and from its rocky and precipitous surface, there is especial need of care and tenderness in conducting the flock from one pasture to another, so that there is more need than with us for skill, courage and fidelity on the part of the shepherd. Our Lord intimates that He was prepared to encounter every peril, nay, even to lay down His life in behalf of the flock. He would not flee (as a hireling might do) when He should see the wolf coming, He would not leave the sheep to be the prey of their enemy; He would stand in the gap and meet the foe, and even lay down His life for those whom He had not only received in charge from the Father, but also possessed as His own. (See on verse 15.) He knew that if He would be their Shepherd, He must bleed and die. And how did He redeem the pledge which He then gave? What say the Scriptures? "All we, like sheep, have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." What says Christ Himself? "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And all this He suffered, not complainingly, but with inexpressible alacrity and pleasure—"I delight to do thy will." "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Nor was this all. After redeeming them by His blood, Jesus has to search and find them, and bring them from their wanderings into His fold. (Luke xv. 3-7.) And when restored, He grants them rest as well as food. He recalls them when wandering, defends them, and kindly and tenderly accommodates Himself to their age and weakness. He has prepared a better, a heavenly country, to receive them. There is, indeed, a dark valley to pass, before they can enter it. But it is safe, and short, and their Shepherd is with them there, and His rod and His staff will comfort them.

14. I am the good shepherd, and ⁴know my sheep, and

am known of mine. 15. *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

⁴² Tim. ii. 19. *Matt. xi. 27. *xv. 13.

I am the good shepherd. (See on verse 11.) Between these verses and verse 13, there is a very marked antithesis. The *good shepherd* is opposed to the *hireling*. The words *I know my sheep*, to *careth not for the sheep*; *I lay down my life for the sheep*, to *fleeth*. The words *am known of mine*, refer to the same thing as *know his voice*, in verse 4. Jesus has an affectionate regard, or love, for His flock, and He is known and loved by them as their Saviour and Friend. Observe how He *first knows* them, and *afterward*, in like manner, they *know* Him. (Gal. iv. 9.) He knows them every one. He knows them, like Moses (Ex. xxxiii. 12, 17), "by name." And they know Him—know His voice and follow Him, trusting in Him, whithersoever He leads or bids.

As the Father knoweth me, &c. It is generally believed that this sentence ought to be read in close connection with the last verse, and without any full stop between. The meaning would then be that the mutual knowledge and communion of Christ and believers is somewhat the same in kind with that which subsists between the Father and the Son. Some, however, understand the sentence as though Jesus would say, "The office of mediating between God and man is fitly committed to me, who, being in my own Person, God and man, have communion in knowledge and nature with both, and unite both natures in myself. On the one side, "as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father;" on the other, "I know my sheep, and am known of mine (verse 14), knowing the perfections of the Godhead, and being touched with a feeling of the infirmities of the manhood, I alone am qualified to mediate between the Father and His flock." *I lay down my life for the sheep.* He had not done so then, but He was going to do so very soon. It was in His mind—His fixed and settled purpose. He came to give His life a ransom for many, an atoning sacrifice for their sins—to die in their place, to redeem them from sin and death, and nothing could lead Him to draw back, because nothing

else could save His sheep. A candid interpretation of the words "for the sheep," ought to go far to establish the special relation of the vicarious death of Christ to the Church.

16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. [Isa. lvi. 8. Ezek. xxxvii. 22; Eph. ii. 14; 1 Peter ii. 25.]

Jesus soars beyond that narrow space to which these selfish ones would confine all benefit. With prophetic eye He views other sheep on distant hills, in distant times, not of this but of many another fold yet to be collected, and enjoy the love and care of the Good Shepherd. He means the perishing Gentiles, *already* His "sheep" in the love of His heart and the purpose of His grace to "bring them" in due time. This is one of the encouragements to missionary exertion amid abounding iniquity. The work by which a sinner is brought to God is God's alone, yet sinful man may be the instrument in His hand. *They shall hear my voice.* This is a prophecy and a promise combined. From these words which Jesus spake upon earth, we cannot doubt that He is still, as Intercessor above, as mindful of those who have not yet entered into the fellowship of His Church. Although living in ignorance and sin, they are dear to Him as persons for whom He shed His blood. He looks forward to their conversion as the reward of His sufferings, and it is owing to His appearance in their behalf that the Holy Spirit is sent to "open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness for their sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith." (Acts xxvi. 18.)

And there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. This denotes the result of the preceding collection of the sheep from different quarters. The word rendered *fold*, is here, literally, *flock*. This passage embraces in its merciful promise and provisions of grace, the great family and household of the faith included in the covenant of the Father with His Son, whatever may be the minor diversities of belief and practice, which occasion their formation into separate religious commu-

nities and brotherhoods. There is in reality but one faith, one baptism, and one Saviour. We must be careful not to make this one Church either too narrow or too broad. We make it too narrow, when, like the Jews and the Papists, we exclude any believer who does not belong to our particular fold. We make it too broad when we include every professing Christian, whether he hears Christ's voice or not. It is a flock of "sheep." "One flock, one Shepherd." Things are now tending to this consummation among all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and one day the bright vision of unity, too bright, perhaps, for earth, shall be all fulfilled.

17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. [Isa. liii. 7, 8; Heb. ii. 9. iii. 19. lvi. 38 and xv. 10; Acts ii. 21, 32.]

Any one has power to lay down his own life. Any one who will, may kill himself. (Chap. viii. 22.) But Christ says, "I have power to lay it down," in such sense, that no one can do it against His will. . . . He alone has the disposal of His life, which is not true of us. (1 John iii. 16.) Since, as a sacrifice (Lev. i. 3), Christ was to be innocent, and to be under the punishment of our sin, He could not be the one, and do the other, without His own free consent and approbation. (Matt. xx. 28; Gal. i. 4; Titus ii. 14.) This is the thing which renders His love more worthy of our gratitude and love. He was sacrificed, because He was willing to be sacrificed, and He was willing out of love to us, and out of obedience to His Father.

This commandment, &c. The reference is, we think, to the whole commission given to the Son as the Good Shepherd, the appointed Saviour. (See vi. 38.) The "power" referred to, denotes the power which Jesus essentially possessed, and on account of the possession of which, He was qualified for the work to which He was appointed, and to which He never would have been appointed had He not been thus qualified. "It is," says an old writer, "a greater miracle to convert a sinner, than to raise one from the dead; and, in effect,

the salvation of a sinner is a far greater work of God, than the creation of the world; wherefore, we ought only for this end, to see what the one and the other cost Him. The creation of the world cost Him only a word. 'He said, and all things were made: He commanded, and all things were created;' but the salvation of men cost Him far dearer than words; they cost Him both His blood and His life. Does not Jesus Christ Himself sufficiently signify to us, of how great value it is, in the sight of God, to employ ourselves in the salvation of souls, when He says in John, *It is for this reason that my Father loves me, because I laid down my life?* *S. Thomas* (Aquinas) marks very well, 'He says not that His Father loves Him, because by Him all things were created, but only that His Father loves Him, *because He lays down His life.*' And wherefore does He give His life, but to save men? Whereby we may consequently see, that nothing is more pleasing to God, than to labor for the salvation of souls." So ends the discourse of the good Shepherd. The whole subject should kindle and confirm in us these two feelings: hearty love toward and confidence in Him, who sets Himself forth to us under this touching similitude, and continual carefulness to prove ourselves His true, faithful, loving and obedient sheep. How many since this discourse was written have felt as they read it, "Truly this was the Son of God! How precious are His words! How sweet are His promises! May the Heavenly Shepherd own me as His sheep at the last day!"

^m19. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. 20. And many of them said, "He hath a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?" 21. Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? 22. ¶ And it was at Jerusalem, the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. 23. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 24. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

^mvii. 43 and ix. 16. ^vvii. 20 and viii. 48, 52. ^eEx. iv. 11; Ps. xlv. 9 and cxlvi. 8. ^pix. 6, 7, 32, 33. ^aActs iii. 11 and v. 12.

The audience are not all one willfully opposing mass. As at ix. 16 and vii. 43, there is a *division*. But the opposers are *many*, and the susceptible are only *others*. *He hath a devil*, &c. When our Lord either gave evidence of supernatural knowledge, or delivered doctrines of extraordinary

sublimity, the resource of His sinful hearers was to ascribe His words to demoniacal possession. On this occasion they call Him *mad*. It was the charge which Festus brought against Paul. (Acts xxvi. 24.) Let not the followers of Christ be surprised if they should be spoken of as their Master was. They can scarcely meet with a worse reception than being accused, 1. Of having the spirit of evil. 2. Of being mad. 3. Of being not worth hearing. *Others said*, &c. Among these probably were Gamaliel, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. They defend Him on the score both of His words and works. They argue that the calm, solemn, loving, God-glorifying language just used, was the opposite to that which might be expected of a demoniac, and that no devil, however powerful, could work such a miracle as to open the eyes of the blind.

The feast of the dedication. This was the name of the festival of eight days, occurring in the month Kislen, corresponding to our December, instituted by Judas Maccabæus in commemoration of the purifying of the temple, after its profanation by the cruel and impious Antiochus Epiphanes about one hundred and sixty-five years before the coming of the Lord, and the renewal of the temple worship. The Evangelist tells us it was at *Jerusalem*, because unlike those great festivals which might be held at Jerusalem only, this might also be celebrated in other parts, and he tells us that it was *winter*, in order perhaps to explain why our Lord should be found in that particular part of the temple mentioned in the next verse.

Solomon's porch. It looked toward the East, and is therefore called by Josephus, *the Eastern porch*. It appears that several porticos or piazzas were erected round the temple, in which persons might walk, and the doctors and other masters might communicate oral instruction to their followers, sheltered from the inclemency of the weather. By some this porch was called "Solomon's," not as having been *built* by him, but as standing in the same place, and erected chiefly of materials supplied by the ruins of Solomon's portico. *The Jews*, probably the Pharisees, and particularly members of the Sanhedrim. The

sequel shows that impure motives alone prompted the question. *Make us to doubt, literally, keep us in excitement*, not knowing, &c. *Tell*—as if indeed He had never told and shown them. (See v. 19, viii. 36, 56, 58.) *Plainly*—openly, expressly.

25. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

*Verse 33, iii. 2 and v. 36. *viii. 47; 1 John iv. 6.

I told you, that is, I am the Christ. *And ye believed not: and, for but*. They pretended that they only doubted. Jesus tells them they did not believe. "Skepticism in religion," as *Matthew Henry* says, "is no better than infidelity." "The evidence of religion," remarks *Bishop Butler*, "not appearing obvious, may constitute one particular part of some men's trials in the religious sense, as it gives scope for a virtuous exercise, or vicious neglect of their understanding, in examining or not examining into that evidence. There seems to be no possible reason to be given why we may not be in a state of moral probation, with regard to the exercise of our understanding upon the subject of religion, as we are with regard to our behavior in common affairs. *The works*—which even might have convinced those who do not believe words. *Of me*—that I am the Christ.

Ye are not of my sheep. Our Lord refers again to the allegory He had recently delivered of the shepherd and his sheep. *Ye believe not*. Need we wonder that they did not believe in Him, who would not even hear Him? That is, hear Him with any patience, with any readiness to believe, with any freedom from prejudice and teachableness of spirit, any docility of mind. (See chap. viii. 43.) "That they were not of His sheep, was proved by their unbelief. The want of faith in the doctrines of Christ," says an eminent theologian, "arises out of want of faith in the Teacher, and the want of faith in the Teacher arises out of want of faith in His credentials, and want of faith in these arises out of their not being rightly apprehended, and want of right apprehension arises out of want of right examination, and want of right examination arises out of—it can arise out of nothing else—some modification of immoral principle, profligacy, thoughtless-

ness, or pride—the pride of worldly distinction, or of wisdom, or of self-righteousness. It is unbelief in the first of these phrases, to which our Lord refers here, and He traces it to its true cause."

27. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:—Verses 4, 14.

My sheep attend to, they believe they obey me. (See verse 3.) *And they follow me*—they acknowledge me as their Leader, their Teacher, their Exemplar—they take the course I point out to them, and not only point out to them, but in which I go before them. Such is the character and conduct of my sheep. Such is not your character and conduct. *And I know them*. "I know who are sincere believers in me, and, knowing who are my sheep, I know who are not my sheep—and I know that ye are not of my sheep."

28. And I give unto them eternal life, and *they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29. *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30. *I and my Father are one. *xvi. 37, xvii. 11, 12 and xviii. 9. *xiv. 23. *xvii. 2, 6, &c. *xvii. 11, 22.

Only one thing further our Lord now tells us concerning His sheep; concerning His dealings with them, but it is the crowning mercy. *I give unto them eternal life*. And because they were exposed to danger, "sheep in the midst of wolves," He adds, *and they shall never perish*. They shall not perish forever. They shall not be cast into that "outer darkness." They shall not enter into the miserable portion of those "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." And because their "adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," and his angels are ever seeking the destruction of the sheep, and some unhappy men lend themselves also to be agents in such soul-murder, He adds yet, *neither shall any*, whether man or devil, *pluck them out of my hand*. Here He is glancing at the final security of His flock. Observe how He connects them with Himself, their safety with His hand. They are in His hand, whence it is impossible to pluck them. How vivid it is! the hand which is the emblem of power and of protection. And, as though His own word were not enough, and to show His perfect correspondence and union with the Father, though He is yet on earth, He adds: *My*

Father, which gave them me, is greater than all. He is greater than their foes. He is omnipotent. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" *And none, whether man or devil, is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* If they are in my hand, then they are in His hand.

Having thus made His power to be the same with His Father's, our Lord, lest His hearers should wonder at this, shows them the reason why He said so, adding immediately, *I and my Father are one*—one in essence, and therefore one in power, which otherwise could not be. For, if He was inferior to, or any way different from, His Father in His Essence, He must needs be so in His power too; and therefore the occasion of His uttering these words sufficiently demonstrates that to be His meaning in them. (Chap. xiv. 11, xv. 24; Deut. vi. 4.) And yet He speaks of Himself and the Father, as two distinct persons, and He names Himself first, because speaking here of His Divine Essence, which is the same in both, it is no matter which is named first, there being no such thing, in that respect, as first and last between them, for they are both one and the same Eternal God. (Chap. i. 1, 2, xvi. 3.)

31. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which of those works do ye stone me? 33. The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34. Jesus answered them, *Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?* 35. If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36. Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? 37. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

viii. 59. cv. 18. *Ps. lxxxii. 6. *Rom. xlii. 1. cvi. 27. [†]ii. 17, v. 36, 37 and viii. 62. [‡]iv. 17, 18; verse 30. [§]Luke i. 35; chap. ix. 35, 37. ^{||}xv. 24. [¶]iv. 36 and xiv. 10, 11. ^{|||}xiv. 10, 11 and xvii. 21.

Took up, literally, *bore* in the hand. They held the stones in readiness to throw at Him. *Again.* (See viii. 39.) The stones were in all probability large blocks lying hard by for the repairs of the temple. "Behold," says *Augustine*, "the Jews understood what Arians do not understand." *Jesus answered*, &c. Our Lord might have commanded fire to descend from heaven, and consume them for their sin, but He replies by putting a very touching, melting question, one would think enough to move them. Observe, 1. His *works*. He came

into the world not to live a life of idleness and ease, but to work. 2. Their quality—"good works." His works were works of mercy and power. Either consideration should have weighed with these men who were the subjects of such works. The mercy of them appealed to their sense of gratitude, the power of them to their sense of justice. The former showed how He had felt for these, the latter how He had proved His claim. Notice that Jesus does not shrink from His statement in verse 30. 3. Their number. "Many." His enemies acknowledge this. "This man doeth many miracles." His miracles tended to confirm one another. We have many recorded, but the half is not told us. (See xxi. 25.) There is enough to assure us that He is the Son of God. 4. Their manifestation—"have I showed you." These vile creatures who attempted to stone Him had been eye-witnesses of many of His wonderful works. They were shown, not for ostentation, but for conviction. 5. Their appointment—"from my Father." As Mediator, He acted as the Father's servant. They were works out of the ordinary course of nature, above the power of a mere man to perform. For these good works they ought to have admired, loved and received Christ, but how different was the conduct they evinced! How deep and dark the depravity of man! Jesus is still stoned in His religion, His cause, and His people. An injury done to them He considers as done to Himself. "If in the hour of prosperity, our hearts should be lifted up, or in the day of adversity depressed, if we should murmur that our good deeds are treated with contempt, and our benevolence returned with ingratitude, let us fix our eyes on the cross of Christ, and tremble and repent." (See Ps. cix. 1-4; Gal. vi. 9.)

For a good work we stone thee not, &c. Observe how exactly our blessed Lord's true meaning was apprehended by these sinful men, namely, that He is of *one substance with the Father*. Clear-sighted enough were they to see in His words the assertion of that sublime truth which modern unbelievers have professed themselves unable to discover there. *For blasphemy*—whose legal punishment was stoning. (Lev. xxiv.

11-16.) *Thou, being a man, i. e., a man only, makest thyself God.* Twice before they understood Him to advance the same claim, and both times they prepared themselves to avenge what they took to be the insulted honor of God, as here, in the way directed by their law. (v. 18, viii. 59.) Would not Christ have corrected them in a point of such unspeakable moment, if they had really mistaken His meaning? Would He not, like Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, have disavowed with horror and indignation all pretensions to Divinity, had He not in deed and in truth been Divine? Would He, like impious Herod, have acquiesced, remarkable as He was in meekness and lowliness of heart, in the supposed arrogation of deity, if He had not been God and man in One Person? (John i. 19-23; Acts xii. 22, 23; Rev. xix. 10.)

Is it not written in your law, &c. The term "law," here as elsewhere in this Gospel, is not to be restricted to the five books of Moses, but comprises the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures. In this answer, which is a conclusion from the less to the greater, Jesus shows, 1. That His claim is perfectly sustained by the Old Testament, that the term *God* is and may be extended down from God to one "being a man," so that it is no blasphemy to suppose that it includes His human person. But, 2. He has a supernatural claim to the *Divine*, running upward they know not how high. 3. His works, performed in unison with His words, authenticate from God whatever claims He presumes to make. If his works are from God, then His words are *from the Father*. And, then, His Sonship is demonstrated. Thus does this argument furnish a bridge for these Jews to admit His Divinity. Nothing but their unchanging preference for a human hero-Messiah prevents their ascending the bridge He presents with the step of a firm faith. When magistrates and judges are in Scripture called *gods*, the Holy Spirit always adds something, which excludes them from a true Divinity, as that "they shall die like men" (Ps. lxxxii. 6), or they are "rulers of the people." (Ex. xxii. 28.) Whereas, when Christ is called God, it is either with some epithet belonging to the Supreme God, as "God over all" (Rom. ix. 5), "the great

God" (Titus ii 13), "the true God" (1 John v. 20), or with addition of some operation proper to God, as when it is said, "The Word was God, and all things were made by Him. (John i. 1, 3.) *Unto whom the word of God came.* This refers probably to their commission as judges, which being in conformity with the requisitions of the Mosaic law, was ordained of God. This establishes the point of comparison between them and Jesus, whom the Father had consecrated to the work whereunto He had been sent. *The Scripture cannot be broken, i. e., loosed, or untied.* This is a decisive testimony of our Lord to the Divine inspiration of the Old Testament.

Whom the Father hath sanctified. Let it be noted, that Jesus does not say, "of Him, whom God hath sanctified," but "of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified," intimating that His original claim to have God for His Father was not because He was sanctified by God, that is, chosen and set apart to the office assigned Him, and so sent into the world, but, contrariwise, that by God, already His Father, He was sanctified and sent into the world. *Sent into the world.* It may be said of every man, that God "sent him into the world." It is, however, *not said* in Scripture of any other man except our Lord, but of Him frequently. "To send," applied to rational creatures, presupposes a capacity of being sent, as moral agents, and to "send into the world" in this sense, evidently implies pre-existence. (vi. 36-40, xvi. 25-30, verses 28-30; 1 Tim. i. 15, 16; verse 15; Heb. ii. 10-15.) *If I do not the works of my Father, &c.* What are the Jews to believe? That He is "the Son of God," a conception whose purport is unfolded in verse 38; see also verse 25. This they were to regard *Him* as being, and to believe therefore in His *word*, and in the impression which it produces. (viii. 43.) If they cannot, however, dispense with the mediation of something which addresses the senses, His works can furnish testimony, corresponding to chap. xiv. 10, 11. These can lead to an acknowledgment that Christ works in unity with the Father. (Comp. v. 19, 30.) *That the Father is in me, and I in him.* "By these words," says Bloomfield, "our Lord meant communion of mind and equality of

power. It is plain that the Jews clearly understood that He claimed and ascribed to Himself the attributes of Godhead, and made Himself equal with the Father." Such language can never be reconciled with the views of Socinians.

39. "Therefore they sought again to take him, but he escaped out of their hand." 40. "And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized, and there he abode."—vii. 33, 44 and viii. 59. "i. 28.

Reason and argument, mercy and miracle, Divine power and Divine goodness, all were lost upon these men, whose hearts were harder than the stones which they held in their hasty hands. Again they attempted with murderous hearts and impious hands, to lay hold on the Prince of Life. But, for that His hour was not yet come, again He exerts His Divine power (see viii. 59), and by a miraculous exertion of it again escapes their hand, preserving for the present that life which now they took in intent, as, by and bye, in reality. *Beyond Jordan*—to the department of Herod Antipas, to Bethany, in fact, in the district in which John had commenced his ministry, and had uttered the testimony given, i. 19, &c. How long the Saviour remained here, depends on the time we allow for His staying in Ephraim (xi. 54), from whence He journeyed to the passover. His operations were interrupted by the message from the family of Lazarus.

41. "And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true."—xiii. 33.

Many came to Jesus, to listen to His instructions, and to be healed of their infir-

mities. *John did no miracle.* Here, a very important testimony against those who would explain the miracles of Jesus as fables, springing from the morbid love of marvels, is found in the observation, that the Baptist, though it might certainly be looked for from him as a prophet, performed no miracle. It has been well said of John, that, "performing no miracle, he was himself a miracle through all future ages. Though he did no miracle, while so many far less distinguished saints accomplished many, yet no saint exists in whose person, and for whose sake, so many miracles were vouchsafed."

42. "And many believed on him there."—viii. 30 and xi. 45.

Delightful and refreshing is it, amid the many examples of the "contradiction of sinners" (Heb. xii. 3), to meet with the many brief notices, such as this, of the Church's early increase. Silently and calmly in the despised Galilee, in the hated Samaria, in the parts beyond Jordan, at Bethany, in the hostile capital itself—silently and secretly are the living stones found to have been wrought into beauty by the hand of the Divine Artist, whereby *that* came to pass in respect of God's spiritual temple which had been exhibited in type in the construction of His material temple—"the House, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building." (1 Kings vi. 7.)

1. What is said of the sheep-fold? 2. Who is the door of the sheep? 3. What is said of any man entering in by the door? 4. Who is the good Shepherd? 5. Why is Christ the good Shepherd? 6. What does the Saviour say of "other sheep?" 7. What effect had these sayings on the Jews? 8. What did the Jews ask Jesus? 9. What was His answer? 10. What did He say when they threatened to stone Him? 11. Where did He go when He escaped from their hands? 12. What occurred there?

CHAPTER XI.

¹ Christ raiseth Lazarus, four days buried. ⁴⁵ Many Jews believe. ⁴⁷ The high priests and Pharisees gather a council against Christ. ⁴⁹ Cyprian prophesieth. ⁵¹ Jesus hid himself. ⁵⁵ At the passover they enquire after him, and lay wait for him.

"The question," says Dr. Wordsworth, "why the raising of Lazarus, related in this chapter, is not described by the three Evangelists who wrote before John, may be a perplexing one to those who do not acknowledge that all the Gospels are but one Gospel, that they are all from One Everlasting Spirit, who, when He was inspiring Matthew, *foreknew* that He would also inspire John, and when He wrote some things by the first three Evangelists, knew *what* He would write by the fourth and last. But they who believe that this was the case, are not staggered here. They do not read the Sermon on the Mount in John, but in Matthew. But they read other Divine discourses of our blessed Lord, in John, concerning the highest mysteries of the truth, which they do not read in any of the other three, and they expect to find Divine works also in John's Gospel which they do not find recorded in them. The Holy Spirit doubtless exercised His Divine influence over the minds of the Evangelists, not only by suggestion and dictation, but also by restraint. He inspired them not only in what they wrote, but in what they did not write. There is inspiration in their silence."

Bayle observes of Spinoza, "I have been assured that he said to his friends, that if he could be convinced of the reality of the resurrection of Lazarus, he would dash to pieces his entire system, and would embrace, without reluctance, the ordinary faith of Christians." And wherefore was it that the Jewish philosopher believed not this narrative? When we consider the place, the time, the circumstances, and the singular publicity of the miracle, it really seems to require more credulity to deny it than to believe it. The difficulties of disbelieving it are far greater than those of believing it. "If all the circumstances do not establish the truth of the miracle," says Tittman, the German commentator, "there is no truth in history." "It is

more largely recorded than any other of Christ's miracles," remarks Matthew Henry, "not only because there are so many circumstances in it so very instructive, and the miracle itself is so very great a proof of His mission, but because it was an earnest of that which was to be the crowning proof of all—Christ's own resurrection."

NOW a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.—^aLuke x. 38, 39.

NOW. In the original *but*, to show why the privacy of our Lord was interrupted, and He deemed it proper to return again into Judea. Lazarus is not mentioned by the other Evangelists: his name occurs for the first time in this passage. Lazarus, or rather *Eleazar*, which is the same word, and which occurs twenty or thirty times in the Old Testament, first, in Ex. vi. 25, denotes one "whom God aids." It may be inferred from many things, that Lazarus was the younger, and his sisters older. *Bethany*, a village on the eastern declivity of the Mount of Olives. *The town of Mary &c.*—the place where they lived. It was thus distinguished from the Bethany of His baptism and retirement. It will be observed that the Evangelist presumes his readers to be acquainted with this family; he subsequently, indeed, designates Mary more particularly; he has also placed her name first, yet so as to show that he supposes her work of love to which he alludes, already known. It seems that Martha was the elder sister, verse 5, 19. Both these pious sisters were affectionately attached to our Lord, and although the elder manifested her affection by her constant and unwearied services for Him, and the younger by sitting at His feet (Luke x. 38-42), there can be no doubt that each was equally the object of our Saviour's love, and preparing, though by a different education, for His kingdom and glory.

2. ^bIt was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

^bMatt. xxvi. 7; Mark xiv. 3; chap. xii. 3.

That Mary. This note of distinction is added, lest any might mistake her for one of those other Marys mentioned in the Gospels. John proves her pious affection

toward Jesus at the present, as he elsewhere proves the traitor's disloyalty, by a subsequent act. (xii. 3.) By one marked act, either good or bad, one may become forever notable. *Which anointed, &c.* (See on Matt. xxvi. 7-13; Mark xiv. 3, &c.) Not merely by her brother's restoration was Mary first stimulated to such a work.

3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.—Phil. ii. 26, 27.

Behold, &c. "This was a very short letter," says *Bishop Patrick*, "and their grief perhaps would not allow them to write a longer. Oh, how great power was there in these few words! They say no more to move Him. He could not choose but go, when He heard this charming word, *he whom thou lovest is sick*. He who loves needs but know, this suffices. The sisters' strong affection for their brother here appears. In sickness we should implore the aid and presence of Jesus. He only can restore us and our friends: He only can cheer us with the hope of a blessed resurrection.

4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.—^aix. 3; verse 40.

He said, that is, to the person who brought the tidings, that he might bear back the reply to Mary and Martha. *Not unto death*. The expression, in the original, is not designed to exclude altogether the idea of dying, but (as the words "but for the glory of God" show) the *remaining* in death. The dying, however, was to prove only the means to the glory of God, and of the Son of God. (See on ix. 3.) Verse 11 shows that Jesus knew of the death of Lazarus. *But for, i. e.*, for the sake of, *the glory of God, &c.* The raising of Lazarus from the dead opened the eyes of the people to the truth of our Lord's claim to the Messiahship, more than any other miracle which He had performed. (See verse 45; also xii. 9, 10, 11, 17.) But so intimate and essential was the union between Him and the Father, that the glory of the one was that also of the other. Hence, the glory of both Father and Son is represented as resulting from this event of Lazarus' sickness. (verse 23 and xiii. 31.) "Taught of God," says *Cecil*, "we should view our losses, sickness, pain, and death, as the several trying stages, by which a good

man, like Joseph, is conducted from a tent to a court, sin his disorder, Christ his physician, pain his medicine, the Bible his support, the grave his bed, and death itself an angel, expressly sent to release the worn-out traveler, or crown the faithful soldier. (Ps. lxxi. 18, cxviii. 18.)"

5. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

What a picture! one that in every age has attracted the admiration of the whole Christian church. No wonder that those miserable skeptics who have carped at the ethical system of the Gospel, as not embracing private friendships in the list of its virtues, have been referred to the Saviour's peculiar regard for this family as a triumphant refutation, if such were needed. They were wont to receive Jesus at their house. God is well pleased when the doors of hospitality are freely opened to the poor and needy and persecuted, for His Name's sake. (See Gen. xviii.; 1 Kings xvii. 9; 2 Kings iv. 8; Matt. x. 41; Acts xvi. 15.)

6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

^aChap. x. 40.

Two days still, &c.—at least twenty-five miles off. Jesus did not reach Bethany till Lazarus had been four days in the grave. (Verse 17.) Lazarus must therefore have been at his last extremity when the sisters sent to Christ. Jesus saw reasons for suffering Lazarus to remain so long dead. Thus He would be the more abundantly glorified by his final restoration to life, for it should seem less difficult to restore to life the recently dead, than those in whom the process of corruption has commenced. It may also have been part of His design to allow the grief of the sisters for the loss of their brother to reach its height, so that the relief He meant to bring might make the more abiding, and therefore more salutary, impression, acting thus after the manner of our Heavenly Father, who often affords the first relief in the moment of greatest sorrow and extremest need. (See iv. 47-49; Mark v. 24-25.)

7. Then after that salth he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. 8. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again? 9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

^aix. 31. ^bix. 4. ^cxii. 35.

After that—when the period both of waiting and duty had expired. Our Lord moves by the clock of His Father's time-keeping. *Master, the Jews of late, &c.* It is observable that our Lord's delay (verse 6) in going to Bethany seems to have occasioned no surprise to the disciples, though they were indeed surprised, as this verse shows, at His afterward proposing to go. They even remonstrate with Him against it. That which is here done by our Divine Master, in order to raise a dead person, teaches His ministers that nothing ought to hinder them from using their utmost endeavors to raise those souls which God either particularly intrusts or providentially recommends to their care.

Are there not twelve hours in the day? He that expects to look back hereafter with satisfaction upon past years, must learn to know the present value of single minutes, and endeavor to let no particle of time fall useless to the ground. (Luke xix. 13.) "A chief part of David's arithmetic in numbering our days," says Gurnall, "lies in that which we call *division*, to cast the account of this our short life, so as to divide the whole little sum thereof into the several portions of time, due for the performing of every duty in. (Gen. xlvii. 9; Ps. xc. 12.) *If any man walk in the day, &c.* The Lord's answer is addressed not so much to the direct question of His disciples, as to the state of mind which prompts that question. The whole is this: There is no danger to men who walk while the light lasts, the danger is only after the sun has set, and when darkness has come on. Then indeed a man may stumble, because he has no light which shall supply the place of the natural luminary which has departed. But as for me, it is still broad daylight with me. My day is not yet come to its close. I can still see my way clearly. And as for you, for doubtless they had hinted also danger to *themselves* (see verses 12, 16), when they intimated danger unto *Him*, fear not. Your safety is bound up in mine.

11. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth* but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.
12. Deut. xxxi. 16; Dan. xii. 2; Matt. ix. 24; Acts vii. 60; 1 Cor. xv. 18, 51.

Jesus here breaks the fact that Lazarus is dead to His disciples. He does it in

words of matchless beauty and tenderness. The announcement would be more literally rendered, "Lazarus, the friend of us, has been laid asleep." Lazarus had shown them kindness, as well as Himself. "*Sleepeth*" means, "is dead." (See Luke viii. 41, 42, 49-55.) It is a gentle and pathetic way of expressing the most painful of events that can befall man, and a most suitable one, when we remember that after death comes resurrection. In dying we are not annihilated. Like sleepers, we lie down to rise again. The Christian, however, is the only one who can truly regard death as a sleep—that is, as a healthy, refreshing sleep, which can do him no harm. The idea of a man being awakened out of the sleep of death was not confined to Christianity, it is to be found also in the Old Testament, and among the Jews. Even to a more cultivated Paganism it was not altogether unknown. But how different the *quietus* or repose some of their sublime philosophers hoped for, to that which, through Christ, the simplest believer now may be sure of. Each one of Christ's believing people is His "friend." He is the "friend of Christ" even after he is dead. The expression "our," attached to friend, teaches the beautiful lesson that every friend of Christ is or should be the friend of all true Christians. Believers are all one family of brothers and sisters, and members of one body. *I go that I may awake him, &c.* These words proclaim Christ's deliberate intention and purpose to raise Lazarus from the dead. He boldly challenges the attention of the disciples, and declares that He is going to Bethany to restore a dead man to life. Never was bolder declaration made. None surely would make it but One who knew that He was very God. "There seems to me," says Dr. Arnold, "to be contained in these few words one of the most powerful charms in the world, to lull the bitterness of death, and to make us anxious to become such, as that we may humbly venture to apply them to ourselves. (Rom. viii. 1,)"

12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he *sleepeth*, he shall do well. 13. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. 14. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

The disciples seem to have misinterpreted-

ed the words in verse 4, of a promise that Lazarus should recover from his sickness, and hence they regarded the declaration in verse 11 as referring to natural and refreshing rest indicating his speedy restoration to health. *Shall do well*, literally, *shall be saved* from death, i. e., shall recover his health. *Howbeit Jesus spake*, &c. In order that the omniscience of Jesus may not be questioned, the Evangelist expressly declares that He referred to the death of Lazarus, although His disciples so misconceived the meaning of His words. This is rendered still more certain in ver. 14, where Jesus announces in plain terms the death of Lazarus, which He could have obtained from no human source. *Then said Jesus unto them plainly*. It is the way of the Scriptures, after hard things, to join other things that are plain. *Lazarus is dead*. He is dead in respect of me, as I am a man, he *sleeps* in my bosom, as I am the living God.

15. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe, nevertheless let us go unto him.

We are said to *believe*, when faith has its increase in our souls, as well as its first beginning. Here we see, 1. Not only that our Saviour is alive to the welfare of His disciples, but that there is nothing He is so much concerned to promote in them as their faith. 2. That the Saviour can accomplish His purposes in a manner peculiarly His own. All the friends of Lazarus would have supposed that as soon as ever He was informed of his affliction, He should have hastened to the scene of distress, and at least have expressed His sympathy. But hear Him: "All has been proper and necessary. I know what I have done, and why I have done it. I know it now, and you will know it soon. Then you will be glad with me. Then you will see that it was far better that Lazarus should be raised from the dead after he had lain in the grave four days, than have been only recovered from a bed of sickness." Thus Jesus brings the blind by a way that they know not. *Nevertheless let us go unto him*—not to *them*, but to *him*—not to the sisters, but to the brother. "Lazarus is dead, and it would be too late for you, but not for me. Your extremity is my opportunity." Jesus is never too

confident in His resources, nor too late in His movements. Let Christ's all-sufficiency encourage us with regard to others. Let those who in doing good meet with unlikely materials to work upon, let ministers who seem only preaching many of their hearers into impenitence, let parents whose hearts are bleeding over ungodly children, think of Him who was taking this seemingly useless, but really successful journey, and never abandon their endeavors or hope.

16. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.—[Luke xxii. 23.]

Thomas is always distinguished by the name of Didymus, that is, two-fold; to show, say some, the twins, struggling in him, of faith and unbelief, of flesh and spirit. (xx. 24, 25; Gen. xxv. 22.) What our Saviour, in saying that *Lazarus was dead, and I am glad*, &c., urged expressly for an encouragement of their faith, Thomas's reasoning turned immediately into an argument of distrust; as is apparent from what he said to his fellow disciples upon this occasion. *Let us also go, that we may die with him*. When he saw his Master resolved to go, he wound up all into this sort of reasoning despair—"Lazarus is dead, and all his pains and fears are over: and better it were for us, if ours were so too. The Jews' malice is bent upon the destruction of us all; and if our Master could not save His principal friend from death, what hope is there of His saving us? Let us go then and meet our doom as patiently as we can." (Verses 7, 8.)

John in but three instances furnishes us with traits of this disciple; namely, here and in xiv. 5, and in xx. 24, &c., but they are in such harmony as to furnish a picture of character. Intellectual reflection predominates in this disciple, immediateness of self-surrender and of trust was in defect, here, consequently he is unable to lift himself up to Christ's word; he gives proof, indeed, of some devotion, as for love of Him he will not shrink from death, but he shows faint-heartedness enough to doubt whether their lives will be saved.

17. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. 18. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: 19. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to

comfort them concerning their brother. 20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house. 21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.—*ix. 31.*

Had lain in the grave four days. Martha and Mary had not, probably, ventured to send to the Lord for help, till the sickness of their brother had assumed a most alarming character, and he had most likely died upon the same day that the messenger announcing his illness had reached the Lord, else he would scarcely have been four days in his grave when Jesus came. *Fifteen furlongs off*—about two miles. *Many of the Jews, &c.* The nearness to Jerusalem is mentioned to explain why so many Jews were present. The number that had come suggests that the family of Bethany was held in high esteem. Thereby the miracle was plentifully witnessed and published. Few of these comforters sympathized with the Christian hopes of these sisters. But the true Comforter was on His way. Jesus visits His “faithful among the faithless.”

Then Martha, as soon as she heard, &c. The burial over, according to the custom of the Jews, the sorrowing sisters were within, surrounded by sympathizing friends, and fulfilling the days of their mourning. At length, but, alas! how much too late, they hear the clamor of the approaching multitude, that Jesus, attended by His disciples, is drawing near the town, Martha, who, even in the extremity of her sorrow, is still the same energetic being that she ever was, hastens forth to meet Him, while Mary, absorbed in grief (how true to nature is the narrative), *sat still in the house.* The undesigned coincidence (See Luke x. 38-42) marks the identity of character and the truthfulness of the Evangelist. Quietness before God is one of the most difficult of all Christian graces, to sit, where He places us, to be what He would have us to be, and this as long as He pleases. (xiii. 37; Gen. xxiv. 48.)

The sisters, both of them, though so different in their turn of mind, greet Jesus with the same pathetic salutation, *Lord, if thou hadst been, &c.* (See verse 32.) How truly the heart, when deeply moved, is the same in all—and how much all grief is alike! In this address, 1. There

is the feeling that the event *might* have been otherwise. “*If thou hadst,*” &c. Both were pious women, yet both betrayed the weakness of their faith. (Verse 39.) Were they not aware that, though He was not there, yet, if He had so ordered it, and but spoken the word, their brother would not have died? We must look beyond second causes to Him who is the first Cause of all things. We should believe and be sure that the circumstances which we regret as the occasion of our affliction are but the appointed means of bringing about what He determines, and what, without them equally well as with them, He might accomplish. If evil come upon us, if our brother die, it is not because this or that accident prevented relief; it is not because He was not there in time, but because it was His will. 2. There may be somewhat of the feeling that the event *should* have been otherwise. When our friends are removed by death, we should, as Christians, remember that God may have many purposes in view with which we may be unacquainted, which, indeed, we could not as yet comprehend, and rest in the assurance that all things will work together for our good. 3. There is apparent a sincere, though melancholy satisfaction in meeting with Jesus at last. He had not come so soon as they expected and desired, still He is come for good, and gratefully do they receive Him. Happy will it be for us, if in like circumstances we are enabled to feel as these sisters felt, and to meet our Saviour’s gracious advances as they did.

But I know, that even now, &c. Martha’s faith, though still imperfect, rises immeasurably in degree between the utterances of these two sentences. (See verse 21.) In the first she appears to believe that all was lost; in the second, she has already attained to the conviction that the prayer of Christ would be undeniable, she wants but one step more, viz.: that the will of Christ was as omnipotent as His prayer, and her belief would be perfected; and even this advancement was not long withheld.

23. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.
24. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

¹Luke xiv. 14; chap. v. 29.

As Jesus did not declare when her brother should rise, nor that He Himself would bring him to life, Martha regarded His words only as a source of consolation, arising out of the doctrine of the resurrection. She cannot believe that they mean more than that he, with all other faithful Israelites, will stand in his lot at the last day. This, at any other time, she would be far from being disposed to undervalue; but now it seems to her so remote, while her loss is altogether recent. Hence, with a slight movement of impatience at comfort that so little met the present longings of her heart, which were to have her brother now, she answers, *I know that he shall rise, &c.*—words which indicate the common faith of the Jews of her day in the resurrection of the body, on the closing day of this world's history. But see how the Lord proceeds to instruct and to elevate her mind, how graciously He bears with this passing fretfulness, how tenderly he touches these still open wounds, how He leads her from grieving over her brother, to believe yet more fully in her Saviour, how he raises her from dwelling upon Lazarus dead, to repose implicitly in Him who is the Lord of life, how He diverts her from thinking only of a remote and general resurrection, to confide in Him who is even at this present the Resurrection and the Life.

25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? *Mat. vi. 21 and vi. 39, 40. Luk. 4, vi. 35 and xiv. 6: Col. iii. 4; 1 John i. 1, 2 and v. 11. Phil. 3; 1 John v. 10, &c.*

This is the only true comfort in respect to the future state. He is the only true Comforter, who can speak, not merely of the immortality of the soul, and of the resurrection of the body, but of Himself as the life of the immortal soul, and the quickener of the risen body, the first begotten from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. Christ is the resurrection and the life, 1. As He is the announcer of the doctrine. It is a truth of pure revelation. The book in which it is contained is called "the Word of Christ." 2. As He affords the pledge. He passed through the regions of the dead, and reached the crown that He now wears. And there is a union between Him and His people, be-

cause He lives, they shall live also. 3. As He procures the privilege. Jesus has redeemed our whole nature, and the body being ransomed, as well as the spirit, by no less a price than His own blood, shall be equally claimed, and renewed, and glorified. 4. As He is the Pattern. He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." *He that believeth in me, &c.* Here, as often in our Lord's words, the temporal death is taken no account of, but quite overlooked, and the believer in Him is contemplated as already lifted above death, and made partaker of everlasting life. (John vi. 47.) The deceased Christian, since he believed in Jesus, while he lived, is not to be properly accounted among the dead now, for his soul, his better part, is now alive, and his dead body shall live again, as soon as Jesus shall call for it. The power, which Christ here asserts, in regard to a two-fold death, one of the body, and another of the soul, furnishes full and clear proof of His equality with the Father. *Believest thou this?* "Believest thou that it is I who am this Lord of life and death? Does thy faith in the Divine verities of the resurrection and eternal life after death center in me?" It is neither the certainty, nor the goodness, nor the greatness of anything, but the lively faith which we have of it implanted in our souls, that will make us seek and labor for it.

27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: for I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Mat. xv. 16; chap. iv. 42 and vi. 14, 69.

"Yea, Lord, I believe. I have believed it, in spite of my petulance, all along. I believe it now more than ever. I trust Thee after this my loss even more than before. I have not lost, but rather increased my sure confidence in Thee." "Her answer," says an old writer, "may seem irrelevant: He questions her about the resurrection, she professes her faith in His incarnation. No, she speaks, like a right believer: yield thy faith to that great work of His birth and incarnation, thou wilt never shrink from the hardest truths and most improbable, as this one was, a dead man's resurrection."

28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. 29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. 30. Now

Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31. *The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

*1 Thes. v. 11; Heb. xii. 12. †Ps. xxvii. 8 and cxix. 59, 60. ‡Verse 19.

She went her way, &c. Jesus may have directed her to go. Or Martha may have understood the turn which the conversation had taken, as a call for the presence of her sister, whom she may have regarded as better able to answer the searching questions of Jesus, and as likely to take a deep interest in the subjects upon which she was herself receiving instruction. *Secretly*—so that she might enjoy a more private and uninterrupted interview with Jesus, than if she should openly announce His presence in the hearing of the Jews who were with her. *Master* means literally *teacher*, and was a title which He claimed for Himself. (See Matt. xxiii. 8, 10.) *Call-eth for thee*. It is not actually recorded that our Saviour asked for Mary. That He “called her,” we learn from these words of her sister. In this way, many little circumstances, perhaps unsuspected by careless readers, are revealed both in the Old and New Testaments. *She arose* from her posture of grief. (See verse 20.) *Quickly*, being incited to haste by the love which she bore her Lord, and by the hopeful, cheerful expression, which appeared in Martha’s tone and countenance. *But was in that place, &c.* Jesus had not entered the village. Why was this? Was it that He desired to avoid display? According to the ordinary view, it was simply because of the fact that the place of sepulture was outside of the village, and this view is favored by verse 31. *When they saw Mary, &c.* The Orientals, to this day, repair frequently, as in ancient times, to the graves of their loved ones. “For three days the grave of the dead is visited.” As Mary hastens to the vicinity of the place of burial, the Jews who were present (verse 19) suppose that she is about to perform that duty, and hasten after her.

32. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

†Verse 21, on which see notes.

The same faith in Christ, as being “the Son of God,” which Martha at fuller length expressed by her words, Mary more

concisely declared by her act of adoration. She utters, like Martha, her double note of sorrow over *what is*, and *what, alas!* as she thinks, *might have been*, but, unlike Martha, she utters no saving clause of hope. (Verse 22.) Grief has choked her utterance, and overmastered her soul. How apt we are, in seasons of affliction, to waste our time and our thoughts in dwelling on second causes, on that fruitful, yet most unfruitful, monosyllable, “*if!*” How much better would our time and thoughts be employed in meditating on Holy Scripture, and especially in remembering for our comfort, that when we are found in the path of duty, however dark or crooked that path may be, we can never with any truth complain, *If thou hadst been here!* (Ps. lxxiii. 21–25.)

33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, 34. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.—^aHeb. iv. 15 and v. 7, 8.

Saw her weeping. No more effectual, no more mighty prayer, than are our tears. Tears brought to pass, what words could not, that Jesus was troubled in His spirit. (Ps. lvi. 3, xxxix. 13; 1 Sam. i. 10, 13; Luke vii. 38, 44.) *He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled*, was filled with painful emotion. He sympathized deeply with these afflicted sisters, for He possessed all the tender sensibilities of human nature. *Where have ye laid him?* Jesus asks the initiatory question in relation to His wondrous work, not of course as needing the information, but in accordance with the conversational customs of the East, and as leading the way to the invitation. All through we may observe the absence of all haste, the shrouding and obscuring of Deity in humanity, till the due moment come, when the clouds give way, and the Divine Sun breaks forth shining in His strength. *Come and see.* It was important that Christ should avoid any appearance of collusion, or deceit, which the Pharisees of those days, and the infidels of future ones, might have urged against Him, had He gone directly to the sepulchre. This is wholly precluded by the earnest desire of His friends to show Him the way thereto.

35. Jesus wept.

Job xxx. 25; Luke xix. 41; Heb. ii. 16.

Is it for nothing that the Evangelist,

some *sixty years* after it occurred, holds up to all ages with such touching brevity the sublime spectacle of the Son of God in tears? What a seal of His perfect oneness with us in the most redeeming feature of our stricken humanity? But was there nothing in those tears beyond sorrow for human suffering and death? Could these *effects* move Him without suggesting the *cause*? Who can doubt that in His ear every feature of the scene proclaimed that stern law of the kingdom—"The wages of sin is death," and that this element in His visible emotion underlay all the rest? O what a friend is this! What a brother, yea, and far more than a brother, and how confidently may we come to Him, as Christian mourners, in every season of trial. Our complaints, our regrets, our expostulations, our very remonstrances almost, and upbraidings, may all be expressed to Him. The weeping of Christ shows us that it is not sinful to sorrow. It also shows us that deep feeling is not a thing of which we need be ashamed. To be cold and stoical and unmoved in the sight of sorrow is no sign of grace. There is nothing unworthy of a child of God in tears.

38. Then said the Jews. Behold how he loved him! 37. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? 38. Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 39. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days. 40. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? ix. 6. *Verses 4, 23.

The exclamation, *Behold how he loved him*, was made by some of the Jews present, who were moved to good will by this lively sympathy of the Lord with the sorrows of those around Him. Others, perhaps, invidiously said, *Could not this man, &c.* He weeps over this calamity now, but could He not have hindered it? (See ix.) *Again groaning.* As before. (Verse 33.) It is not improbable that Jesus, who before groaned in Himself for compassion of their tears, now groaned for their incredulity. Nothing could so afflict the Saviour of men, as the sins of men. *It was a cave, &c.* The Jewish sepulchres consisted of subterranean caves hewn out in the rock, or (as in so rocky and cavernous a country as Judea) shaped into proper form, with a *foramen*, closed with a huge

stone, instead of a door. This stone was called *gole*, the *roller*. The corpses were placed in repositories hollowed out on the sides of the cave. *And a stone lay upon it.* The particle rendered "upon," should be rendered *at, against*, for the Jewish tombs opened on the side.

Take ye away the stone, &c. "The dead man beneath the stone," says *Augustine*, "is the guilty sinner under the law. (Gal. iii. 21, 22.) The letter, that killeth, is the stone, that keeps us down." "*Remove,*" He says, "*the stone.*" Take away the dead weight of the Law. Preach the grace of the Gospel. (Ex. xxxi. 18; 2 Cor. iii. 6.) *Martha saith unto him, &c.* He who has studied the human heart, he who has studied his own heart, will not regard as strange things those rapid changes of feeling, and quick flows and ebbs of faith, in any one, much less in one so susceptible to instant impression as Martha. But Jesus reminded her that He had already in effect, perhaps in the conversation He held with her when she went out to meet Him, told her that if she would believe, she should behold the glory of God. At these words, faith once more gushed up in her heart, like a spring of water, and the Redeemer was no longer obstructed by her unbelief. *See the glory of God.* See here the connection between faith and sight. We believe first, and then see.

41. Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus *lifted up his eyes*, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.—xii. 30.

Then they took away the stone, &c. What man can do, man must do, or God will never interfere to effect what man is unable to perform. *Lifted up his eyes.* We have no other recorded instance of a prayer offered by Jesus previous to His performance of a miracle. The design would seem to have been to prevent those present from inferring that He raised Lazarus by any act of His own dissociated from the Father, or that in this, as well as in every other proof which He gave of His Divine mission, He was not acting in submission to the will and purpose of Him who sent Him. *Father, I thank thee, &c.* "I praise Thee, O Father, that Thou hast always heard my secret prayers, and I

know that Thou *will* always hear them, but now I pray aloud on account of the people which stand by," &c.

43. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and this face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

xxx. 7.

With a loud voice—as was not His ordinary custom. This was in order to call the attention of the entire multitude to the act demonstrating His miraculous intention, and to furnish a powerful emblem of the mighty call by which He will summon the nations of the dead to the resurrection. *Come forth.* It is spoken, it is done; nature hears His voice, and confessing her Author instantly obeys the dread command. (Ps. cxlviii. 5.) *And he that was dead,* &c. By a power Divine the disembodied spirit was fetched back from the world of spirits, reunited to the body, fitted for its habitation. The damage done by “decay’s effacing fingers” already repaired, death’s work undone, corruption’s hideous task retrieved “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” Notice the progressive stages in the three instances recorded in the Gospels of resurrection from the dead. First comes the daughter of Jairus, recently departed; then the widow’s son at Nain, at the gates of the grave, being carried to his burial; lastly, this of Lazarus, rescued even from corruption. *Bound hand and foot,* &c. Bandages were often, in the East, bound around each limb of the corpse. These bandages, however, were not so very tight as entirely to hinder motion, when life was restored to Lazarus. *Loose him, and let him go.* They are not to throng him, to pry in upon the awful secrets of the grave, to ply him with curious questions, but let him depart in peace—to the privacy which is most healthful for soul and body, and to the society of those loving sisters who may best minister unto him. Jesus will no more “loose him” Himself than “roll away the stone.” The one was the necessary preparation for resurrection, the other the necessary sequel to it. *The life-giving act alone He reserves to Himself.* So in the quickening of the dead to spiritual life, human instrumentality is

employed first to prepare the way, and then to turn it to account.

How strikingly simple, how truly sublime, is every portion of this impressive narrative! What absence of all effort, of all display! It was no greater effort for Jesus to pour the tide of life anew into the stagnant veins, to reanimate the mouldering frame, to call that tainted and corrupted corpse back from the sepulchre, than in the garden of Gethsemane to awaken the sleeping Peter. Most convincing evidence of the power of the only-begotten Son of God! A single word from Him is sufficient to impart spiritual life to a soul in the shadow of death, natural life to a body amid the corruption of the grave, and life forever to all the generations of Adam upon the resurrection day. (See v. 26, 28, 29.)

45. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did believed on him. 46. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

4ii. 23, x. 42 and xii. 11, 18.

Which came to Mary. Such as come to do good unto the godly in their need may readily meet with more good by this means. *Believed on him.* It might be anticipated from what has preceded, that among the friends of the family there would be susceptible hearts. *But some of them went their ways,* &c. Death itself more readily yielded to the power of Christ than did these men’s infidelity. (See xii. 37–41.) Here was a miracle proving and enforcing a solemn parable. (Luke xvi. 19.) There is a Lazarus in each case. The very name should have served to remind them of His warning word.

47. ¶ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51. And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52. And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

1Ps. li. 2; Matt. xxvi. 3; Mark xiv. 1; Luke xxii. 2, xxii. 19; Acts iv. 16. 2Luke iii. 2; chap. xviii. 14; Acts iv. 6. xxviii. 14. 3Isa. xlix. 6; 1 John ii. 2. ex. 16; Eph. ii. 14, 15, 16, 17.

If we let him thus alone, &c. No one could now deny that Jesus had wrought many miracles, and a fear was expressed lest this crowning act of power, wrought so near Jerusalem, and upon a person so

well-known as Lazarus, might excite the enthusiasm of the people in our Lord's favor, and lead to some movement which might attract the attention of the Romans and occasion the loss of the few internal liberties which the nation had been permitted to retain. And yet the Jews did not escape what they dreaded; nay, indeed, they brought it upon themselves, by this very course. It is ever the way of those who rule the earth, to leave out of their reckoning Him who rules the universe. (Ps. xciv. 1-11.) The conduct of the Jews toward Jesus was the counterpart of the wicked husbandman in the parable, the fulfillment of the cruel counsels of Joseph's brethren, those types of a worse fratricide. "As they, thinking to defeat the purpose of God concerning their younger brother, help to bring it to pass, so the Jewish rulers were the instruments to fulfill that purpose of God concerning Christ, which they meant to bring to nothing.

Named Caiaphas, &c. The high priesthood, by Divine appointment, was to continue in the same person for life, but the Romans changed the high priest at pleasure, and made the office, for the most part, annual. There is some doubt whether the participial clause, "but being high priest," &c., is to be regarded as denoting the cause or occasion of what follows, in the sense of *inasmuch as he was high priest*, &c., or as a simple announcement that Caiaphas was the high priest on that memorable year. The latter is Tholuck's view, the former that of Stier and Olshausen. *Ye know nothing at all, &c.* An expression as it seems of displeasure and impatience with the council. *It is expedient, &c.* The good of the whole, the preservation of our nationality, as you confess, from Roman despotism, requires the death of one, innocent or not. So let all pleas in behalf of His piety and goodness be silenced. *For us.* If He gains the people, we know that neither He nor the people would be friends to *us*.

Whole nation perish not—by the Roman sword, as you see it will, if this man prevails. *Being high priest that year, he prophesied, &c.* A Divine interpretation, truly, of that evil man's unsuspected prophecy!

The meaning of Caiaphas was insincere, mean and timid. The meaning of the Holy Ghost his words was awful, mysterious and Divine. All that Caiaphas *intended* to say clearly amounted to this: that our Saviour's destruction must any how be effected, and that speedily. His argument was that the death of One would thus be productive of general good—by diverting from the nation the wrath of their Roman masters. But his speech was overruled by a higher power, and the words which fell from his lips proved susceptible of a double meaning; the Holy Ghost deigning to employ even this sinful organ (as He had already spoken by the mouth of Balaam), to convey nothing less than a wondrous prophecy concerning the propitiatory nature of the approaching sacrifice of Christ's death, and its marvelous result to "the Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16) scattered throughout the world, not only (that is) to the Jewish nation, but to the Gentile as well. (1 John ii. 2; chap. x. 16.)

53. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

God's overruling Providence is a power, which veils its interference, and moves so as not to shock the tenor of man's responsible action, in the course of trial and duty. (xix. 11.) In this sense, the miracle of raising Lazarus was "for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." (Verse 4.) For this miracle prepared the way for our Lord's death; and by His death, the Father was glorified (xvii. 1), and Christ Himself "entered into His glory." (Luke xxiv. 25.)

51. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but went thence into a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

biv. 1, 3 and vii. 1. ³See 2 Chron. xlii. 19.

Our Lord, though ready to be offered, and, when His hour was come, "led as a lamb to the slaughter," would not now needlessly expose Himself to the malice of these wicked men. As His good works had failed to convince them, He retires. He now escapes into the region of Jordan lying north of the Dead Sea, as in chap. x., after the commotion, He went to Perea. It is the Divine appointment that we should decline persecution, till a necessity of obeying God, or charity for the souls of

men, oblige us to appear. Happy the country which affords a retreat to the Son of God persecuted. But more happy the heart which opens itself to Him while the world persecutes Him, which adores Him, which is wholly taken up with Him, which fills itself with His word, which is nourished by His truth, and which continually excites and quickens its faith and love by meditating upon His mysteries.

55. ¹And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand, and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. 56. ²Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? 57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him.

¹Chap. ii. 13, v. 1 and vi. 4. ²Verse 8; chap. vii. 11.

And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand, &c. While the Lord was hidden in His retreat, the Jews were assembling to keep the Passover at Jerusalem. To judge from the numbers that flocked thither, one would have supposed that they were a very religious people. They came from distant parts of the country, and they arrived at an early period, in order to go through various purifications and washings commanded in the law, but they did not, like David, wash their hands in innocence, before they approached the altar of their God. (Ps. xxvi. 6.) There may be a full attendance at the house of God, and even at the Lord's Supper, while there are but few spiritual worshippers. Such religious acts obtain for those who perform them a *name* to live among men, but they may be performed while the heart is *dead* before God. Never were the Jews in a more dangerous state than when, having ceased to worship graven images, they observed

with strictness the ceremonies of the law.

Then sought they for Jesus, &c. Then or therefore in consequence of the fame of Jesus, especially that which resulted from His great miracle at Bethany, which could not but have been noised through the whole land. What think ye, &c. The form of this question implies the opinion that He rather *would* come. Our Lord, on a former occasion, had not come up to the Passover. (See John vi.) Hence there was room for some doubt whether He would come now. Now both . . . priests . . . Pharisees, &c. This verse shows the first steps which had been taken after the session of the council which adopted the advice of Caiaphas to kill Jesus. A general order had been given that if any man knew where Jesus was, he was to give information, that He might be apprehended. Probably this order may only have referred to Jerusalem, and the house where our Lord might lodge when He came to the Passover, if He did come. It can scarcely be supposed that the enemies of Christ could be ignorant where He was between the miracle of Bethany and the Passover, and they dared not perhaps run the risk of a tumult or rebellion, which might be caused if they sent into the rural districts to apprehend Him.

"Let us even now," says an old writer, "show the Jews where Christ is. Oh, that they would hear and understand, whosoever are the seed of those, who gave commandment that it should be shown them where Christ was! Let them come to the Church, out of the Gospel let them hear." (Ps. xiv. 7.)

1. Who was sick at Bethany? 2. What did the sisters of Lazarus do? 3. What did Jesus say to His disciples who seemed to wonder that He would go into Judea again? 4. How is verse 15 to be understood? 5. How is Jesus the resurrection and the life? 6. What did Martha and Mary say to Jesus? 7. What does the weeping of Jesus teach us? 8. How was Lazarus raised from the dead? 9. What was the effect of this miracle? 10. What did Caiaphas say? 11. Did Jesus walk any more openly among the Jews? 12. To what place did He go? 13. What does His example teach?

CHAPTER XII.

1 *Jesus excuseth Mary anointing his feet.* 9 *The people flock to see Lazarus.* 10 *The high priests consult to kill him.* 12 *Christ rideth into Jerusalem.* 20 *Greeks desire to see Jesus.* 23 *He foretelleth his death.* 37 *The Jews are generally divided: 42 yet many chief rulers believe, but do not confess him: 44 therefore Jesus call- eth earnestly for confession of faith.*

WHEN Jesus, six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.—xi. 1, 43.

Then connects the approach of Jesus to Jerusalem, which is now about to be related, with this excitement in regard to the question, whether, in face of such danger, He would make His appearance at the paschal feast. The verse is logically connected with the close of the preceding chapter. *Six days before the pass-over, i. e.,* on the sixth day before it, probably after sunset on *Friday* evening, or the commencement of the Jewish *Sabbath* preceding the Passover. *Bethany*, from which unbelief had banished Him, but where were yet faithful hearts and loving hands ready to minister unto Him, come, at least, that had not bowed the knee to Baal.

2. Where they made him a supper, and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.—Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3.

Made him a supper—to show respect and affection for Jesus. The entertainment took place at the house of Simon the leper. (See Matt. xxvi. 6.) We should have expected from the traits of Martha's character, given in chap. xi. and in Luke x. 38, &c., that she would attend to the domestic arrangements. Before she was "cumbered about much serving," now she had learned the lesson from the Lord, and we read here that she simply *served*. So in regard to Mary, before she "sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word," now, having through that word believed, she makes her costly oblation, the fruit of her love, treating Him "not as man, but God." (2 Peter iii. 18.) Martha no longer objects, as on a former occasion (Luke x. 40), nor makes more of the entertainment than of Him who was intended to be honored by it. But Lazarus was one of them, &c. This is stated as evidence of his complete restoration. To eat and drink proves the reality of a corporeal, as distinguished from a merely spiritual pres-

ence. *Sat at the table with him.* So do the righteous, after their resurrection, sit down in heaven at the Marriage Supper, and are "forever with the Lord."

3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, 5. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6. This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 8. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. Luke x. 38, 39; chap. xi. 2. Chap. xlii. 29. Matt. xxvi. 11; Mark xiv. 7.

On verses 3-8; see on Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9.

Then took Mary, &c. It was not unusual to connect the anointing of the feet with the ablutions which took place previous to entertainments. (Luke vii. 46.) *Three hundred denarii or pence*, are worth about \$45.00. The price of this oil seems conclusively to prove that the family were in good circumstances. "The Spirit of heavenly love," says Bishop Horne, "was 'the oil of gladness' which Jehovah poured 'without measure,' on Him who is the High Priest and Head of His Church. Insinuating and healing, comforting and exhilarating, it is diffused from Him over His Body Mystical, even down to the least and lowest members." "Of His fullness have we all received," and, as it is said of Mary's box of spikenard in the Gospel, *The house is filled with the odour of the ointment.* Nor did the dew of heaven, in time of drought ever prove more refreshing and beneficial to the mountains of Judah, than are the influences of Grace, when descending in soft silence from above upon the Church in the Union and Communion of which God hath "commanded the blessing, even life forevermore." Oh, come the day when division shall cease, and enmity be done away; when the tribes of the spiritual Israel shall be united in a bond of eternal charity, under the true David, in the Jerusalem which is above, and saints and angels shall sing this lovely Psalm together! (Ps. cxxii. 5-8; see also 1 Cor. i. 2, 3.)

Given to the poor. (Deut. xv. 11.) Covetousness and irreverence are here covered under the cloak of benevolence. *This*

he said, &c. This one trait of Judas unlocks his soul to a glance, which renders clear all that follows. He could prevail upon himself, not once only, but repeatedly, to purloin from the money which served at once for the wants of Jesus and for the poor, and which was supplied entirely by charity (Luke viii. 3), and yet could present himself in the presence of Jesus, and was so hypocritical withal, as to wish to seem the friend of the poor at the very time he was robbing the poor. Such a man had already smothered conscience—such a man had no longer power to pray. Judas, who had betrayed his trust, soon after betrayed his Master. And those who are entrusted with any moneys of others, may incidentally learn hence to have clean hands and a pure heart, to preserve the most scrupulous integrity the less likely they are to be called to account, to be the more ready at any time to render an account, and the easier the opportunity to defraud, the more carefully to guard against that danger.

Let her alone, &c. "It is not sufficient to carry religion in our hearts, as fire is carried in flint stones, but we are outwardly, visibly, to serve and honor God, and that, too, not only with our souls, but our bodies, and not only with our bodies, but with the best of our goods. If we have anything in all our possessions of more value and price than another, to what should we convert it, rather than unto Him? (Prov. iii. 9; 2 Sam. xxiv. 22-4; Mal. i. 8.) *Against the day of my burying, &c.* As the time was so near at hand when our Lord's dead body would have to be anointed, and she was not to have that privilege even after the spices were bought for the purpose (Mark xvi. 1), He lovingly regards it as done *now*. How much more may be involved in an act of Christian kindness than we think! Even to give a cup of cold water out of love to Christ, shall not lose its reward. *The poor always, &c.* We are to show to the poor the kindness we would have shown to the Lord Himself, had He been with Mary at Bethany. *But me ye have not always.* Soon He was to be withdrawn from them, and they should see Him no more. The time draweth nigh. Six days more, and they

shall see Him die a cruel death. No more opportunity of testifying love to His person. Soon He is to be laid in His grave. Shall He reject this appropriate anointing? In the anticipation of that awful hour, how welcome this tribute of a full and loving heart, this offering of the lavish hand which owns no niggard gift! So a gifted poet enjoins.

"Give all then canst, high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more!"

9. ¶ Many people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10. ¶ But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death: 11. ¶ Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

¶ xi. 43, 44. ¶ Luke xvi. 31. ¶ xxi. 45, v. 18.

To such a pitch had these chief priests come of diabolical determination to shut out the light from themselves, and quench it from the earth! How necessary, in many cases, the concurrence of the will is toward the production of faith, daily experience may convince us. We see men rejecting the strongest evidence, when opposed by interest, prejudice and passion, and accepting the slightest which falls in with them. The best arguments in the world avail nothing on one side, when pride, pleasure and profit are engaged on the other. *The chief priests consulted, &c.* What can be done with such people as these chief priests? Or, what effect would the appearance of Christ among them after His resurrection have produced, but that of provoking fresh blasphemies and fresh insults? (Verses 39, 40; Rom. x. 21; Acts x. 41.)

12. ¶ On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13. Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, ¶ Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. 14. ¶ And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon, as it is written, 15. ¶ Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. 16. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. 17. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. 18. ¶ For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. 19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, ¶ Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold; the world is gone after him.

¶ Matt. xxi. 8: Mark xi. 8: Luke xix. 35, 36, &c. ¶ Ps. cxviii. 25, 26. ¶ Matt. xxi. 7. ¶ Zech. ix. 9. ¶ Luke xviii. 31. ¶ vii. 39. ¶ xiv. 25. ¶ verse 11. ¶ xxi. 47, 48.

On verses 12-19, see on Matt. xxi. 1-11, 14-17; Mark xi. 1-11; Luke xix. 29-44.

Next day. Jesus is supposed to have arrived in Bethany on the evening after

the Sabbath, and to have remained there during the next day. *Much people.* At this time the holy city was already filling with the crowds of people, pilgrims, who had trooped in from all the country far and near, to prepare for their great annual festival of the Passover. *Took branches, &c.* It was customary with the Jews, at the feast of the tabernacles, to carry about branches of palm and other trees in their hands, and to sing, *HOSANNA*, "Save now, I beseech Thee." (Ps. cxviii. 25.) *Had found a young ass, &c.* Jesus desired to declare Himself the King of Israel, but only as the King of peace, He selected, therefore, the animal that was usually ridden in time of peace, while the horse was reserved for war. (Hos. xiv. 4; Prov. xxi. 31; Jer. xvii. 25), and points directly to that prophecy (Zech. ix. 9), which likewise depicts the Messiah as King of peace. Our Lord, it is particularly noted, rode the *colt*, according to the prophecy, not the parent animal which accompanied. Having seen the humility of Zion's King in His first coming, let us now from it lift up our eyes as it were to the throne of God, and consider how He shall appear, and how also it shall be with us, at His second coming. In this accepted time let us turn to Him in penitence and faith, who once came to visit us in great humility.

These things understood not his disciples, &c. While the miracle, the triumph, and the cross are passing in rapid succession before their eyes, they are confused in their perceptions. But when all are past and rise up as one *whole* before them, when they see the accordance of prophecy and event, as taught by the voice of the risen Jesus (Luke xxiv. 25-35), and by the refreshing power of the quickening Spirit (chap. xiv. 26), they comprehend the entire symmetrical plan. Then they understand the CHRIST, and thenceforward are competent to herald Him forth to the world. How eminently honest and satisfactory such convictions as these! how entirely remote from all enthusiasm and deception! (See chap. ii. 22; also Luke xxiv. 6-8.) In the case of false christs, of false religions, the faith, or rather the credulity, is strongest and most fanatical at the outset, and then it wanes, and grad-

ually declines, and sometimes ends in a strong reaction, and in an immortal hate: but the faith of the disciples was the growing conviction of their minds, it was ever waxing onward, all these circumstances were gradually confirming it, here a little and there a little; it was as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

The people therefore bare record.

The sentiment is, that the people who were eye-witnesses of the miracle, attested the reality of its performance, and thus frustrated the attempts made by our Lord's enemies to throw discredit upon the whole transaction. *The world is gone after him, or, as we say, everybody,* a form of hyperbole common in almost all languages. "And now began to work the greatest glory of the Divine Providence: here was the case of Christianity at stake. The world was rich and prosperous, learned and full of wise men, the Gospel was preached with poverty and persecution, in simplicity of discourse, and in 'demonstration of the Spirit.' . . . On the one side there was the scandal of the Cross, on the other the patience of the saints, and what was the event? They that had overcome the world, could not strangle Christianity. But so have I seen the sun with a little ray of distant light challenge all the power of darkness, and, without violence and noise, climbing up the hill, hath made night so to retire, that its memory was lost in the joys and sprightfulness of the morning. And Christianity, without violence or armies, without resistance and self-preservation, without strength or human eloquence, . . . with its humility and meekness, with toleration and patience, with obedience and charity, with praying and dying, did insensibly turn the world into Christian, and persecution into victory. (Matt. xii. 19, 20; Rev. xix. 16.)"—*Bishop Taylor.*

20. † And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast.

*Acts xvii. 4. †1 Kings viii. 41, 42; Acts viii. 27.

These "certain Greeks" were probably of those Gentiles—of whom Cornelius is a specimen (Acts x. 1)—who had embraced the truth respecting Jehovah, the only true God, as taught in the Jewish Scriptures, and observed what were termed the

seven Noachian precepts against idolatry, profanity, incest, murder, dishonesty, eating blood and things strangled, and allowing a murderer to live—but had not formally enrolled themselves among the Jews. In the time of our Lord, this seems to have been a considerably numerous class.

21. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. 22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew : and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. 23. And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."

vi. 44. *xiii. 32 and xvii. 1.

Bethsaida. There, perhaps, those Greeks had been wont to lodge on their journey to Jerusalem. *Sir.* They address Philip thus, with sentiments of respect. *We would see Jesus.* "We would count it a great favor if you could bring us into His presence." This desire was of a higher character than Herod's. (Luke xxiii. 8.) These men from the West represent, at the end, what those from the East did at the beginning of Christ's life. But these come to the cross, as those came to the cradle. Jesus is as really present, though in a spiritual and invisible manner at all the sacred festivals appointed by God, as He was at the Jewish Passover. *Philip cometh,* &c. Philip first consults with Andrew, apparently through a doubt, whether it would be proper to bring uncircumcised persons into the presence of their Master, after the inhibition He had formerly given them. (Matt. x. 5, 6.) Jesus then thought proper to declare that the time was approaching, when there was to be no difference between the Jew and the Greek; but that the same Lord was to be "rich unto all that call upon Him," and that all were to be "One in Christ Jesus." . . . He seems to have viewed their application to be admitted into His presence, as an earnest of the flowing-in of all the Gentiles to Him. *The hour is come,* said He, *that the Son of man should be glorified;* and, if His hearers made a suitable use of this doctrine, they may have been instrumental on their return home in disposing the hearts of their countrymen to receive the saving truths, which the messengers of the Gospel would shortly propose to their acceptance. Thus, we find in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles, that the Greeks are frequently mentioned by name among the

heathen converts, as having embraced the proffered mercy of God. (Acts xiv. 1, xvi. 1, xvii. 4; Gal. ii. 3.)

24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

*1 Cor. xv. 36.

From our Lord's connecting this parable with what He says of the glorifying of Himself in the preceding verse, it is evident that if His great work was to be finished in redeeming the lost, and bringing many sons and daughters unto righteousness, it could alone be through death. In death He becomes the principle of our life. When Jesus went down to the grave He went *alone*—He by Himself "endured the grief and despised the shame"—"of the people, there was none with Him." A solitary being, a spectacle to men and angels, He hung for a brief period on the accursed tree, and then disappeared in the grave. Then it was that His work obtained its full reward. He rose again, like the bright, fresh, green blade which rises from the ground where the corn of wheat lay, telling that death was resolved into life; and when at length the harvest time shall come, He will be found like the corn of wheat which has passed through its stages, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, to be no longer "alone," but to have brought forth "much fruit."

A grain of corn, as is well known, multiplies by yielding other grains like itself. If, therefore, Jesus be compared to seed, and He be sown to multiply, He will produce others like Himself. If barley be sown, barley comes up, if wheat be sown, wheat appears, if Christ be sown, Christians are brought forth. They are predestinated to be conformed to Him; and as "they have borne the image of the earthy, they must also bear the image of the heavenly." Here, indeed, the likeness is not complete—but it will be perfect in due time. There is one thing here which will afford the benevolent mind a delicious pleasure—the largeness of the crop—"much fruit." Jesus is leading "many sons unto glory," and when He has collected them all together, they will be found "a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues."

25. "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

^aMatt. x. 29 and xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24 and xvii. 33.

Jesus applied to His disciples the general rule, that, if a person should love life on earth so much that he would not part with it for His sake, he would lose eternal life, and that, if a person should love *Him* more than life on earth, so as to be willing to expose himself to death for the sake of the Saviour, he would secure life eternal. (See notes on the parallel passages referred to.) So far was Christ from all customary and popular methods of courting and complimenting those who came to Him, in order to make proselytes, that His usual practice was rather to repel them, at least for a time, that they might have leisure to examine their motives, and to count the cost of following a rejected Master and a persecuted religion. This is not what an impostor would have done. (vi. 15, 25, 26; Luke viii. 4, 5, xiv. 25-33.)

26. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

^axiv. 3 and xvii. 21; 1 Thes. iv. 17.

Jesus here claims the same absolute subjection to Himself, as the law of men's exaltation to honor, as He yielded to the Father. The clause, *if any man serve me*, (i. e., would enter into my service), is twice expressed, first with the duty, and then with the promise. *Follow me*—imitate my example, and endure suffering and even death itself, to promote that cause for which I am about to lay down my life—this is his duty and his interest. *Honour*—reward gloriously. These words were remarkably fulfilled in the death of Stephen, the first martyr.

27. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

^aMatt. xxvi. 38, 39; Luke xii. 50; chap. xliii. 21. ^bLuke xxii. 53; chap. xviii. 37.

Now is my soul troubled, &c. This sentence implies a sudden, strong mental agony which came over our Lord, troubling, distressing, and harassing Him. What was it from? Not from the mere foresight of a painful death on the cross, and the bodily suffering attending it. No doubt human nature, even when sinless, naturally revolts from pain and suffering. Yet mere bodily pain has been endured for weeks by many a martyr without a

groan or a murmur. No! it was the weight of the world's imputed sin laid upon our Lord's head, which pressed Him downward, and made Him cry, "now is my soul troubled." Let us notice here the reality of Christ's substitution for us. He was made "a curse" for us, and sin for us, and He felt it for a time most deeply. (Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 21.)

And what shall I say, &c. The Saviour speaks as one in a strait, as if struggling between inclination and conviction, His feeling and His work. There is no real difficulty here. He was human as well as Divine, and the Godhead did not absorb the humanity, or change its attributes. The Word was made flesh, and had all the passions and infirmities of our nature, sin only excepted. But suffering in itself can never be agreeable to our nature—for then it would be no longer suffering. If therefore we submit to it, it is not from pleasure, but for some reason or purpose. This reluctance, instead of being inconsistent with submission, serves to enhance it, and is even necessary to it. There is no resignation in giving up what we do not value. In our Saviour's mode of expressing His acquiescence in the event, observe two things concerning His death: 1. It was not casual: *For this cause*, &c. It was written in the volume of the book. It was a covenant transaction. He assumed a body and entered our world for the very design. He became incarnate to die. 2. It was voluntary: *Came I unto this hour*. He was not compelled or deceived into the business, but as it was foreappointed, so He foreknew and foresaw it, and acted from independence and choice. He loved us and gave Himself for us.

28. Father, glorify thy name. "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.—^aMatt. iii. 17.

Glorify thy name. As if Jesus had said, "If my sufferings will be for Thine honor, let them fall upon me, regardless of my feelings." Did He then question this? By no means. His language is rather the expression of confidence. "I know that my death will infallibly and infinitely advance Thy praise, and therefore I cheerfully bow to Thy pleasure." In the scheme of redemption through the Cross of Christ, the brightest form of the Divine glory

shines. *Then came there a voice*, &c. Thrice was the Divine voice heard from heaven: first, at our Lord's baptism, when He seems to have been specially designated to His *Priestly* office: next at His transfiguration, when, by the departure of Moses and Elijah, He was discovered as the great *Prophet* of His people: lastly, on the present occasion, when He is not only revealed to Zion as her *King*, and beholds the first fruits of those Gentiles who should hereafter press so largely into His kingdom, but is invested, although in mockery, with all the insignia of royalty, and wears His title ("the King of the Jews") upon the very cross.

I have both glorified it, &c. Reference is had to the glorification of the Father in and through the Son, the relation between them being so intimate and essential, that the glory of the one was that also of the other. In all the revelations and manifestations of the invisible God, made by Jesus Christ, especially in the days of His incarnation, the Divine name had been glorified, and thus it would continue to be in the perfected results of the redemptive economy throughout the ages of eternity. *I have and will*, has a tone which comprehends all the past and the future.

29. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Some, who stood at a distance, hearing only a sound, said, *it thundered*, others who heard an articulate, but to them unintelligible voice, said, *an angel spake to him*. Not concealing the doubts of the people, is an evidence of John's veracity. If the Evangelists had wished to deceive, they might, perhaps, have related that thunder was a voice from heaven to Christ, but they could never have related that any said that a voice to Christ was thunder. Here is a refutation of rationalism.

30. Jesus answered and said, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes."—Chap. xi. 42.

This voice came not, &c. That is, not for my sake, as though I needed such a testimony from heaven for my own satisfaction, *but for your sakes*, that ye, hearing the voice, may believe that *the Father hath sent me*. (Comp. chap. xi. 42.)

31. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.
Matt. xii. 29; Luke x. 18; chap. xiv. 30 and xvi. 11; Acts xxv. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. ii. 2 and vi. 12.

Now is the judgment of this world—the world that "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8), considered as a vast and complicated kingdom of Satan, breathing his spirit, doing his work and involved in his doom, which Christ's death by its hands irrevocably sealed. *Now shall the prince*, &c. How differently is that fast-approaching "hour" regarded in the kingdoms of darkness and of light! "The hour of relief from the dread Troubler of our peace—how near it is! Yet a little moment and the day is ours!" So it was calculated and felt in one region. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out," is a somewhat different view of the same event. We know who was right. Though yet under a veil, He sees the triumphs of the cross in unclouded and transporting light.

32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33. This he said, signifying what death he should die.

John. i. 14 and viii. 28. ¹Rom. v. 13; ²Heb. ii. 9. ³ixviii. 32.

If (or, when) I be lifted up, &c. Christ's being lifted up on the cross, and dying the death of the vilest malefactor, was done, as we are expressly told, "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," in order that His outward condition might fitly correspond with His real state, as being made a curse for us, that we might inherit a blessing. Jesus lifted up on the cross is, in other words, the Lord of glory bearing in His own person the awful curse due to our sins, and yielding Himself up as a willing victim to that death, which, through eternity, we had deserved to die. *Will draw all men unto me*. The drawing here intended, if it may not altogether and exclusively be understood of a friendly attachment, a drawing with sweet constraint and love, must certainly be viewed as mainly intending that. Our Lord's connecting this drawing with His being lifted up or crucified, imports, 1. That such must have been the design of His crucifixion. It was "for the joy that was set before Him"—the joy, namely, of being the author of eternal redemption to all that should believe on His name—for that joy "he endured the cross, despising the shame." 2. That there was a fitness in Christ's being lifted up for drawing all men unto Him, or that His crucifixion was the most apt, powerful and effective means for pro-

ducing such a result, as the drawing of men to Him. 3. That there is a power going along with Christ's dying on the cross, sufficient absolutely to secure the end in view.

The general idea which the passage embodies, on being carefully considered in the light of other Scripture declarations, will be found to imply in it three things: Christ's making all men, without exception, the subjects of His Mediatorial government, His making all men, without exception the objects of the invitations of His Gospel, and His making all whom the Father has given Him—and who are a vast multitude, Gentiles as well as Jews—men of all ages, conditions and characters—of every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation—partakers of the blessings of salvation. All these, though not in the same way, our Lord draws to Himself in consequence of His being lifted up from the earth. It is right to remark that the word *men* is a supplement; the original words are, "I will draw *all* to me."

34. The people answered him, "We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" 35. Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

†Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37 and ex. 4; Isa. ix. 7 and liii. 8; Ezek. xxxvii. 25; Dan. ii. 44 and vii. 14, 27; Mt. iv. 7. †vii. 38, ix. 4. †Jer. xiii. 16; Eph. v. 8. †xi. 10; 1 John ii. 11. †Luke xvi. 8; Eph. v. 8; 1 Thes. v. 5; 1 John ii. 9, 10, 11. †viii. 59 and xl. 54.

Christ abideth forever. "Christ" is but the Greek form of the Jewish word *Messiah*, and these people had cherished the interpretation of the *law*, that is, of the Old Testament, that the Messiah should come, establish a kingdom, and reign forever. The question, *Who is this Son of man?* in all probability means, "Who, and what kind of a person dost Thou claim to be, calling Thyself the Son of man, and yet talking of being lifted up on the cross? Dost Thou mean that one and the same person can be a dying person, and yet also the eternal Christ? Dost Thou claim to be the eternal Christ, and yet talk of being lifted up on a cross? Explain this apparent contradiction, for we cannot understand it." It is just the old story over again. The Jews could not and would not understand that Messiah was to suffer as well as to

reign, to die as a sacrifice as well as to appear in glory.

Then Jesus said unto them, &c. Instead of answering the cavils of the people, our Lord gave them a solemn warning. He saw with sorrow that they were wasting the *little* time during which they would enjoy His instructions. He exhorts them to make a faithful use of His presence. (viii. 21.) *Darkness*, the period when the salvation is no longer personally among them—the result of which is that the footstep is no longer secure. *Children of light*, used also, Luke xvi. 8 (on which see notes) a Hebraistic designation of the relation of dependence, as the child is dependent on the mother. *Did hide himself from them*, is meant to designate only His withdrawal from *public* labors. Our time for getting good is short and limited, let us take heed that we make good use of it.

37. ¶ But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38. That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39. Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

†Isa. liii. 1; Rom. x. 16. †Isa. vi. 9, 10; Matt. xiii. 14, 15. †Isa. vi. 1.

It is the manner of this Evangelist alone to record his own reflections on the scenes he describes, but here, having arrived at what was virtually the close of our Lord's public ministry, he casts an affecting glance over the fruitlessness of His whole ministry on the bulk of the now doomed people. *That the saying of Esaias, &c.* The prophecy was not the *motive*, or the *cause* of their wickedness; in other words, the unbelief of the Jews did not happen because it was foretold, but it was foretold as something which it was known by the Spirit of inspiration would take place, and which actually did take place, precisely as it was foretold. *Our report*, our instruction. *The arm of the Lord been revealed.* This phrase may allude to the habit generally worn by the Easterns, and especially by persons of rank, which was a long robe without sleeves, so that when the *arm* was stretched out to perform any action requiring strength, it would appear *uncovered*. (Comp. Isa. liii. 1.) In this connection it seems strongly to imply, that whenever

true faith is produced in the mind, it is to be considered as the effect of a *divine energy*. (See Eph. i. 19 and Col. ii. 12.)

They could not believe, not from want of physical, but moral ability—they would not. If a man willfully shuts his eyes against the truth, God may seal those rebel eyes in a confirmed blindness. *Because that Esaias said again, &c.* (See on Matt xiii. 10–15.) It is evident that the Evangelist was far from intending to say, that the inability to believe was superinduced and caused in order that the prediction of the prophet might be accomplished, still less that the miracles in question were wrought with a view to incredulity on the part of those who should witness them. We are to suppose that the fact of their unbelief is represented to bespeak a state of mind and heart which rendered them the awful examples of such blindness and insensibility as the prophet foretold.

He hath blinded their eyes, &c. In all ancient languages, especially the Hebrew, any one is often said to do anything, who tells, narrates, and shows a thing to be, or be done, and thus verbs active are to be understood *declaratively*. (Comp. 2 Kings i. 16.) The meaning, therefore, of Isa. vi. 10, is this: Go, show and *declare* to the people that their heart is heavy, &c., equivalent to, "This people's heart is gross," &c. And so the Sept. have expressed it, and have been followed by Matthew and Luke. But John expresses it simply, "He hath blinded," &c., without adding *who* has done so, which may be understood from Isaiah, for he who is *taxed* with blindness must be the *author* of his blindness.

These things said Esaias, &c. These words, when compared with the place in which the prophecy occurs, are a direct testimony to the Divinity of our blessed Lord. Isaiah has a vision of the Lord in His glory. How divinely glorious it was!—"the smoke, the hearing unutterable mysteries, the beholding the Seraphim, the lightning which leapt from the throne, against which those powers could not look." But the main point in Isaiah's heavenly vision is, that there he had a glimpse of the glory which Christ had with His Father before the world was. It was *Christ's* glory which

Isaiah saw in heavenly vision, for, if the words "his glory," are not to be understood of Christ, what use have they, or what purpose do they serve? What need is there for the Evangelist to tell us here that Isaiah then saw the glory of God the Father, and spake of Him? The prophet tells us it was the glory of the Lord, Jehovah, God over all: our Evangelist tells us it was the glory of *Christ*. The conclusion is inevitable, that Christ is God. Isaiah's vision of God's glory, and John's testimony to Christ's Divinity, here meet. As the Evangelist here applies the prophet's words to Christ, and the Apostle (Acts xxviii. 25–27) speaks of the same words as proceeding from the Holy Ghost, we have thus a testimony to the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

42. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.—vii. 13 and ix. 22. wv. 54.

The Scripture, says an old writer, hath observed very justly, that "as the fining pot for silver and the furnace for gold, so is a man in his *praise*" (Prov. xxvii. 21.) This tries him thoroughly, and soon discovers, whether his virtue be true standard, or of a base alloy. For, as metal, if it be good, is not hurt, but purified, by the fire, but, if bad, turns into dross and fume, so is a good or bad man affected with commendations. How many do we see puffed up and even transported beyond all sober sense by a general applause; and as dejected and despicably melancholy again by contempt and a common cry going against them. What more extravagant, more absurd, than to neglect the service of God, for anything the world will say, or think of us? What will it signify to us in the next life how people censure or commend us here? Allow this but one serious and impartial thought, and then I will venture to appeal to thine own conscience, whether the world and the love of it, in this respect, be not the very abstract of vanity itself. (Matt. x. 28; Acts iv. 19, 20; 1 Cor. iv. 3.) A Christian, observes another, runs greater hazard from commendation than from calumny. (Prov. xvii. 3.)

44. ¶ Jesus cried and said, ¶ He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

*Matt. ix. 37; 1 Peter i. 21.

This final summary of the public testimony of Jesus to the Jews, consists mainly of memoranda collected from His various teachings. *Believeth not on me*—not on me simply as man, but as the incarnation of Jehovah, of the Jehovah seen in vision by Isaiah.

45. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.
*Chap. xiv. 9.

This is an advance on the declaration of the preceding verse. Not only was a belief in the Son a belief also in the Father who sent Him, but also the sight of the one was that also of the other. There is not the shadow of doubt that reference is had here to actual vision, such as Isaiah had been favored with, and such as was vouchsafed to all who had seen Jesus with the bodily eye.

46. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.
*Verses 35, 36; chap. iii. 19, viii. 12 and ix. 5, 29.

It is here evidently implied that Jesus found the world in darkness, in which if men wish not to remain, they must believe on Him. He once said to His disciples, "ye are the light of the world" (Matt. v. 14) but He did not say, "*ye are come a light into the world*," &c. All Christians are lights, but they are so by faith—because they are enlightened by Him, from whom to withdraw is darkness. (See Col. i. 13; 1 Peter ii. 9.) Observe that the very form of the expression in this verse, shows, 1. That Christ existed before His incarnation, even as the sun exists before it appears above the eastern hills. 2. It is implied that He was the one Saviour of the world, as there is but one sun. 3. That He came not to one nation only, but to *all* (see chap. i. 9), even as the sun's "going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the end of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." (Ps. xix. 6; see notes on parallel verses.)

47. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

*Chap. v. 45 and viii. 15, 26. bChap. iii. 17. cLuke x. 16. dDeut. xviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16.

Here two periods are distinctly spoken of, a present and a future. The meaning is, not that Christ will never judge, but that He judges or condemns not now.

Now is the time of mercy. The Lord's first advent was in great humility to save. (See iii. 17.) Happy those who timely hearken unto His words and believe in Him. But there is also, as the Lord goes on to say, a time of justice. The day is coming when He shall come in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead. But though He shall be the Judge of all, for this place by no means excludes Him from that office, yet the work, so to speak, shall be already done. As we say of a manifestly-guilty and justly-convicted criminal, even before the judge opens his mouth to pass upon him the awful sentence of the law, that he is self-condemned, so the word of Christ shall be the witness in that dreadful day. In that time of trial, at the great assize, it shall be produced, and the sinner's life shall be reproduced, and be put side by side to see how they tally. (See Prov. i. 23-31.) The *day*, thus designated, signifies a portion of duration set apart for the judgment, for which one might suppose an eternity would scarcely be too great, when we consider the immensity of the subject, and the multitude of the persons concerned. But we must recollect that God can in a moment let in such light as would equal what, according to our present ideas, it would require eternity to disclose, just as our Saviour could in a few moments impress on the woman of Samaria such a sense of His omniscience that she went away declaring, "He had told her all that she ever did," and demanded, "Is not this the Christ?" (Ps. l. 19-22, xc. 8.)

49. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak.
*viii. 38 and xiv. 10. dDeut. xviii. 18.

Here Christ declares again that mighty truth which we find so often in this Gospel—the intimate union between Himself and His Father. "I have not spoken of myself, of my own independent mind, and without concert with my Father in heaven." (See on verse 50.) *Which sent me*. When we read of the Father "sending" Christ, and giving Christ a "commandment," we must carefully dismiss from our minds all idea of any inferiority to God the Father on the part of God the Son. The expressions are used in condescension

to our weak faculties, to convey the idea of perfect oneness. We are not speaking of the relation that exists between two human beings, like ourselves, but between the Persons in the Divine Trinity." The "*sending*" of the Son was the result of the eternal counsel of that blessed Trinity, in which Father, Son and Holy Ghost are co-equal and co-eternal. The eternal Son was as willing to be "sent" as the eternal Father was to "send" Him. The "*commandment*" given by the Father to the Son, as to what He should teach and do, was not a commandment in which the Son had no part but to obey. It was simply the charge or commission arranged in the covenant of redemption, by all Three Persons in the Trinity, which the Son was as willing to execute as the Father was willing to give.

50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

I know. (See iii. 11, v. 32, vii. 29, viii. 14, 16, 55.) Our Lord, in all these passages, refers to personal, intuitive knowledge, not to that which He has received from Divine illumination or revelation, like the prophets and inspired writers of

the Old Testament. *His commandment.* (See on verse 49.) *Is life everlasting.* The commission or direction which the Father gave me, was intended to secure men's eternal happiness. It was *salvation*, then, for which Jesus was sent into the world. The instructions which He imparted were in accordance with this design, but if they are rejected, they will issue in the condemnation of men.

As the Father said . . . so I speak—and, therefore, rejecting my words is rejecting God's words, and rejecting me is rejecting God. When Israel, therefore, rejected Christ, she rejected the ancient Israel's God, and all history since proclaims that she is of God rejected. And this thus far concludes our Evangelist's history of the public ministry of Jesus to His countrymen and the world. It is a conclusion for weeping, and yet he is solemnly calm.

Through the remainder of this entire Gospel (xiii.-xxi.), being nearly half of the whole, we have Jesus' private ministry within his Apostolic college, until He comes forth for the sacrifice, with the consummation.

1. When did Jesus come to Bethany? 2. Who made Him a supper? 3. Who "served?" 4. What did Mary do? 5. What did Judas say? 6. State the reply of Jesus. 7. Why did many Jews come there? 8. What did the chief priests consult to do? 9. What took place when Jesus was coming to Jerusalem? 10. What is said about "certain Greeks?" 11. What did Jesus answer to Andrew and Philip? 12. How is verse 27 to be understood? 13. What did the voice from heaven say? 14. What did Christ say He would do when lifted up from the earth? 15. Explain verse 40. 16. Is believing on Christ believing on Him by whom He was sent? 17. Explain the words "his commandment is life everlasting."

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Jesus washeth the disciples' feet: exhorteth them to humility and charity. 18 He foretelleth, and discovereth to John by a token, that Judas should betray him: 31 commandeth them to love one another, 36 and forewarneth Peter of his denial.*

NOW before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.—^aMatt. xxvi. 2. ^bxii. 23 and xvii. 1, 11.

The touching incident we are now to consider is said to have taken place *before the feast of the passover*, though indeed it was

on the very evening when they had just partaken together of the paschal lamb, type of that very Paschal Lamb to be offered on the morrow. But this is in strict accordance with Scripture phraseology, which commands that the lamb be slain and eaten on the evening of the fourteenth day, and yet calls the fifteenth day the first of the feast, the first of those seven holy days, the first day of that solemn week, which looked back on one deliver-

ance and looked forward to another; which had respect to a former signal interposition and to a future infinitely more so: a double commemoration, memorial of the escape from Egypt, type of the redemption from sin.

When Jesus knew, &c. So perfect was His foresight of the event, that He knew not only the fact itself, but the incidents attending it, and as He attempted not to escape, He evinced not only His wisdom, but His devotedness to His work. *That he should depart out of this world.* Jesus was in the world for thirty-three years. Many of His people are in it a shorter, and many a much longer period. It was a sad world to Him. It knew Him not, but hated and rejected Him, and could not be satisfied till it had shed His blood. And *they* find it a vain, deceitful injurious, vile and wicked world. *Unto the Father.* As Christ's death was "a going to the Father," so is that of His followers, that is, going to heaven, for the Father is there. *Having loved,* from the foundation of the world. (Eph. i. 4, 5, 11.) *His own,* is not to be restricted to His immediate disciples, but embraces all in every age who should believe on Him. (Comp. xvii. 24.) *Which were in the world, i. e.,* which belonged to the human race. *Unto the end,* to the end of His life. He persevered in giving them proofs of His love. Notwithstanding their imperfections, His love persisted even to His ascension, and remains forevermore. We should learn to strengthen our faith by the experience which we have already had of God's great goodness toward us; by those things which we have known performed, learn to hope for those things which are promised. "When you doubt what you shall have," says *Hooker*, "search what you have had at God's hands. Make this reckoning, that the benefits, which He hath bestowed, are bills obligatory, and sufficient sureties that He will bestow further. His present mercy is still a warrant of His future love, because *whom He loveth, He loveth unto the end.*" (Ps. xxiii. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 18; James iv. 6.)

2. And the supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him:—Luke xxii. 3: verse 27.

Supper being ended, rather, "supper being come," which is the sense in which the

word is often used elsewhere. (xxi. 4; Luke iv. 42; Acts xii. 18, xvi. 35, xxi. 40.) The supper was not ended, except as to the preparation of it. (See verses 26-28.) *The devil having, &c.* "Judas having now yielded to the temptations of the devil, and the enticements of his own covetous inclinations." (See notes on Matt. xxvi. 14-16 and Luke xxii. 3.) *Judas Iscariot, &c.* The dishonored name is given in full that he may never be confounded with any other of that name.

3. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4. Matt. xi. 27 and xxviii. 18; chap. iii. 35 and xvii. 2; Acts ii. 36; 1 Cor. xv. 27; Heb. ii. 8. cviii. 42, xvi. 28 and xvii. 8.

The truth that *the Father had given all things into his hands*—had intrusted Him with the redemption of a lost world, with all the glories of His character, all the interest of His government as involved in this—and with all the power and authority that are necessary to enable Him successfully to execute so high a trust, that *he was come from God*, that He was not only sent by Him, but had come from Him, from His bosom; and that through the appointed way of a complete expiation of the sins of men, by intense sufferings, bodily and mental, and a violent death, thus doing the will of God in the sacrifice of Himself, He was just about to return to His Father, and receive the rich reward of His generous interposition, this truth was full before the mind of Jesus. This observation of the Evangelist proves that to him the scene that follows appeared as one of the sublimest in the life of our Lord. "In fact," says *Tholuck*, "we might, in contemplating this scene, say with Claudius, such an ideal of man, as presents itself here, never entered the heart of man. Whatever of greatness and glory antiquity may present—a dying Epaminondas, a dying Socrates—vanishes before this ideal of Deity in humiliation, and of a divine form of a servant."

4. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6. Luke xxii. 27; Phil. iii. 7, 8.

The supper had been prepared, but was not yet eaten. (See on verse 2.) *His garments*—the *pallium*, the outer garment.

The Hebrews themselves expressed, as here, the pallium in the *plural* (for honor) as it was very wide and flowing. *Took a towel*, &c. To be thus girded was considered by the ancients in the same light as, with us, a person's wearing an *apron*, namely, as indicating the exercise of some servile or handicraft occupation. (See on Luke xxii. 26, 27.) *Poured water*, &c. This was the office of the lowest servants. *Began to wash*, &c. Not in the present instance alone did Jesus give us an example of service. In taking upon Him our nature, He did what is here represented, He "took upon Him the form of a servant," and even His precious blood He poured forth that therein He might wash us from our sins; that He might cleanse us with the washing of water by the word. Our Lord here teaches us, that it is our duty, in whatever station Providence shall place us in the world, to stoop to the lowest offices of love and service toward our brethren.

6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. 8. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

^aMatt. iii. 14. ^bVerse 12. ^cIll. 5. ^d1 Cor. vi. 11; Eph. v. 26; Titus iii. 5; Heb. x. 22.

Peter's feelings, when he viewed Christ's dignity on the one hand, and his own insignificance on the other, revolted at the idea of having the work of a menial servant performed to him. The words "then cometh," &c., do not involve the idea that Peter was the first. Affecting scene! what believing heart can thus contemplate Jesus thus stooping to wash His disciples' feet, and not feel a glow of love kindled in his heart toward Him, and an ardent desire to imitate so lovely an example! When we think, too, of the circumstances under which this act of love was performed, our wonder and admiration is increased, for it was the same night in which He was betrayed, a night in which it might have been thought His own approaching trials would have engrossed His whole attention.

What I do thou knowest not now, &c. This intimation refers to the design of this washing, which was two-fold: first, exemplary—to enforce upon them condescension, humbleness of mind, brotherly

kindness. And, secondly, symbolical—to lead their minds impressively to things of a higher nature. In an extended sense we may apply this assuring sentence, "What I do thou knowest not now," &c. "Submit to all my dispensations. Believe that there is good reason, though for the time it be hidden from thine eyes." "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

"Till Death the weary spirit free,
Thy God hath said, 'Tis good for thee
To walk by faith and not by sight:
Take it on trust a little while;
Soon shalt thou read the mystery right
In the full sunshine of His smile."

Thou shalt never wash my feet. As though Peter had said, This is too much, and what I can never submit to! We may sin against Christ, under a show of modesty and reverence for His name. The resistance of Peter after he was assured that his Lord had a good reason for what He did, though he at present did not comprehend it, was setting up his own wisdom and will against His. *If I wash thee not*, &c. Though this declaration intends nothing less than the necessity of obedience in this instance, it surely comprehends much more. Jesus, therefore, now does not mention the washing of Peter's feet, but of Himself: if I wash thee not. And the threatening, "thou hast no part with me," seems too dreadful to be denounced against an unwillingness to comply with this ceremonial observance, which sprang from something good as well as evil in the Apostle, and was, therefore, a mixed action, a sin of infirmity. Besides, we know that our Saviour was accustomed to teach by facts and imagery, to pass from the body to the mind, to ascend from particular hints to general truths, and to express more than is immediately perceived, in order that it might be discovered by repeated meditation, or illustrated by subsequent events. Jesus stood ready to wash Peter, and stands ready to wash the foulest of sinners.

9. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head. 10. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11. For the knew who should betray him, therefore said he, ye are not all clean. 12. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? 13. ^aYe call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am.

^bLxx. 3. ^cIvi. 64. ^dMatt. xxiii. 8; Luke vi. 46; 1 Cor. viii. 6 and xii. 3; Phil. ii. 11.

Lord, not my feet only, &c. "Let me be entirely washed by Thee, that I may have full participation with Thee." Peter's apprehensions were indistinct, but his love was fervent. He was ready to do or submit to anything, rather than be excluded from having part and lot in Christ, and in His salvation. *He that is washed needeth not, &c.* Reference is had to the washing of the whole body in the bath. The full bath was taken before the principal meal, and when this was done, there was no necessity for further ablutions, except to remove the defilement contracted by the feet, as the person walked about the house. Here is the very point of the resemblance. Peter had given evidence that he had been subject to this moral cleansing, there was no need, therefore, that he should be regenerated anew, thenceforward he would need only that cleansing process, which was well represented in bodily purification by the washing of the feet. The cleansing which takes place at the commencement of the Christian life, or in justification and regeneration, embraces complete absolution from sin as a guilty state, and entire deliverance from it as a polluted life. (Rev. i. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 11.) This cleansing is effected *once for all*, and is never repeated. But Christians, from their contact with earth, require another cleansing, here described as that of "the feet." It is this cleansing which we are taught to seek *daily*, when in the spirit of adoption, we say, "Our Father which art in heaven—*forgive us our debts;*" and, when burdened with the sense of manifold shortcomings, as what tender spirit of a Christian is not? is it not a relief to be permitted thus to wash our feet after a day's contact with the earth?

Ye are clean. Peter and the great body of the disciples were genuine believers in Christ, and therefore sanctified in Christ, purified by Christ, devoted to Christ. They were sincere, but far they were from being perfect. They were clean—clean through the word which Jesus had spoken, and they had believed—so clean, as not to need to be wholly washed anew. *But not all.* These words were added by our Lord, if so be He might thus reach the seared conscience of the covetous, insincere, unloving

one, to touch, and, if it might be, to turn that traitor's heart. *For he knew, &c.* Jesus knew who was about to betray Him, for He "searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men." *Therefore said he, &c.* Christ had, in all probability, washed the feet of all the twelve, but as no external ablutions can purify a hypocrite or a traitor, therefore Judas still remained unclean. By not naming the traitor, our Lord left him space for repentance before He exposed his secret wickedness to his brethren, and brought down on himself swift and fearful destruction. *Was set down again*—had reclined again at the supper. *Know ye—do ye understand?* *Master and Lord*, literally, *the Master and the Lord*, using the titles as the disciples applied them to Him. After this mystically preparing and sanctifying the Apostles for the work of the ministry, and consecrating them as "Holy unto the Lord," well may we speak of them, saying, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. x. 15; Eph. vi. 15.)

14. "If then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."
 *Luke xxii. 37. *Rom. xii. 10; Gal. vi. 1, 2; 1 Peter v. 6.

It is evident that this *mode* of expressing our love one to another, was not intended by Christ as a *permanent* law, but a direction adapted to the prevailing custom of the people to whom it was originally given. That the Apostles did not take Christ's words in a literal sense, is clear, since this washing was neither observed by them, nor by the primitive Christians. The Saviour intended that His disciples should behave toward one another as He had behaved toward them: who, though He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," had become their servant (see Matt. xxiii. 1-12), who though He was rich, yet for their sakes had become poor, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Thus they should imbibe that spirit which would stoop, if needful, to this or any other act of charity, set to the surrounding pagans that sublime example, and draw from a wondering world, as we know it did, the just exclamation, "See how these Christians love!"

15. For *pl* have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.
 pMatt. xi. 29; Phil. ii. 5; 1 Peter ii. 21; 1 John ii. 6.

The word rendered *example*, literally signifies, a *sign, form, pattern*, consisting in some outward manifestation. *That ye should do*, &c. The literal order of construction is, *that as I did* (in the original the aorist tense is employed) *to you, you also may do* to one another. It is to be noted that the language is not, *what I did* to you, ye also must do, &c. Identity of act is not the thing enjoined, but identity of spirit and temper: *as I did to you*, &c., that is, "you should exercise the same humility and love which I have manifested in this act. It is needless to say that this example, in its spirit, is binding upon the followers of Jesus in every age and land. We are to serve the saints on earth, even to the performance of the lowliest offices.

16. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.*

qMatt. x. 21; Luke vi. 40; chap. xv. 20.

The servant is not greater, &c. If the master has condescended to perform such an act, surely the servant ought not to think it beneath him. Let us be less disposed to criticise the defects of those around us, and more anxious and active for their rectification. Let him who cannot bear with the folly and the vileness of sinners, look upward to Christ: if the Holy One of God could bear with Judas so long, and continue to the last the manifestation of kindness, mingled with all needful warning and reproof, if still He is dealing in this manner with us, then ought we to deal tenderly with each other.

17. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*—James i. 25.

If ye know do. If this lesson has entered your understanding, cease all strife for predominancy, and only surpass in service to each other. Knowledge, obedience and happiness, are essential elements of true piety. "He doth not only sin by not doing good, but he sins also by knowing how to do it, and yet not doing it; and so is guilty of a double sin, one, in neglecting his duty, as it is commanded by God, and another in neglecting it, although he himself knows it to be his duty. And, by consequence, he sins both against God and his own conscience too, and will fare ac-

cordingly in the other world, where it will be more tolerable for those that never heard of the Word of God, than for such as heard it, and yet refused to conform their faith and actions to it. (ix. 40, 41; James i. 12.)" It is love alone, interposed between knowledge and duty, which completes the spiritual circle of Christianity. (ix. 21.)

18. *I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.*—Ps. xli. 9; Matt. xxvi. 23; verse 21.

The words, *I speak not of you all*, are equivalent to, "what I have said about your being washed by me, and having part in me—of your being clean, of your being my disciples and servants, of your knowing these things, doing these things, and being happy in knowing and doing them—is true of the great body of you, but it is not true of every individual among you." *I know whom I have chosen.* Some understand this thus: "I know who the persons are that are ultimately to be saved by me, and I know that though the greater part of you do, you do not all belong to that number. There can be no doubt that our Lord did know the chosen ones, them who were "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world," by the Father. But this cannot be the truth here taught. It cannot be supposed that it was our Lord's purpose to furnish Judas with an apology for his crime, by telling him that he was not one of the chosen of God, and, therefore, whatever he did or did not do, salvation was to him impossible—perdition was certain. With the great body of Christian interpreters, therefore, we consider the choosing here referred to, as being the choosing to the Apostleship, as Jesus said elsewhere, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (vi. 70, 71.) Our Lord had chosen them all to this office, and He knew the hearts of all whom He had chosen, and He knew that among them there was one unsound, insincere, covetous, a traitor, ready to betray, only waiting for opportunity.

He that eateth bread with me. To eat with one was a proof of friendship. (See 2 Sam. ix. 11; Matt. ix. 11; Gen. xliii. 32.) This means that Judas had been admitted to all the privileges of friendship, and had

partaken of the usual evidences of His affection. These words of David (Ps. xli. 9), are supposed to have been originally uttered in reference to the treachery of Ahithophel toward him. (See 2 Sam. xv. 12, 31.) But we learn from this passage, that they were spoken prophetically of the treachery of Judas toward Christ, of whom David was a type. *Hath lifted up his heel*, &c. The metaphor is supposed to be taken from an animal of such vicious propensities, that it suddenly turns and kicks at its owner, even when he is treating it with kindness, and perhaps proffering it its accustomed food. Thus insidiously did Judas, like Ahithophel of old, plot the ruin of one, to whom he should have felt himself bound by the strongest ties of gratitude and love.

19. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

*xix. 29 and xvi. 4.

"The end of prophecy is," says *Bishop Horsley*, "not to give curious men a knowledge of futurity, but to be, in its completion, an evidence of God's all-ruling Providence, who, if He governed not the world, could not possibly foretell the wants of distant ages. It is gradually to clear up, as the events should approach, and acquire *from* the events, when brought to pass, the most entire perspicuity; that thus men might remain in that ignorance of futurity, which so suits with the whole of our condition, that it seems essential to the welfare of the world, and yet be overwhelmed at last with evident demonstrations of the power of God. (ii. 22, xvi. 1-4.)

20. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 21. "When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. "Matt. x. 40 and xxv. 40; Luke x. 16. "Matt. xxvi. 21; Mark xiv. 18; Luke xxii. 21. "xii. 27. "Acts i. 17; 1 John ii. 19.

Verily, verily, &c. Jesus returns, after the sad parenthesis (verse 18), to the main subject from which He had digressed, resuming it with the usual solemn formula. And, inasmuch as what He had said to His Apostles, had partaken of the nature of rebuke and warning, He proceeds to comfort them with words of strength and consolation. *Receiveth whomsoever I send*, &c. The fulfillment of my prediction, in

the treason of Judas, proves that your commission is from the Son of God; and the truth remains sure, that he who *receiveth you* whom I send, receiveth the Son of God, and receiveth the Father who *sent* Him. (See on Matt. x. 40.) *Troubled in spirit*. Again does the image of the dark treason of Judas arise before the mind of the Saviour, and again the agitations which lately had so frequently shaken his human spirit now return. (See on xii. 27.) There is a melancholy emphasis upon the word "*you*." One of you, of whom I have just been speaking, *shall betray me*, shall take advantage of your intimacy with me, and knowledge of my ways and my whereabouts to guide the enemy to my retirement, and deliver me into the hands of those who seek to take my life. *The disciples looked one on another*, &c. (See on Matt. xxv. 22.) The mention of the manner in which the disciples received this startling announcement is most natural. Their minds had been so full of what He had just done for them, that His former statement concerning this sad and shameful deed seems to have fallen upon the ear in vain, or to have passed unheeded. From the doubtful glances which they exchanged one with another, it appears that however deep-seated was the meanness and covetousness of Judas, he had hitherto managed to conceal it from his fellows, and had indulged his sinful propensity in secret, or that it was not yet sufficiently developed to attract their notice.

23. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

*xix. 26, xx. 2 and xxi. 7, 20, 24.

Leaning, rather, according to the original, "*lying in Jesus' bosom*," *i. e.*, reclining at table in the place which was next to and immediately in front of our Lord. This situation was one chiefly assigned to near and dear connections. *Whom Jesus loved*. John was the youngest of the disciples, and without claiming any proud pre-eminence, he tenderly remembers that Jesus had for him a peculiar love. He was the youngest, tenderest, feeblest lamb of the flock. "Jesus did not love John more than the rest, with His infinite, eternal, saving love," says *Dr. Lightfoot*, "but

He favored him more with some outward kindness, and more intimate friendship and familiarity. And why? because John had promised that he would take care of Christ's mother after His death. For the words of our Saviour upon the cross to John do carry a fair probability with them, that *that* was not the first time that John heard of such a matter, but that long before he had so promised." *Beckoned*, with a motion of the head, *i. e.*, "nodded," made signs to John, who was so placed as to inquire without being heard by the rest. Between John and Peter there seems to have been a strong friendship. We find them continually, as here, associated together. *Lord, who is it?* This was asked privately. (Comp. verses 28, 29.)

26. Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. 28. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. 29. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast, or, that he should give something to the poor. 30. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night.

²⁶Luke xxii. 3; chap. vi. 70. ^{exil.} 6.

He it is, &c. It appears from this that Judas must have taken his place at the table so as to be near to the Lord. This brings the prophecy more home—"Who did eat of my bread?" (Verse 18.) This answer of our Lord was probably returned in the same undertone in which the question was proposed to him. *Dipped the sop, &c.* Here we must understand that after the second cup of wine at the paschal feast, the father of the family took a piece of unleavened bread, broke it into pieces, and gave a bit to each of those present, commonly dipping it first in the broth. Our Lord took one of these morsels, as He said these words, and dipping it in the dish, gave it to Judas.

Judas had, doubtless, observed and construed these successive movements, and deeming himself marked out to the other Apostles, and Satan now entering into him for the last time, his heart became filled with wrath, and fancying that now at last he had some justification for his conduct, he cast all remorseful thoughts to the winds, and became fixed in his fell and traitorous purpose.

Observing that this was the man's state

of mind, Jesus could no longer endure his presence. He wished to declare to His beloved ones the anguish He felt at parting with them, to comfort them in that sad prospect, and to declare to them the great blessings which His death would work out for the race of man. This He could not do in the presence of one whose contemplated act was to be the proximate cause of all this anguish, and whose heart was alien from His and theirs. He therefore told him to depart. "*That thou doest, do quickly*,"—words which the traitor, and John, and Peter could construe aright, but from which the other Apostles, still in their simple-mindedness, concluded only that he had been sent to make some further preparations for the festival, or to take some alms to the poor. Even Peter and John may not have supposed that the treasons of Judas were so near at hand.

The statement that Judas "went out" is full of awful meaning. In departing from that upper chamber, he, like Cain, "went out from the presence of the Lord," cast himself forth from what was a type of "the Marriage Supper of the Lamb"—a scene of light and joy, into the image of that "outer darkness," which is spoken of in the Gospel as the portion of the damned. *It was night.* What a moral is here, and what a fine tragic effect has the mention of this simple incident! (Ps. civ. 20.) Darkness, the short twilight of the East, closes upon them, and shuts in the gloomy scene. A fitting time for such a deed! A fit type of what was about to be done! Literally, the traitor loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds were evil (chap. iii. 19, 20), ready subject of the ruler of the darkness of this world.

Note, 1. Satan, who from an angel became a devil, would easily teach an Apostle how to become an apostate and a traitor. But he could not teach him how to betray the religion of Christ, when he betrayed Christ Himself. Neither could they, who put Christ to death, extinguish that religion. On the contrary, by so doing, they took the only way that could be taken to perfect the great work and to establish it in the world. 2. As after the sop Satan entered into Judas, so by the believing reception of the holy elements

of bread and wine Christ enters into the hearts of His people, becomes the food and nourishment of their souls; He diffuses Himself through all their faculties, and animates them with His life and Spirit, that it may not be any more they, but "Christ that liveth in them." 3. From verse 29 we learn that charity to the poor was an habitual characteristic of our Lord's life, although known only to the Apostles and to the recipients of His bounty. That bounty seems to have passed into the Church, as the mark of a true disciple (Gal. ii. 10), having been sealed and sanctified, as by the Lord's example, so by those ever-memorable posthumous words of His, which seem to stand as a ninth Beatitude. (Acts xx. 35.)

31. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

Exil. 23. xiv. 13; 1 Peter iv. 11.

He whose spirit was just now so troubled at the dark side of events before Him, now rises into exultation at the glory that crowns the darkness. Again the entire scenes of crucifixion and ascension are concentrated and brought into a *now*, and the whole is seen to be a *glory*. *God is glorified in him*. Never was the glory of God so displayed as when Jesus expired on the cross; hence this event was typified from the foundation of the world, the whole Gospel is called the preaching of the cross, an ordinance is established to show it forth, the praises of the heavenly state regard the Lamb as worthy, because He was slain, and the angels desire to look into these things, as discovering more of the perfections of Deity, than is to be seen in nature and Providence.

32. "If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him."

Exil. 1, 4, 5, 6. Exil. 23.

The "if" here is not conditional, but expressive of a fact which is as a stepping-stone to another fact. *God shall also*—in return and reward of this highest of all services ever rendered to Him, or capable of being rendered, *glorify him in himself*, referring to the resurrection and exaltation of Christ after this service was over, including all the honor and glory then put upon Him, and that will forever encircle Him as the Head of the new creation.

33. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come, so now I say to you.

vii. 34 and viii. 21.

The endearing appellation, *Little children*, given by Christ to His disciples, expresses the tender affection which He bears them, though now upon the point of departing from them. Whatever Christ's dealings are, or may be, with His people in respect of His removing and withdrawing from them, yet He still retains the relation of Father to them, and will in His absence from them exercise such a care over them as parents have of their young and tender children. *As I said unto the Jews*. Though Jesus said to the disciples the same thing as He said to the Jews (vii. 34, viii. 21), yet it was not in the same manner—to the unbelieving Jews it was a solemn warning, lest, continuing in their unbelief, they should never attain the presence of His glory. *So now*, &c. Jesus, whose death was the very next day, plainly tells His disciples that He was going to heaven, and, though they should follow Him their Fore-runner afterward, yet at present they should not do so, as they had not yet finished the work which He had for them to do.

34. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Lev. xix. 18; chap. xv. 12, 17; Eph. v. 2; 1 Thes. iv. 9; James ii. 8; 1 Peter i. 22; 1 John ii. 7, 8, iii. 11, 23 and iv. 21.

The word "new" as applied to the "commandment," does not, regarded as used with reference to the Old Testament, express *antithesis*, but *distinction* merely. The novelty of the command consisted much in the manner of its enforcement. *I give unto you*. Observe how Jesus delivers this precept by way of gift and privilege. This was His farewell sermon: He was now making His will, and among other things that He bequeaths His disciples, He takes this commandment (as a father would do his seal-ring off his finger) and gives it to them. (2 Cor. viii. 9; Rom. viii. 15, 16.) "They, that are indeed lovers of God," says *Archbishop Leighton*, "are united, by that their hearts meet in Him, as in one center: they cannot but love one another. When a godly man sees his Father's image, he is forced to love it; he loves those whom he perceives godly, so as to delight in them, because that image is in them;

and those, that appear destitute of it, he loves them so as to wish them partakers of that image. And this is all for God; he loves a friend in God, and an enemy for God. And, as the Christian's love is pure in its cause, so in its effects and exercise. His society and converse with any tends mainly to this, that he may mutually help and be helped in the knowledge and love of God; he desires most that he and his brethren may jointly mind their journey heavenward, and further one another in their way to the full enjoyment of God. . . . There is, in this 'fervent love,' sympathy with the griefs of our brethren, desire and endeavor to help them. . . . Receiving of the same spirit from their Head, Christ, brethren are most strongly bent to the good of one another; as in the natural body, if there be but a thorn in the foot, the back boweth, the head stoops down, the eyes look, the hand reaches to it, and endeavors its help and ease; in a word, all the members partake of the good and evil, one with another. . . . Let that love begin here, which shall never end." (Gen. xiii. 8; Acts ix. 4; Rom. viii. 29; 1 Cor. xii. xiii.)

35. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.
†1 John ii. 5 and iv. 12, 20.

Observe, 1. Although Christians should not be ostentatious, nor self-seekers, yet as they ought to assure their own hearts of their good condition before God, so they ought in their station to shine and appear such as they are, for it is their duty by consistent deportment to make all men know that they are Christ's disciples. 2. As true love of the brethren is an infallible evidence of regeneration (1 John iii. 10, 14 and iv. 7), so this love is the badge of Christians, by which they are known to the world. (See 1 Cor. xii. 31, with chap. xiii. 1-3, &c.; also Rom. xii. 10, xiii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 13; Gal. v. 13; Eph. iv. 2.) We should fervently pray God to write the new law of love in our hearts. Remember, this is the measure, nothing short of it will suffice, "*As I have loved you.*" We know how Christ loved us: even so ought we also to love one another. No knowledge, no gifts, no greatness without this will suffice.

36. † Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.—xxi. 18; 2 Peter i. 14.

Peter passed over what his Master had said about mutual love, and asked, *Whither goest thou?* As Jesus had not expressly said that He was about to die, the disciples did not thoroughly apprehend His meaning. They thought of His being removed from them in some way, but exactly what He meant they knew not. (See on verse 33.) Doubtless there are many who wish that they could obtain such a promise as Peter received, *thou shalt follow me afterwards.* But though it is the privilege of only a few Christians to hear such an assurance from the lips of their Master, it is the privilege of *all* to have the inward witness of the Spirit, for it is written: "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." Let all believers listen to His gentle voice in their souls.

37. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.
†Matt. xxvi. 34, 34, 35; Mark xiv. 29, 30, 31; Luke xxii. 33, 34.

There are very few, says one, who know the measure of their own strength. We must not rely upon that which we perceive in ourselves, or which we imagine we have, but we must pray much, and promise nothing from ourselves. Peter asks why he cannot follow Christ now, and the reason is, because he believes he can. Presumption gives imaginary strength and hinders men from asking and receiving that which is real. When God assures us of anything, let us not pretend to argue about it, but let us be so far from contradicting Him as to believe without the least hesitation. Peter was not yet strong enough to renounce his own opinion and judgment, and to submit entirely to the Word of God—and yet he thought he could renounce the love of life, and die for the sake of his Master! Thus a deceitful zeal makes us believe we could do great things for God, while, at the same time we do not even easy things which He actually requires of us. Strange delusion this! (See notes on Matt. xxvi. 30-35.)

38. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

This was a humiliating assurance indeed!

Peter is given to understand that, so far from "laying down his life" for Christ's sake, he will even deny that he knows Christ at all; not *once* will he disclaim all knowledge of the Saviour, but *three times* in succession: not *hereafter*, when his faith has begun to wax cool, will he do this, but now, even before the cock crow. Mark mentions in *his* account a second cock-crowing (xiv. 27-31), yet the discrepancy, if such it can be called, it is not difficult to account for. There was a particular hour of the night, one of the watches into which the day was divided, called by this special term, the cock-crowing. (See Mark xiii. 35.) This was what the Lord here intended. Though the cock might crow, as Mark has

noted, even once and again, yet that particular hour called the *cock-crowing*, as the other Evangelists recorded, should not be reached till this too confident disciple had thrice denied his Lord.

Jesus now hears His people's vows of fidelity. He will try them all and prove their sincerity. In what *way* he will try us, at what *time*, we cannot tell. When the trials come, may we be found faithful. Then shall we know the truth of the promise, "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation, for when (as *often* as) he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." (James i. 12.)

1. Explain "before the feast of the Passover." 2. Who put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus? 3. How did Jesus wash the disciples' feet? 4. What did Peter say? 5. State our Lord's reply to Him. 6. What does verse 17 mean? 7. Are those who receive Christ's ministers regarded as receiving Him? 8. What was the effect of Christ's declaring that one of His disciples should betray Him? 9. What did Jesus say when Judas had gone out? 10. What did Peter say to our Lord? 11. Repeat Christ's answer.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *Christ comforteth his disciples with the hope of heaven: 6 professeth himself the way, the truth, and the life, and one with the Father: 13 assurareth their prayers in his name to be effectual: 15 requesteth love and obedience, 16 promiseth the Holy Ghost the Comforter, 21 and leaveth his peace with them.*

We now come to that portion of the evangelical history which we may with propriety call its *Holy of Holies*. Our Evangelist, like a consecrated priest, alone opens up to us the view into this sanctuary. It is the record of the last moments spent by the Lord in the midst of His disciples before His passion, when words full of heavenly thought flowed from His sacred lips. All that His heart, glowing with love, had still to say to His friends, was compressed into this short season.

LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.—Verse 27, xvi. 22, 23.

Our Lord having informed His disciples that He was about to leave them, well knew that their minds must be distressed by this intelligence. (xvi. 6.) It may be that He observed signs of sorrow, uncer-

tainty and dismay gathering upon their countenances, and that, therefore, filled with grief, as His own heart was, He hastened to speak comfort to theirs.

Let not your heart be troubled, agitated, like water, when subject to any disturbing force. They ought not to be dismayed, as if their stay were gone—as if they had lost their confidence in their Lord. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* These words may be read in no less than three ways—either, first, indicatively, or second, imperatively, or third, partly in the one way, partly in the other. If we read them indicatively, we shall say ye believe in God, ye believe also in me; if we read them imperatively, we shall say believe in God, believe also in me; and if we read them partly both ways, we shall say, as our translators have done, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." It is a matter of no moment which of these readings we prefer. The question is merely one of grammatical propriety, and in whatever

way we use the words, the sense is substantially the same. In either case their trust in God is the essential antecedent of their trust in Christ. "Trust in God, or continue to trust in God as you now do, the God of your fathers, the God of all grace, the God whom I have declared, God reconciled in His own Son, and reconciling sinners to Himself, and trust in me also, His Son, by whom He is declared, and in whom He is reconciled—in me the Mediator between God and man—in me the Apostle and High Priest of your profession, in me whom you see before you in the flesh, in me who am clothed with your nature, who can take a fellow-feeling in all your distresses, and who, being exalted to the throne, and crowned with glory, shall want no means of ministering to your comfort."

2. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
John. xiii. 33, 34. Verses 13, 25; Acts i. 11. xii. 26 and xvii. 24; 1 Thes. iv. 17.

Christ calls heaven His *Father's house*—as much as to say, I am only going home. Now He is not ashamed to call His people brethren. Heaven, therefore, is their home also. They are only strangers and pilgrims on earth. They take many a weary step, and often meet with rough usage and trying weather, but better entertainment awaits them at their journey's end—heaven will make amends for all. *Are many mansions.* No inconsiderable number will be required. For, to the question, Are there few that shall be saved? the answer, taking them all, eventually and collectively, must be, No. The Captain of our salvation is leading "many sons" unto glory. And John saw before the throne "a great multitude which no man could number," from all the diversities of the human race. The expression, however, implies not only multiplicity, but variety. Though the house is one, the apartments are many. There is something in the heavenly state suited to the circumstances, and character, and taste of every inhabitant. The angels have their orders and degrees. We see endless diversity in all God's works and ways. Heaven will not be an exception. All the saints will there be perfectly blessed, but

all, we may well believe, will not be similarly employed, or equally endowed. Communications there, as well as here, must be supposed to be dispensed according to the capacity bestowed. And yet the difference of degrees of glory does not hinder, but the least saint in glory is as really happy as the highest there. (Ps. lxxxix. 11; Dan. xii. 2, 3; Luke xxii. 28-30; Col. i. 16.)

If it were not so, &c. He would not deceive them, He would not permit them to forsake all and to follow Him, if He did not know that by doing so, whatever they lost and whatever they suffered in this world, they secured their happiness in the world to come. How does Jesus *prepare a place* for His people? 1. The presence of a beloved object is the grand preparative of any place, and that which gives it its principal charm. Such is the preparation of a place in the future world for us. As the happiness of heaven is not such as Adam would have obtained after a proper trial of his obedience in Paradise, but the happiness of a lost creature, in whose restoration difficulties were found which the Saviour alone could remove, so He must go first, to remove every impediment, to perform every condition, to secure every advantage. 2. Christ will also gather together the whole family of heaven and earth. God has so ordained, that both in this world and that which is to come our blessedness should be bound up with that of each other. Hence, it follows that every accession to the heavenly world affords an influx to the enjoyment of its inhabitants. Every one that goes before may be said to contribute to the preparing of the place for them which follow after. 3. Christ prepares a place for us, in superintending the concerns of the universe, and causing all events to work together and produce the highest ultimate good. Glory awaits the righteous immediately upon their departure from the body, but a much greater glory is in reserve. Innumerable events in the system of Providence must remain inexplicable, till the mystery of God be finished. It is impossible for spectators to comprehend the use of all the parts of a complicated machine till it is constructed and put into motion. And as our

Forerunner is now preparing the scenery of this grand exhibition, and hastening it to its desired issue, it is thus that He is preparing a place for us. He who prepares the place for us, must also prepare us for the place, by forming in us that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." (Prov. xvi. 1.)

I will come again, &c. This is fulfilled in two cases. Jesus comes again at death to receive us to Himself. And this is infinitely desirable. His passage through the territories of death was attended with the most dreadful of all conflicts, but, having overcome, it renders ours an easy one. He comes again at the last day. And this coming differs very much from the former. The one is spiritual, but the other will be personal. The one is private and invisible, the other will be public and obvious, for every eye shall see Him. The one is to receive His people individually, the other will be to receive them collectively. The one is to receive their souls, but the other is also to receive their bodies. (1 Thes. iv. 16-18.) *That where I am, &c.* See notes above. We should not prize heaven itself further than as we have there a more full and perfect enjoyment of God. (xii. 26, xvii. 24.)

4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.
5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way? 6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. 7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

^aHeb. iv. 8. ^b17 and viii. 32. ^c1. 4 and xi. 25. ^dx. 9. ^eviii. 19.

Whither I go, &c. By saying this Jesus meant rather to draw out their inquiries and reply to them. *Lord, we know not, &c.* The interpellation of Thomas is one of three we meet with in this chapter. Thomas first, Philip next, Judas afterward, each have their question. In our Lord's reply to the first of these it will be observed that He inverts the order of the question. He does not speak of the "whither" till He has told them of the "way." He tells them of the Father when He has first told them of Himself. Jesus Christ is our *way* to the Father and to heaven, in His *person*, as God manifest in the flesh, in His *office*, as our Mediator with

God, introducing us to the Holiest by "a new and living way;" in His *sacrifice*, as our Great High Priest forever, who, by His perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice has made propitiation for the sins of the whole world, in His *intercession* as our Advocate with the Father, who hath given us access with confidence to the throne of grace; lastly, He is our way, as being our great Moral Teacher and perfect Exemplar, being the great *Shepherd of the sheep*, "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps," and preceding us in a way open to all, plain and even secure, pleasant, and terminating in everlasting bliss. He is "*the truth*," both in His essence and attributes, as being one with the Father (who "is truth"); He is the *fountain* of all truth, the *complement* of all truth (being the substance of all the types and figures of the Old Testament), having all the characters of truth. As such, He is our great *Prophet*, pointing out by His word, which "is truth," the way which leadeth unto everlasting life. He is "*the life*," as being (what He elsewhere testifies of Himself) "*the resurrection and the life*," through whom alone any one cometh unto the Father in acceptance and salvation, and through whose life-giving Spirit the dead in trespasses and sins are so quickened as to believe in Him as *the truth*, and come unto Him as *the way*, and thus to finally experience Him as *the life*.

No man cometh unto the Father but by me—He is *the living way of access* to the Father. He is the bridge from man to God. And, what is the same thing, He is the bridge from earth to heaven. "We talk of repentance, of prayer and of amendment, though we have not them. But, if we had them, there is yet one thing necessary, above all these, which we forget—there is absolute need of a Mediator to make our peace, and restore us into favor with God, One who must for that end do and suffer for us what we can neither do nor suffer. Though we could shed rivers of tears, they cannot wash out the stain of any one sin; yea, there is some pollution in our very tears, so that they themselves have need to be washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. (Eph. ii. 13-18; 1 Tim. ii. 5.)

If ye had known me, &c. The first part of this verse is almost a repetition of the latter part of John (viii. 19, on which see notes). (Heb. i. 3.) Thus Jesus explains how it happens that Thomas, in the name of the rest, was able to declare with truth that he knew not whither our Lord was going. It arose out of *their imperfect knowledge of Himself*. For, as the Godhead of the Father and the Son is *one and indivisible*, so does the knowledge which has the second for its object, involve the knowledge of the former also. This is made clear in verse 9. Have *seen him*—are acquainted with Him, have a knowledge of God Himself, by having an acquaintance with me.

⁸ Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

It is more probable that he wished for some glorious display of God's presence and perfections, as Moses had done, and which he called God's face. If so, he knew not what He asked. The exhibition might have been fatal. But some, and among these is *Doddridge*, are disposed to commend rather than censure Philip. They take his meaning to be, "Oh! bring us to the knowledge of the blessed God, and we resign every other wish as nothing compared with this!" God cannot be completely known, but He can be really known, savingly known, known as the strength of *our* heart, and *our* portion forever. And this knowledge can yield satisfaction to the possessor. It will suffice for our happiness hereafter. But this knowledge is to be derived from the Lord Jesus.

⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

⁸ Chap. xii. 45; Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3.

Christ had been with Philip and his fellow-disciples corporeally, for the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among them, and they beheld His glory. And He is with His people now. What was His promise to His ministers? to His Church? to individuals? "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." *Hast thou not known me?* Philip was not entirely ignorant of Him. But he knew Him not sufficiently, he knew Him not comparatively, he knew Him not, considering how he might have known Him.

The defectiveness of the knowledge of Christ's followers is very censurable, especially after *long* intimacy with Him.

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. For the reasons just above mentioned, that the Father dwells in the fullness of His attributes of power, wisdom and goodness concentrated into the human person, and made as fully visible to man as man's sense can grasp.

¹⁰ Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you = I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

¹¹ Verse 20; chap. x. 38 and xvii. 21, 23. = Chap. v. 19, vii. 16, viii. 28 and xii. 49.

All that Christ said or did in the Father's name was a proof of such a mutual indwelling as that he who had seen the one had seen the other, but not a proof (as some have maintained from this passage) of our Lord's Deity consisting in the Father's dwelling in Him. It might as well be alleged that the Deity of the Father consisted in that of the Son, who is said to be "in Him." This and all other such passages, which ascribe the works of Christ to the power of the Father, are expressive of the economy of things, and not of the insufficiency of the Saviour. (See on verse 20.)

¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. = Chap. v. 35 and x. 38.

Believe me. Take my word for it, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. We have here a repetition of what is stated in the preceding verse—the Deity, the eternal Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Or else believe me, &c.* Take my word for it, that I am God, and cannot lie; if you cannot trust my word for it, believe me for my very works' sake. Christ's referring to His *works* here, as often elsewhere, respects not merely His miracles themselves, but His sovereign, God-like way of performing them by His own Divine power, which was the same in Him as in the Father.

¹² Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father. = Matt. xxi. 21; Mark xvi. 17; Luke x. 17.

He that believeth on me. It seems clear that this expression, like the similar one, "Them that believe" (Mark xvi. 17), refers to the Apostles and the miracle workers of the primitive age—we say of the primitive age, for we have no

satisfactory proof of miracle-working subsequent to that age. It is plain from the New Testament that there was a *faith* which was connected with miraculous powers. "Miracles," says an ancient writer, "do not still continue, because there are no persons employed to teach any new doctrines, and no promise of Scripture doth imply any more, for "the signs which were to follow them that believe" (Mark xvi. 17), were such as tended to the first confirmation of the Christian faith, which, being effected, their use ceased; and so to ask why God doth not continue a gift of miracles to convince men that the former were true, is to the same purpose as to ask why God doth not make a new sun, to satisfy atheists that He made the old. (Acts viii. 5, 6; 1 Cor. xiv. 12.)

And greater works, &c. The word "works," it will be observed, is printed in the italic character, which intimates that there is no word in the original text answering to the English one. We apprehend that there is no reference to miracles, properly so called in this case, but to some things which our Lord means to contrast, as to magnitude and importance, with the miracles both of Himself and of the Apostles, such as preaching of a clear, full revelation of the economy of mercy to a lost world—the making manifest "the mystery which has been hid in God" since the unbeginning ages of eternity—the turning even a single soul, far more an innumerable multitude of souls, "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the service of the living God"—"the pulling down strongholds," and making lofty imaginations bow before the authority and the grace of the Redeemer. (Eph. iii. 3–11; Acts xxvi. 18; 2 Cor. x. 4; Eph. ii. 20; 1 Chron. xxii. 5.)

Because I go unto my Father. Our Lord thus plainly intimates that their doing these things was to be the result of His going to the Father by an expiatory death, and a glorious resurrection and ascension. There could have been no good news to man had not the curse been borne away. There could have been no quickening, spiritual influence, had He not died to open a channel for it, and ascended to pour it forth abundantly through that

channel into the human heart. "All power in heaven and earth" is given Him, because He became "obedient to death, even the death of the cross." It is, *therefore*, that He was highly exalted, and that, having "ascended on high, he received gifts for men."

13. ¶ And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [¶] Matt. vii. 7 and xxi. 22; Mark xi. 24; Luke xi. 9; chap. xv. 7, 16 and xvi. 23, 24; James i. 5; 1 John iii. 22 and v. 14.

(See notes on verse 14.) It is the sacrifice of Jesus that secures our prayers an audience and answer. The very presenting His sacrifice is a symbolical prayer for those very blessings which we pray for, and not only so, but a prayer that is enforced with a just claim, and both plead the right, or purchase, to all the blessings it sues for, and so cannot be justly denied or rejected. (Luke i. 10; Heb. x. 19, 20; Rev. v. 8, viii. 3. Ps. cxvi. 2.) *In my name.* (See on verse 14.) *That the Father may be glorified in the Son*, that is, that the mighty power and the great grace of Jehovah, the eternal God, may appear to the creature, who comes in Christ's name, for the sake of the Son, that the glory may redound to God and to us through the Son.

14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

In my name. Christ here repeats what was said in the preceding verse, that it might be more carefully observed. He knew how apt mankind were, and still would be, to make use of other names, besides His, in their prayers to God. There is not one word in the Scriptures that can be wrested to mean that Jesus will do what we ask in any other name than His. But that what we ask in the name of Christ, trusting in His merits, inspired by His Spirit, and aiming at His glory. He will do, we have His own word, and that, too, not only once, but again, that we might have strong consolation, and be the more fully assured of it. (Acts iii. 6, 8; Col. iii. 17; Phil. ii. 9, 10.) All right prayer is heard and granted.

15. ¶ If ye love me, keep my commandments. [¶] Verses 21, 23; chap. xv. 10, 14; 1 John v. 3.

Hence we may learn that the only safe proof that we love His person is, that we obey His law. "My mother and my brethren are these," says He, "which hear the Word of God, and do it." The expressions.

of our love to God ought to be regulated, not by our blind and wild fancies, but by His revealed will. (1 John iii. 14, iv. 11, 20, 21; see notes on verse 23.)

16. And I will pray the Father, and the shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.

*Chap. xv. 26 and xvi. 7; Rom. viii. 15, 26.

Another Comforter—a word used only by John, in his *Gospel* with reference to the Holy Spirit, in his *First Epistle* (ii. 1), with reference to Christ Himself. Its proper sense is an "advocate," "patron," "helper." In this sense it is plainly meant of Christ (1 John ii. 1), and in this sense it comprehends all the *comfort* as well as *aid* of the Spirit's work. The Spirit is here promised as One who would *supply Christ's own place* in His absence.

The personality of the Holy Spirit is here distinctly affirmed. The gift of the Spirit is a fruit of Christ's mediation, purchased by His merit, and taken out by His intercession. This wondrous gift is the Divine Paraclete, the *Comforter*, as Christ delights to call Him: for such is one of the meanings of that comprehensive word. It may also mean Advocate, Counselor, Intercessor, one who stands by us, and stands up for us, and helps us. (See notes on xv. 26.) These heavenly offices are applied in common both to the Son and to the Spirit. (See 1 John ii. 1.) And indeed what Christ was to His disciples while He was upon the earth, all this should the Spirit be to them after He ascended into heaven. Christ calls Him "*another Comforter*," and promises that He shall abide with them *forever*, in allusion to His own approaching departure, and the shortness of His stay. In spiritual distresses and anxieties, the Holy Spirit directs the penitent to Christ, and through Christ to the Father of mercies, as it is written, "Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." He so comforts and enlarges the believing soul, and so animates it with holy hope, that it runs cheerfully in the way of God's commandments. And the mourner can even say, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul." (Ps. xciv. 19.)

17. *Even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

*Chap. xv. 26 and xvi. 13; 1 John iv. 6. †Cor. ii. 14. ‡John ii. 27.

Even the Spirit of truth. As the evil Spirit is a liar from the beginning, and "the father of lies" (John viii. 44), so God is "the God of truth." (Ps. xxxi. 5.) Unchangeable in His perfections, unerring in His wisdom, unailing in His promises, He is Himself eternal truth, and the Author of truth in man's soul. He makes His people love truth, and guides them into all truth. By nature we are such, that, "as soon as we are born we go astray, and speak lies" (Ps. lviii. 3-7), but the Holy Ghost so changes our deceitful hearts that at length we "utterly abhor all false ways." (Ps. exix. 128.) How precious is the promise of such a Guide and Comforter as this! how should we value His presence, and submit ourselves to His teaching! *The world*, it is said, *cannot receive Him*. Why not? *because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him*. The love of sin and worldly cares and pleasures blind its sight, deafen its ear, stupefy its understanding. If we would have this abiding guest in our souls, we must learn to view with abhorrence whatever evil tempers and wicked practices bring a film upon the soul, which prevents its "seeing," and much more, therefore, "receiving" this Divine inhabitant. *Dwelleth with you, and shall be in you*, though the proper fullness of both these was yet future, our Lord by using both the present and the future, seems plainly to say that they already had the germ of this great blessing. (See notes on verse 26.)

18. †I will not leave you comfortless: †I will come to you.—†Matt. xxviii. 20. ‡Verses 3, 28.

Comfortless, like orphans, friendless and destitute of proper guidance. (See on verses 16-17.) *Come to you*. The Saviour would grant them His Spiritual presence, though in body He would be absent from them. (Comp. Matt. xviii. 20.) Jesus has not "left us" without a rule (xiii. 34), nor without an example (xiii. 15), nor without a motive (xiv. 15), nor without a strength (xv. 5), nor without a warning (xv. 2, 6), nor without a Comforter, nor without a reward (xiv. 2.)

19. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me: †because I live, ye shall live also. †Chap. xvi. 16. ‡1 Cor. xv. 20.

His bodily presence being all the sight

of Him which "the world" ever had, or was capable of, it "beheld Him no more" after His departure to the Father; but by the coming of the Spirit, the presence of Christ was not only *continued* to His spiritually enlightened disciples, but rendered far more efficacious and blissful than His bodily presence had been before the Spirit's coming. *Because I live, &c.* By His life here, though spoken of as present, because of its nearness and certainty, our Lord means His life after His resurrection. To this the Apostle refers, Rom. v. 10. It would be easy to show how the life of Christ's people in their justification, sanctification and glorification, depends on the living Saviour, but we see also that their life is insured and secured by His—"Because I live, ye shall live also." The certainty of the result is founded in three principles. 1. The union subsisting between Him and them. 2. The claim He has to urge on their behalf, having suffered and died for them. And, 3, the all-sufficiency He possesses to meet all their exigencies. (See chap. xvii. 2¹, 24; Heb. ii. 9; 1 Peter v. 1; Rev. iii. 21.) "Knowest thou not," said *Luther* to the King of Terrors, "that thou didst devour the Lord Christ, but wert obliged to give Him back, and wert devoured of Him? So thou must leave me undevoured because I abide in Him, and live and suffer for His name's sake. Men may hunt me out of the world—that I care not for—but I shall not on that account abide in death, I shall live with my Lord Christ, since I know and believe that *He liveth*."

²⁰ At that day ye shall know that *I am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.
²¹ Verse 10; chap. x. 34 and xvii. 21, 23, 26.

At that day. This phrase is often as here used in the Old Testament Scriptures to signify the whole period of the kingdom of God. (See Isa. xii. 1; Zech. xiii. 1, xiv. 9.) *Ye shall know*—it shall be by experience. There shall be no guess, or mere expectation, or *hope* so about it. The religion of the Spirit is not a *hope*, but an *enjoyment*. "For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. viii. 24.)

That I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. Observe, 1. Although Christ is oftentimes little known, it is most necessary

to know Him, and what His interest in the Father is. 2. Although true believers may be clouded with much ignorance, yet Christ has His time and way to make them understand the mysteries of God, to their comfort and salvation. 3. Christ, rightly known, will be seen to be one in essence with the Father, and consequently approved of Him, and He in whom the Father is to be found, and to know this is the great encouragement of believers. 4. It exceedingly adds to the comfort of believers to know that Christ, who is one with the Father, has also a mystical union and communion with them. 5. The communion between Christ and believers is mutual, they being in Him by faith and needy dependence, and He in them by His Spirit, as the root of their spiritual being, and to make all His fullness forthcoming for them. 6. The communion between Christ and believers is very near and intimate, so that there can be no separation, and the fruits and comfort of it must be very real. 7. Believers may have an intimate communion with Christ, who yet stand in need to be made to know that it is so, for this communion is true for the present, yet the knowledge of it is but to come.

²¹ *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

^c Verses 15, 23; 1 John ii. 5 and v. 3.

Our Lord winds up with the same note which He had struck at the beginning of this passage (verse 15.) This turn in the conversation began with love and obedience; with love and obedience it concludes. *He that hath, &c.* He that hath my commandments in his memory, and keepeth them in his life. *He it is that loveth me, &c.* The Saviour shows in what true love to Him consists, and then He throws in a gracious parenthesis, as it were, hinting how much more there was in this than they might think: it should ensure them the love of that Father whom Philip, at the outset (verse 8), had besought Him to show them. Jesus loves them that love Him; and as they prove *their* love by obeying Him, so He proves *His* love by manifesting Himself to *them*. To those who love and obey Him, He will *manifest*

Himself, in whom and by whom alone can they see and know the Father. (Comp. chap. xv. 10.) What an encouragement is this to us in our Christian course! (See 1 John iii. 18.)

22. ²² Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?—²³ Luke vi. 16.

Our Evangelist indicates anxiety to preclude the supposition that it was the traitor (the only "Judas" whom He has hitherto named), who asked this question. The speaker was "Judas, the brother of James," called by Matthew, "Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddens." He was one of our Lord's cousins ("brethren," as they are called in the Gospels), and author of the Epistle which bears his name. His surprise seems to have arisen out of the deep-rooted belief (which Jude had entertained with the rest of his nation), that the manifestation of Messiah was to be something of a wholly different nature from that which He here for the second time intimates.

23. Jesus answered and said unto him, *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and I will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

²⁴ Verse 15. ²⁵ 1 John ii. 24; Rev. iii. 20.

(See notes on verses 15, 20, 21.) "If our souls be elevated to contemplate and adore the perfections of God," says an ancient writer, "by a necessary and inevitable consequence we shall love Him, and loving Him we must always desire to please Him, and delight in so doing, and besides this our natures will be transformed into a likeness to Him, by that participation of His Divine nature, that we shall by a vital congruity delight in all those things, that He commands, and feel a propension to them, even when we do not reflect on the revealed will of God. (Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22.)" *Make our abode with him.* The idea is the same as is suggested in verse 21, with the additional thought of a *continued* enjoyment of God's presence and love. (Comp. Ps. lxxiii. 23-28.) *My Father . . . we . . . him*—the Father, Son, and Spirit, will in spirit come into union with the believer's spirit.

24. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

²⁵ Verse 10; chap. v. 19, 33, vii. 16, viii. 28 and xii. 49.

He that loveth me not, &c. We may take this saying either for our comfort and en-

couragement, or for our warning, according as we may need either. It is comfort for the fearful and the loving, the timid yet faithful, those who are much afraid, yet who love much; they keep their Lord's sayings, therefore they need not fear, doubtless they love their Lord. On the other hand, it is warning for the careless and presumptuous. "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say."

25. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

These things have I spoken. Glancing the mind's eye over His own discourse, Jesus presents it as a whole as uttered by Himself *being yet present*. His personal presence and His living voice were yet with them, and He now places this personal teaching in preparatory contrast with that of the spiritual Paraclete whom the Father will send.

26. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

²⁷ b16. ²⁸ i. 45, xvi. 13, 14; Ps. xxv. 9, 12-14.

The Comforter. (See notes on verse 16.) *Whom the Father will send, &c.* The Holy Ghost, who, proceeding from Christ as the Head, diffuses Himself into His members, is sent from the Father by the Son—"in His name," through His merits. (See on xv. 26.) Christ, also, as the Father, had the power of sending the Holy Spirit. (Chap. xv. 26, xvi. 7; comp. also Acts ii. 17, 18, with verse 33, and Matt. x. 20 with Gal. iv. 6; see also 1 Peter i. 11; Rom. viii. 9; Phil. i. 19.) *He shall teach you all things*—all things requisite to be known by you, and taught by you to others. (See chap. xvi. 13.) *And bring all things to your remembrance, &c.* Here Christ promises that inspiration, which enabled them not only to give a true history of His life and death, but also gave them the most perfect recollection of all the words He had spoken to them, so that they have been able to transmit to posterity the identical words which Jesus uttered in His discourses. On this rests the credibility and ultimate divine authority of the Gospel history. The whole of what is here said of the *Spirit* is decisive of His divine *personality*, "he who can regard all the *personal* expressions, applied to the Spirit in these three chapters ('teaching,' 'reminding,' 'testifying,' 'com-

ing,' 'convincing,' 'guiding,' 'speaking,' 'hearing,' 'prophesying,' 'taking'), as being no other than a long drawn out figure, deserves not to be recognized even as an interpreter of intelligible words, much less an expositor of Holy Scripture."

27. ¹Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. ²Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ³Phil. iv. 7; Col. iii. 15. ¹Verse 1.

Peace. Jesus said to His disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Yet at the same time they were to have peace in Him. This peace, therefore, must have been something which trouble could not hinder or injure. It must have been a spiritual privilege—composure of mind. Who can adequately conceive the value of this peace? It passeth all understanding. It is a cluster of the grapes of Eshcol. It weans from the world. It enlivens duty. It smooths the rugged path of adversity. It turns a dying chamber into the house of God and the gate of heaven.

I leave. Christ is both the testator, to "leave," and the executor, to give, out of His own hands, what His love has left to believers, so that there is no fear that His will shall be performed to the full, seeing He Himself lives to see it done. "My peace." It is Christ's, for He came and preached it. It was His in an infinitely more expensive way. He procured it for us. He came not to tell us the way to heaven, but to be the way; not to show us how to make our peace with God, but to make it. He made peace by the blood of His cross. And He applies it by the agency of His Holy Spirit.

Not as the world giveth, &c. Not by empty or ineffectual wishes, but by a sincere and efficacious blessing. (Rom. v. 1; John xvi. 22; Phil. iv. 7.) "The peace I leave with you, is not in your houses, but in your hearts, the comfort I give you lies not in gold and silver, but in pardon of sin, hopes of glory, and inward consolations, and these shall outlive all the world's joy. . . . Many a dying father has in his farewell speech to his children wished them all peace and comfort, when he should be dead and gone, but who, besides Jesus Christ, could send a Comforter into their hearts, and lodge peace and comfort in their bosoms? (Job xxxiv. 29; Isa. xxxii. 17.)

Let not your heart be troubled, &c. (See notes on verses 2 and 3; also 12, 18 and 23.) "Your heart," not your hearts, in the plural. They were "of one heart, and of one soul," according to that lovely description of the infant Church. (Acts iii.) They were, even now, about to reap the fruit of their Lord's accepted intercession, "Holy Father, keep, through Thine own name, those whom Thou hast given me, *that they may be one, as we are!*" Where, alas, are the fruits of that intercession now? (Isa. xxvi. 3; Ps. cxx. 6, 7; Acts vii. 26, 27.) *Neither let it be afraid.* "Fear not," is the first word, in the first annunciation of Christ's conception, the first word in the first annunciation of His birth, and the first word in the first annunciation of His resurrection, and almost the last word in His last exhortation, a little before His death. (Luke i. 74; Heb. ii. 14, 15.)

28. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, ¹I go unto the Father: for ²my Father is greater than I.

¹Verse 3, 18. ²Verse 12; chap. xvi. 16 and xx. 17. ³See chap. v. 18 and x. 30; Phil. ii. 6.

If ye loved me, &c. The glory and happiness which my Father possesses, and which I go to possess with Him, is greater than anything I can here enjoy; your love to me, therefore, if it were properly regulated, instead of prompting you to wish to detain me here, would rather incline you to rejoice in my departure. It has been already seen, that the Word, as God and with God, is declared to be One with and equal to the Father. (i. 1-3, v. 17-29, x. 26-31; verse 30; see also Phil. ii. 6.) In this respect Jesus could not say, "My Father is greater than I;" indeed, there can be no greater or less in the infinite perfection of Deity. But, as God the Son was manifested in human nature, and as in this sense He was about to finish His work and go to receive His merited recompense, in being exalted to the Mediatorial throne, the language is evidently proper, not only as to His human nature, but likewise in respect of His Mediatorial character and kingdom, in which He acted as the Servant and Apostle of His Father; even as an ambassador, though equal in nature, is inferior in office, to the prince who commissions him. In this sense it is in perfect accordance with the rest of

Scripture, and it behooves all who love Him greatly to rejoice in His exaltation to glory, after His voluntary humiliation. "These words" ("*my Father is greater than I*"), says an able commentator, "which A. ians and Socinians perpetually quote as triumphant evidence against the proper divinity of Christ, really yield no intelligible sense on their principles. Were a holy man, on his death-bed, beholding his friends in tears at the prospect of losing him, to say, 'ye ought rather to joy than weep for me, and would if ye really loved me,' the speech would be quite natural. But if they should ask him, *why* joy at his departure was more suitable than sorrow, would they not start back with astonishment, if not horror, were he to reply, '*Because my Father is greater than I*?' Does not this strange speech from Christ's lips, then, *presuppose such teaching* on His part as would make it extremely difficult for them to think He could gain anything by departing to the Father, and make it necessary for Him to say expressly that there was a sense in which He *could* do so? Thus this startling explanation seems plainly intended to correct such misapprehensions as might arise from the emphatic and reiterated teaching of *His proper equality with the Father*—as if so exalted a Person were incapable of any accession by transition from this dismal scene to a cloudless heaven and the very bosom of the Father—and by assuring them that this was *not* the case, to make them forget their own sorrow in His approaching joy."

29. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe.
†Chap. xiii. 19 and xvi. 4.

Now I have told you, &c. Christ here refers to what He had said concerning His death and resurrection, His sufferings and glory. *That ye might believe.* Observe, 1. The importance of faith. By faith we are justified, sanctified; by faith we stand, walk, live, are saved. 2. There may be an improvement in faith, where the principle is already found. These disciples believed at this very time, but their faith was too obscure in its views, too feeble in its hold, too powerless in its operation, and Christ's purpose was that it might be lightened and strengthened. 3. One of the best means of increasing and estab-

lishing our faith is to compare the word and the works of the Lord together. 4. The benefit to be derived from prophecy is subsequent to its accomplishment. How can it be otherwise? Where is the evidence of the truth of prophecy before it come to pass? It may be said, A God who cannot lie has spoken it. But God Himself does not demand our faith on the announcement, but on the event.

30. Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.
†Chap. xii. 31 and xvi. 11.

I will not talk, &c. It is here intimated that Christ *had* talked "much" with them. But "*hereafter*" He *would* not talk much with them—not from disinclination, but from want of intercourse.

For the prince of this world, &c. Here our Lord marks the character of His adversary. He is not the prince of this world by right, but usurpation, and by God's allowing him power over those who provoke him. *Cometh.* The Saviour sees Satan's approach. He comes—not personally, as He had come to Him in the wilderness, but in his instruments—in Judas that betrayed Him, in Peter that denied Him, in His disciples that forsook Him and fled, in Herod that threatened Him, in Pilate that condemned Him, in the Jews that clamored for His blood, and in the Romans that shed it. *And hath nothing in me.* There is in me no principle or feeling that accords with His, and nothing therefore by which he can prevail. If the "prince of this world" had the hardihood to attack the "Prince of life," in whom He could find nothing, can we hope to escape his assaults, when in us there is so much of the world whereby he may work our destruction? May we be prepared for the conflict, by being found in Christ, setting our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Taking to us "the whole armor of God," may we "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." (Eph. vi. 10, 11.)

31. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.
†Chap. x. 18; Phil. ii. 8; Heb. v. 8.

But that the world may know, &c. The sense must be completed thus: "But to the prince of the world, though he has nothing in me, I shall yield myself up

even unto death, that the world may know that I love and obey the Father, whose commandment it is that I give my life a ransom for many." (See on chap. x. 17, 18.) The greatest glory that we can give to God is to fulfill His blessed will in all things.

Arise, let us go hence. The discourse and converse at the table now having been finished, Jesus rises from the table and

bids His Apostles rise, that they may listen to His solemn valedictory, closed with His High Priestly prayer, preparatory to their going forth in separation and His going forth to His Passion. *Arise!* is a solemn call, which should forever reconcile us to break off our luxurious sleep. (Eph. v. 14.) *Let us go hence.* A Christian man's life is nothing else but a going out of it. (1 Cor. xv. 31.)

1. With what words of comfort does this chapter begin? 2. What does the Saviour say about His Father's house? 3. What did Thomas say? 4. State our Lord's reply. 5. How is He the "way," "truth," "life?" 6. Does Christ assert that He is in the Father, and the Father in Him? 7. How is verse 12 to be understood? 8. What is said of "another Comforter?" 9. State the question of Judas. 10. Also our Lord's answer. 11. What did Jesus say about peace? 12. Explain the words "My Father is greater than I."

CHAPTER XV.

¹ *The consolation and mutual love between Christ and his members, under the parable of the vine.* ¹⁸ *A comfort in the hatred and persecution of the world.* ²⁶ *The office of the Holy Ghost, and of the apostles.*

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

The true vine, &c. (See notes on chap. xiv. 31.) Our Lord selects the image here from fruit-bearing trees, and from among these the noblest, the most beautiful and graceful, and which has ever been esteemed most highly among men—the vine. He implies that the vine to which He refers is planted in a vineyard, and that it is carefully tended by a husbandman. It is probable that a vine, with its branches, and leaves, and fruit, was in view by the moonlight—perhaps one was trailing by the side of the window. In selecting this image, Jesus made choice of one very well fitted for conveying, with clearness and impression, the truth of which He meant it to be the embodiment. *The true vine.* The vine which we see rising from the ground at our feet, and hanging its beauteous branches, laden with luscious fruit, is the mere type of this "*True Vine*," made, prepared, set in this world, and all its construction and habits arranged by the God of nature, to be a fitting emblem of His more precious plant in the kingdom of

grace. Just as the vine had been often used in the Old Testament Scriptures to denote Abraham, or the house of Israel, (Ps. lxxx. 8-16; Isa. v. 1; Ezek. xix. 10-14; Jer. ii. 21), so now the Saviour adopts the same image to denote His manhood—His Divine humanity. *True*, not typical—real, not ideal, not illustration but embodiment. "*The verri vine*," so *Wickliffe* in his old version of the Bible renders it. So elsewhere the Lord calls Himself "*The True Bread*." (Chap. vi. 32, 33, 35.) We are here taught that, though there may be other pretended sources of spiritual life and growth, Christ is the only true source. It is not even doctrines, however right, that will give us life, doctrines, forms, ceremonies, ordinances, all have their proper use, but they cannot give life; Christ is the true vine, and we must be joined to Him as branches, or there is no life in us. (See notes on verse 5.)

And my Father is the husbandman. As the husbandman prepares room for his plant, and sets it in the place thus made ready, so the Father sent His Son into the world, having "*prepared a body*" for Him, and thus as it were planted the Vine, of which those who believe in Him are the branches. So *Tholuck*: "*The Father who*

sent the Son into the world, is the possessor and fosterer of the vine together with its branches." (See notes on verse 3 and 5.)

2. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away : and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

*Matt. xv. 13.

The cultivator of vines, when he sees branches continuing barren when they should be fruitful, concludes that these branches are, from some cause or other, not partakers of the fruit-bearing influence of the vine, and, perceiving that they are doing no good, but rather evil, cuts them off, and removes them. In like manner, the great Proprietor—cultivator of the spiritual vine, when He perceives that branches are not fruitful, is said to "take them away." God, in His own time, takes away the mere nominal Christian, and will not suffer him any longer even to seem to belong to Christ. If nothing else does so, *death* puts an end to this seeming union, and takes away the fruitless branch. (See Job xxvii. 8; Ps. i. 4; Matt. vii. 23.) But often before death, God in His providence takes such a one away from the means of grace. He did not profit by them while he had them, he shall now have them no more. The false professor is frequently placed in circumstances in which his real character becomes manifest. (See on verse 6.)

And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, &c. Even the fruit-bearing branches are not left to themselves. The knife is used to them also. But only the pruning-knife. They are not cut off, but "purged," or, pruned. What need have the people of God of afflictions? "The same," says *Philip Henry*, "that our bodies have of physic, that our trees have of pruning, that gold and silver have of the furnace, that liquors have of being emptied from vessels, that the iron has of a file, that the fields have of a hedge, that the child has of the rod. (Eccl. vii. 14; 1 Peter i. 6.) *More fruit.* Every Christian is pruned, for there is not one but may become more fruitful still.

3. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

*Chap. xiii. 10 and xvii. 17, Eph. v. 26; 1 Peter i. 22.

The word is "as a refiner's fire." (Mal. iii. 2, 3.) It is one of those arteries by

which the Spirit is conveyed to us. (Isa. lix. 21; Jer. xxxi. 33.) It will be observed that Christ here challenges for Himself, a share in the work of the "husbandman" (verse 1), an office, which, only as He is one with the husbandman of this allegory, He could have any right to challenge for His own. He too has power to purge or cleanse through His word. "The faithful in Christ Jesus are *clean*, being by faith justified from all things, and having thus a standing-ground before God, which yet is in some sort an ideal one—their actual state, although ever approximating to this yet still failing to correspond to it—they therefore needing by the same faith to appropriate ever more and more of that sanctifying grace, those purifying influences, which continually stream forth from Him on all them that are His, and by aid of which He is bringing them to *be* all that, which for His sake His Father has been already willing to regard them."

4. *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

*Col. i. 23; 1 John ii. 6.

It is assumed that they were already connected with Him by a vital union, and this connection they are commanded to carefully preserve. *As the branch cannot, &c.* This second clause in the sentence is not promise, any more than the first, they are precept both. "*Take heed that ye abide in me, and that I abide in you.*" The mystical use of this word "to abide," representing as it does the innermost fellowship and communion of believers with their Lord, and of their Lord with them, and occasionally representing a higher mystery still (John xiv. 10, xv. 10), is peculiar to John, but is very frequent both in his Gospel and in his Epistles, in the language of his Lord, and in his own which he has earned from that Lord. In these two invitations of Divine love and directions of Infinite Wisdom, namely, "Come unto me" and "*Abide in me*" are hidden all the riches of our salvation. Happy are they who come, most happy they who abide: the first, a blessing in time—the latter, in all eternity. (1 John ii. 28, 29; 2 John viii. 9.) As all spiritual fruitfulness had been ascribed to the mutual *inhabitation*, and living, active, *interpenetration*, so to speak, of Christ and

His disciples, so here the keeping up of this vital connection is made essential to continued fruitfulness.

5. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.
^aHos. xiv. 8; Phil. i. 11 and iv. 13.

I am the vine. Ministers are not to preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. But He was His own subject—He preached Himself. How could He have done otherwise, concerned as He was to be useful, and knowing as He did that His Person and work were essential to our salvation?

Our Saviour never takes His comparisons from the sciences, and seldom from the arts, but from natural scenery, which is obvious and intelligible to all. *Ye are the branches.* Our union with Christ, and so in Him with one another, is a mysterious truth which calls for the exercise of a simple and child-like faith. This figure teaches, 1. How close is the union between Christ and His members. The vine and the branches are connected. They are not merely bound or joined together, as is the case with the stones in a building, but actually grow into and out of one another. One stream of life circulates through all. God views believers as "one body in Christ," and members in particular. 2. That Christ and His members have a character of likeness. The branches are the very same kind of wood as the vine, and the very same sap pervades them both. And they that are joined to the Lord are of one spirit. The same mind is in them which was also in Christ Jesus. 3. That all the members of Christ absolutely depend on Him for the supply of what they need. All spiritual blessings flow to us from Him. 4. The usefulness of Christians. The branches are the beauty and excellency of the vine, and *by* these, its vigor and fertility are displayed. Jesus is glorified in His people. We should accustom ourselves to derive spiritual reflections from all the material objects around us. A taste for natural scenery is pleasing and good in itself. But let us not approach it, as a creature only to enjoy, or a philosopher only to admire, but as a Christian also, to improve.

He that abideth in me, and I in him, &c.

(See on verse 4.) While Christ had already declared the abiding in Him to be the one condition of all fruit-bearing, He adds a promise now, that He who abides in Him shall not only bear fruit, but shall bear it abundantly. *For without me ye can do nothing.* The meaning is, "separated from me, or apart from me, ye can do nothing"—still carrying on the figure of the vine and the branches. Not only will there not be much fruit, unless the union with Christ be maintained, there will not be any at all. The words seem to throw light too upon the kind of fruit that is meant. "Without me ye can do nothing." The fruit is what we do—our conduct, our actions, our service our life. These words therefore do not mean merely, as they are often supposed to mean, that without Christ's *help* we can nothing. This is quite true, but these words mean much more. They teach us that *apart* from Christ, that is, if not joined to Him by faith, we can bear no fruit, and do God no acceptable service. (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6, hence Acts i. 8, xv. 9; Gal. v. 6; 1 John iii. 24, iv. 13; Rom. viii. 9.)

6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
^aMatt. iii. 10 and vii. 19.

If a man abide not in me, that is, if a man does not so dwell in me, as to partake of all I have to give, and am willing to bestow—if he is satisfied with a mere outward connection, and has no living trust in me, so as to make me all in all to him—so as to lead him to apply to me continually for all things pertaining to life and godliness, then his unfruitfulness will be made manifest, and that man will be driven away in his wickedness. *Is cast forth as a branch, &c.* That which is here spoken of an individual, is true of a Church; when it ceases to look to Christ alone for life, it is withered, and goes into the furnace, not for purification, but for consumption.

And men gather them, or, better, "and they gather them," bring them together into one bundle of death. The gatherers are the angels, the ministers of the divine anger, to whom the final execution of the Divine judgment is everywhere committed. (Matt. xiii. 41, 49, xxiv. 31; Luke xix. 24; Rev. xix. 24.) *And cast them into the fire,*

and they are burned, or, in its simplicity, more terrible still, *and they burn*. (See Ezek. xv. 4.) But all which is here expressed or implied, of "the fire" (Matt. iii. 10), "the flame" (Luke xvi. 24), "the flaming fire" (2 Thes. i. 8), "the furnace of fire" (Matt. xiii. 42, 50), "the gehenna of fire" (Matt. v. 24; Mark ix. 43), "the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15, xxi. 8), "the everlasting fire" (Matt. xxv. 41; Jude 7), with all the secrets of anguish which words like these, if there be any truth in words, *must* invoke, demands rather to be trembled at than needs to be expounded. It is by just such warnings as that contained in this verse, that saints "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." (See chap. x. 27-29; Rom. viii. 28-39; Phil. i. 16.)

7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
† Verse 16; chap. xiv. 13, 14 and xvi. 23.

If ye abide in me, &c. (See on verses 4 and 5.) The words, "*If my words abide in you*," imply, that the words with which God has furnished us, are to be our guide and directory in prayer. It is *His* promises we are to plead, the truths of *His* word we are to found our hopes upon, *His* declared purposes that are to guide our desires, *His* representation of our condition that is to regulate and give form to our confessions. It is not meant strictly that all our prayers should be moulded to the very language of Scripture, but rather that the Bible should show us what it is we are to ask for, should limit and define our desires, and keep them within the compass of God's purposes and promises. *It shall be done unto you*. This declaration does not mean that Christians may have anything—it matters not what it may be—for the asking, if they can but persuade themselves that they shall have it. It has been justly and finely said: "The will which is the ruling power of the universe, is expressed in Christ's word. For a man to have this word abiding in him, therefore, is to have, for the regulation of his desires, the same principle which is the regulator of all beings and of all events, and surely there can be no more infallible security against the possibility of disappointment, than to have one's will in accordance with that of the Supreme Proprietor and Governor of all beings, and disposer of all events."

His will shall be done, and, if His word is abiding in us, so shall ours.

8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; ^{also shall ye be my disciples.}
† Matt. v. 16; Phil. i. 11. ‡ Chap. viii. 31 and xiii. 35

Our Lord here gives the final cause, the glory of the Father; "that God in all things may be glorified, to whom be glory and dominion forever, Amen." How continually the Divine Son, when He became man, set this object, and nothing short of this, before Him! If we would be His disciples indeed, we must do likewise. It is by "bearing much fruit," that we appear to the world as Christ's true disciples. (See chap. viii. 31; James i. 12.) All the glory which God is pleased to have out of Himself is chiefly reduced to that which He procures Himself, by the operation of His grace in the hearts of men on earth, and by the manifestation of His glory in heaven. And indeed the production of the fruits of His Spirit in a soul, and the forming of one single Christian, are more to His glory than the creation of the material world, and the production of that wonderful variety of flowers and fruits, because it is by the former that the mystical body, the spiritual world, is formed, in and by which He designs to be eternally glorified, of which His Son is the Head, and His Spirit the soul.

9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

How encouraging, but how wonderful, is this declaration of Jesus! How precious to His true disciples! Who can tell the measure of that love wherewith the Father loveth His only begotten Son, in whom He is well pleased. Can it be that we are loved by Christ with a love no less than that infinite and inexhaustible love, wherewith He is loved of the Father? Dear must we be indeed in His sight, precious indeed must our souls then be to Him, notwithstanding all their guilt and infirmities. *Continue ye in my love*. Keep your place in my affection. Let us ever remember, that as the way to abide in the love of Christ is "to keep His commandments," so to disregard them is perilous. There is not any sin by which His love will be more nearly lost, than by the breach of that unity which He would have among all His members. All being joined to Him as their

Head, all should be united with one another in faith and peace, in hope and charity.

10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.
1 Chap. xiv. 15, 21, 23.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love—the obedient spirit of true discipleship cherishing and attracting the continuance and increase of Christ's love, and this, He adds, was the secret even of His own "abiding in His Father's love." The great idea of the whole passage is, that there exists between Christ and the believer the same basis of love, as that upon which rests the ineffable union of the Father and Son. The analogy between His obedience to the Father and theirs to Him, is the more perfect and striking, because it refers to the days of His humiliation on earth, when He stooped to the condition of a man of sorrows and one acquainted with grief. (Isa. liii. 3.)

11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.
1 Chap. xvi. 24 and xvii. 13; 1 John i. 4.

My joy might remain in you, the joy which I feel in respect to you might be abiding. Your joy, &c., the happiness which you experience from my favor. "This Divine joy," remarks Cecil, "is planted in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore an inward and spiritual joy, it is deep rooted in the heart, it is solid and well founded, it is abiding and lasting, it is a satisfying joy, and purifying in its effects. It is a joy that flourishes most in adversity. It is a communicative joy: a man has not tasted what religion is, if he does not seek to impart this joy to others. It is the joy of communion with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a humble joy, but it causes a man 'to triumph in Christ.' Though this joy may be interrupted, yet the source and matter of it remain unchanged, just as in nature, clouds may sometimes, for many days, interrupt the rays of the sun, but the order of creation continues the same." (John iv. 14; Rom. xv. 29, 32; 1 John i. 1-4.)

12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

1 Chap. xiii. 34; 1 Thes. iv. 9. 1 Peter iv. 8; 1 John iii. 11 and iv. 21.

Among the "commandments" mentioned in verse 10, that all-embracing "com-

mandment," which was delivered, chap. xiii. 34, is made prominent, and by the words, "as I have loved you," is developed to its highest capacity. We know we cannot reach this highest pattern, that is not meant, but the more we look on it, the higher we shall reach in this love, and shall learn some measure of such love on earth, as is in heaven, and that which so begins here, shall there be perfected. We are being trained up here to join the multitude which no man can number. We are to love all those happy spirits. Not one is to be treated with contempt or dislike, or even with shyness and reserve. All are to be loved by us, as far as Divine grace may enable us to do so, with the love with which the Father loves the Son, with which the Son loves us. Let us begin this happy life now. Let us love one another. Though there are a multitude of sins in our brethren as well as in ourselves, yet love is a mantle wide enough to cover them all.

13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

1 Chap. x. 11, 15; Rom. v. 7, 8; Eph. v. 2; 1 John iii. 16.

It is here implied that by His own free will Christ would submit to death. When the Saviour expresses the greatness of His love, He uses this phrase, *lay down his life*, (as John x. 15, 17; 1 John iii. 16), when the merit of His passion, he uses the phrase "to die for us," or "for our sins" (as Rom. v. 6, 8; 2 Cor. v. 15; Heb. ii. 9; 1 Peter iii. 18.) "One can show no greater regard for those dear to him than to give his life for them, and this is the love ye shall find in me." "The cross of Christ," says Maclaurin, "was the noontide of everlasting love, the meridian splendor of eternal mercy. There were many bright manifestations of the same love before, but they were like the light of the morning, that 'shines more and more unto the perfect day,' and that perfect day was when Christ was on the cross, when darkness covered all the land." Comparisons can give but a very imperfect view of this love, which "passeth knowledge." Though we should suppose all the love of all the men that ever were, or shall be, on the earth, and all the love of the angels in heaven united in one heart, it would be but a cold heart to that, which

was pierced by the soldier's spear. The Jews saw but blood and water, but faith can discern a bright ocean of eternal love flowing out of these wounds. We may have some impression of the glory of it, by considering its effects. We should consider all the spiritual and eternal blessings received by God's people for four thousand years before Christ was crucified, or that have been received since, or that will be received till the consummation of all things; all the deliverances from eternal misery, all the oceans of joy in heaven, the rivers of water of life, to be enjoyed to all eternity by multitudes, as the sand of the sea-shore—we should consider all these blessings, as flowing from that love, that was displayed in the cross of Christ. (Zech. ix. 17; Eph. iii. 13–21.)”

14. “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.—” Chap. xiv. 15, 23; see Matt. xii. 50.

It is here assumed by Jesus Christ, that His disciples are His friends, and on this assumption of their friendship is founded, as a natural inference, their duty to do whatsoever He has commanded them. It is a great elevation to be a friend of Jesus Christ. To be a friend of God is noted as the highest honor of Abraham; to be a friend of Jesus Christ is not less an honor, since He and His Father are one. Mutual effects are implied in this friendship between the Saviour and His disciples; mutual affection and delight in each other's society; their love to Him is the effect of His to themselves, not only as from this it derives the grand motive, but also as it indicates that everlasting love which is mentioned as the highest source of spiritual blessings.

15. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.

See Gen. xviii. 17; chap. xvii. 26; Acts xx. 27.

The love which Christ bears toward His people suits the relation of friends better than that which subsists between a master and his servants. Reverence is the appropriate sentiment of a servant toward his master, there is not, in the order of things, so much of affection in that relation. But Jesus Christ loves His people with an intense affection, even like that with which He is Himself regarded by His Father, as the beloved Son. *The servant knoweth not*

what his lord (or master) doeth, &c. It is implied that there is perfect freedom of communication between Christ and His disciples. A servant knows little of his master's mind, as it is communicated to a friend, but here the Master reveals His secrets to His servants, whom He treats as His friends; they know the way of the Lord, they become “of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord,” and “they go and tell Jesus,” they commit their cares to Him, confess all their infirmities, all their sins to Him, to Him who can correct their errors, sympathize with their infirmities, forgive their sins, relieve their sorrows.

16. “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

1 Chap. vi. 70 and xiii. 18; 1 John iv. 10, 19. 2 Matt. xxviii. 49; Mark xvi. 15; Col. i. 6.

Lest they should be puffed up with pride, and “exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations,” so as to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, our Lord reminds them that He had chosen them, or selected them out, to a life of holiness and the enjoyment of His favor, and that their position, privileges and prospects were not owing to themselves, but to Him. They were *ordained*, or (which is the sense of the word here) *appointed*, that they might go and bring forth fruit, which might “abide the day of His coming.” (1 Cor. iii. 14.) Connected with this is that privilege of prayer, to which in connection with abiding in Him He had already adverted. (Verse 7.) He had selected them to the laborious office of converting a world. He had selected them to the blessed privilege of asking boundless blessings from above. Let us tread in their steps. We also are the friends of Jesus, if we do what He commands us. We may bring forth fruit that shall never wither. It is far better to convert one soul, than, like Columbus, to discover a continent, or, like Herschell, a planet. The fruits of science will pass away, but the fruits of grace will abide unto eternal life.

17. “These things I command you, that ye love one another.—” Verse 12.

I command you. Inasmuch as I have conferred upon you grace so stupendous, and a love so perfect, full rightly have I

authority to *command* you. And my *command* is, that one command most fully authorized by my example—the *commandment of mutual love*. In revealing His Gospel to the world, Christ not only performed the part of a Prophet, but also a Legislator, and that by His own inherent authority. As He was a King, He stamped those doctrines into laws, which He taught and delivered, as a Prophet. And such as His kingly power is, such are His laws and commandments. He is a spiritual King, a King of souls, of will, and of affections, and accordingly His laws are spiritual, and extend their obligation to the souls, and wills, and affections of His subjects. (Matt. v. 21, 22, vii. 29; Heb. viii. 10.)

18. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you, if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

¶ John iii. 1. 13. ¶ John iv. 5. *Chap. xvii. 14. *Matt. x. 24; Luke vi. 40; chap. xiii. 16. *Ezek. iii. 7. *Matt. x. 22 and xxiv. 9; chap. xvi. 3.

His own, that which belongs to the world, that which is like the world. *I have chosen you out of the world*. (See on verse 16.) This clause is antithetic to *ye are not of the world*, and serves to fix more definitely and emphatically its meaning. *Out of the world*, is that form in Greek which denotes internal separation. They had been under the full influence of worldly aims, purposes and principles, but through the sovereign grace of God, had been chosen from a life of sin to one of holiness and usefulness. *The word that I said unto you*. (See chap. xiii. 16; comp. Matt. x. 24.) *If they have kept my saying*—you see how ill they have kept it—they *will keep yours, i. e.*, in the same manner. Keeping Christ's saying denotes holding fast His doctrines, and obeying His precepts. *For my name's sake*. (Matt. x. 22.) Your support and reward will be therefore the greater. (Matt. v. 11, 12; Acts v. 41; 1 Peter iv. 16.)

Christians are chosen out of the world by God's grace to follow Christ's steps, and by a holy life and conversation, to bear witness for Him in a world that hates Him, and all who do this with zeal and faithfulness may expect to meet some measure of dislike, ridicule and opposition.

(Gal. iv. 29; 2 Tim. iii. 12; 1 Peter iv. 12-14.) Surely, while we mourn over such symptoms of enmity to God, we may well be content to bear some little part of that burden which was laid on our blessed Master (Heb. xii. 1-4); if, indeed, the world speak too well of us, we should suspect whether we be faithful to Christ; for the world loves its own, but has ever hated Christ, and those who are most like Christ. We should never, it is true, needlessly provoke the world's enmity, it is a false zeal, a zeal without knowledge, that would do this, but if we meet with it in the way of duty, we may well rejoice in being counted worthy to bear what is a badge of honor, when borne for Christ's sake, an indication, so far as it goes, that the world sees in us something that is contrary to its own doings.

22. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.—*Chap. ix. 41. *Rom. i. 20; James iv. 17.

Our Lord never refers to Himself as one born into the world in the ordinary way of human generation, but as having "*come*" forth from the Father. His pre-existent state is thus kept ever before the mind, in all His discourses. The Saviour's coming and speaking to these people (which was a great instance of His mercy) led to their contracting a guilt, which they would not otherwise have had, and we should bear in mind that this is the very condition of being more favored and privileged than others, that our condemnation will be the greater, if we do not rightfully improve our mercies. *No cloak*—no color of plea, nothing to pretend by way of excuse. "We think that it follows from verse 23," says *Tholuck*, "that by 'sin,' in verse 22, is intended the guilt of hatred against divine things in general, so that the connection of the thought is this: The hatred toward you rests upon aversion to me, and this rests upon ignorance of the Father. Had I not appeared, this ignorance, and the aversion to what is divine connected with it, would have been comparatively guiltless, but after I have revealed the Father by my appearing and by my instructions, they are the more culpable." Miserable is that person whom the divine benefits only render inexcusable! This is often the effect of outward blessings, which

the sinner abuses by his own infidelity. (See notes on verse 24.)

23. ^aHe that hateth me hateth my Father also.
^b1 John ii. 23.

The second aggravation of their sin is that their hatred of Christ is joined with hatred of the Father. Here we learn, 1. That the great hatred against God in the world appears chiefly in opposition to Christ. 2. That whatever holiness or respect to God men may pretend, yet if they hate Christ or His Gospel, they are but haters of God, who is one in essence with His Son, who sent Him into the world, and who is in Him reconciling the world, by His obediential life and sacrificial death, and by the word of the Gospel. To reject the Son is to reject the Father. To affront an ambassador is an indignity offered to the government which he represents. To despise a preacher is to despise Him from whom he receives his mission.

24. If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin, but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.—Chap. iii. 2, vii. 21 and ix. 32.

The third aggravation of their sin is taken from our Lord's miracles. *If I had not spoken.* (Verse 22.) *If I had not done.* The two combined, doctrine and miracle, attested His unity with the Father and Divine mission. (Chap. vii. 46; Matt. ix. 33; Acts i. 1.) *Among them.* How strangely irrational were the Jews in rejecting our Saviour, when His miracles not only exceeded those of Moses both in number and quality, but, which was much more, when they themselves saw the miracles which Christ did, yet received those of Moses, only upon the credit of their fathers. (Chap. ii. 23, v. 36, x. 25; Acts ii. 22.) *They had not had sin.* It is evident from the word of God (Rom. i. 20, 21), as well as from the reason of things, that sin may be imputed to those who have no revelation. This expression, therefore, must be a Hebraism, which calls a thing nothing compared with something inconceivably greater. (Chap. ix. 41.) *But now have they both seen and hated, &c.* Ignorance, though it does not deserve pardon, yet it often finds it, because it is not joined with open contempt of Him that is able to pardon. But he that sins against knowledge, not only provokes the justice of God by his sin (as every other sinner does), but

he also dams up the mercy of God by his contempt, and does his part to shut himself out from all possibility of pardon. (1 Tim. i. 13; James iv. 17.) It should not pass unnoticed, that at this verse our Lord says *Me and my Father*, and, a few verses further on, *My Father and me.* (x. 30, xvi. 3.)

25. But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, ^aThey hated me without a cause.—[Ps. xxxv. 19 and lxix. 4.]

The meaning is, as in so many other places of the Gospel, not that the Jews hated Christ in order that the words of David might be fulfilled, but that from their hatred resulted the fulfilment of certain words, spoken prophetically by the inspired Psalmist (Ps. lxix. 4), and which the Evangelist here adduces as having reference to the sacred person of our Lord. The "*law*" here stands for the whole volume of the ancient Scriptures (as in x. 34), and it is emphatically called "*theirs*" (as in other places; see chap. viii. 17, x. 34), to convey a tacit reproof of that wickedness, which, "one of themselves, *even a prophet of their own*" (Titus i. 12), had foreseen and denounced.

They hated me without a cause. For what "*cause*" was all this hatred? What plea for this malignity? And still we might ask, Why does the world hate religion, and the Bible, and God? "To hate God" raises horror, and more still, "to hate *him* without a cause." And yet we certainly hate Him, when we do not love His law, His government, the dispensations of His Providence, &c. We have no such direct thought or formal purpose, but actions include all this. Be it our care, that if man dislike or persecute us, there may be no other cause but our faithfulness to real religion, and, as in Daniel's case, men may find no occasion against us, except they find it against us concerning the law of our God. (Dan. vi. 5.)

26. ^aBut when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, ^bhe shall testify of me.

^cLuke xxiv. 49; chap. xiv. 17, 26 and xvi. 7, 13; Acts ii. 33. ^d1 John v. 6.

The Comforter—the Spirit of truth. The two appellations here given to Him who was to be the witness of Christ, and who was soon to come, were given to Him when first spoken of by our Lord, chapter

xiv. 16, 17, and at the 26th verse of that chapter He is termed "the Holy Ghost." That it is of a person, and not merely of an attribute or influence that our Lord speaks, is very evident. His proper name is the Holy Ghost—His character is the Spirit of truth—His office, in reference to Christians, the Comforter. The original word "paraclete" rendered "Comforter," cannot be translated by any one English word. It includes all that is most important in meaning, expressed by the terms instructor, monitor, helper, guide, comforter.

The Spirit of truth, not the Spirit of falsehood, but of truth—not the Spirit of error, but of truth—who knows the truth—who loves the truth—who reveals the truth—who cannot be deceived—who cannot deceive—equally incapable of ignorance and deception.

Whom I will send unto you from the Father. In chap. xiv. 16, this glorious Person is said to be "given" by the Father, and, in the 26th verse of that chapter, to be "sent" by the Father in answer to the prayer of the Son, and here He is said to be "sent" by the Son from the Father. In the economy of salvation, the Father sustains the majesty of the Divinity. The Son and the Holy Spirit act subordinate parts. All things are of the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. The Spirit is said to be sent by the Son from the Father, the idea is, that of a foundation being laid for the gracious mission of the Spirit, in the finished work of the Son, as the great expiator. HE—the glorified God-man—has committed to Him, as the reward of His mediatorial labors, the communication of the influences of the Divine Spirit, so that He has but to intercede, pray, express His will to the Father, and the Spirit's effecting miraculous or saving changes among men is the immediate result.

Which proceedeth from the Father. Here is an evident difference between the Mission and Procession of the Holy Spirit; the former is spoken of, as then to come, *whom I will send.* The latter is spoken of in the present tense, *which proceedeth.* The same Greek term, which we translate "to proceed," is employed by John, when he describes the Spirit as *proceeding* out

of the mouth of Christ in the likeness of "A sharp two-edged sword," and again as "A pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, *proceeding* out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," (Rev. i. 16, xxii. 1.) *He shall testify of me.* Here, again, the personality of the Holy Spirit appears. "He shall bear witness to my integrity. Though I am rejected by my adversaries, yet the Holy Spirit will vindicate me, and bring clearly to light the truth respecting me." There is also reference to the illumination of their minds in regard to the Old Testament types, ordinances and prophecies.

In relation to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (which is so plainly taught in this verse), an old writer says: "As in waters, there is the fountain, or well-head, then there is the spring, that boils up out of that fountain, and then there is the stream that flows forth from the fountain and the spring, and yet all these are but one and the same water; so, here (chap. vii. 37-39), God the Father is the Fountain of Deity, the Son as the spring, that boils up out of the fountain, and the Holy Ghost, that flows from both; (see Gal. iv. 4) and yet all three is but one and the same God. The same may be also explained by another familiar instance. The sun, you know, begets beams, and from the sun and beams together proceed the light and heat. So God the Father begets the Son, and from the Father and Son together proceeds the Spirit of knowledge and grace. But as the sun is not before the beams, nor the beams before the light and heat, but all are together, so neither is Father before the Son, nor Father or Son before the Holy Ghost, but only in order and relation to one another, in which only respect the Father is the first Person in the Trinity."

27. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.
1 Luke xxiv. 48; Acts i. 8, 21, 22; ii. 32, iii. 15, iv. 20, 33, v. 32, x. 39 and xiii. 31; 1 Peter v. 1; 2 Peter i. 16. 2 Luke i. 2, 1 John i. 1, 2.

Although the "testimony" of the Spirit is mediated through the human "testimony" of the disciples, yet the latter is here made co-ordinate with the former. "When ye shall have been comforted by the Holy Ghost, and your mind has been supported by fixed truth, He will impel you to testify of me. For, first, He will

give testimony internally in your hearts, and then outwardly by miracles and through your confession and preaching."

The main things to be regarded as the truth of human testimony are these: 1. If men testify nothing but what they saw or heard. 2. If they testify at no long distance of time from the things done. 3. If they testify them plainly, and without doubtful expressions. 4. If a great number agree in the same testimony. 5. If any part with all that is valuable to mankind rather than deny the truth of what they have testified. All these particulars united in the Apostles and disciples of Jesus as witnesses for Him. Their testimony was to be a personal one. (See Luke i. 2; Acts i. 21.) The desirableness and even necessity of this in proclaiming the Gospel to an unbelieving world, must be obvious to all. Their words would

have found small credence in Jerusalem, Judea, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Ethiopia and other regions whither they carried the Gospel, had they not been able to testify to its truth from their own personal knowledge. With straightforward plainness and simplicity they narrated the wonderful history of Jesus of Nazareth, and in proof of their veracity appealed to the miraculous gifts with which they had been endowed by the Holy Spirit. How united and resistless their testimony! How could they be deceived, or why should they deceive others, and do this, too, at the expense of all that was dear to them in this world, even of life itself?

"Whence but from Heaven, could men unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie:
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price."

1. Who is the true vine? 2. Who is the husbandman? 3. What is said of fruitless branches? 4. What of fruitful branches? 5. How is God the Father glorified? 6. What is said of those who keep Christ's commandments? 7. Who are Christ's "friends?" 8. What does verse 16 mean? 9. Why is it that the world hates Christians? 10. Explain the expression "they had not had sin." 11. What did Jesus say the Comforter would do? 12. What is said of the testimony borne by the Apostles?

CHAPTER XVI.

¹ Christ comforteth his disciples against tribulation by the promise of the Holy Ghost, and by his resurrection and ascension: ²³ assureth their prayers made in his name to be acceptable to his Father. ³³ Peace in Christ, and in the world affliction.

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye ²³should not be offended.
^aMatt. xi. 6, xiii. 57, xxiv. 10 and xxvi. 31, 33.

These things—including His description both of the hostility of the world and the co-operation of the Paraclete or Comforter. *That ye should not be offended*—"that ye should not be stumbled." There is a strong temptation in times of great affliction to distrust God. It is very hard, when He smites us, to believe that He loves us. When we are prosperous and happy, then it is easy to say, "As many as He loves He rebukes and chastens." It is easy then to believe, or to *think* we believe

that He does not willingly grieve or afflict the children of men. But when suffering from disease, passing under the cloud of bereavement, pining in a dungeon, or threatened with the stake, then it is hard *not* to imagine that God has forgotten to be gracious. Those who have experienced sore afflictions can remember the struggle in their hearts at such times. Jesus knew the weakness of His disciples, and hence He thus prepared them for their approaching trials, that when they came they might not be accounted "strange things."

2. ^bThey shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

^cChap. ix. 22, 34 and xii. 42. ^dActs viii. 1, ix. 1 and xxvi. 9, 10, 11.

Put you out of the synagogues. (See on ix. 22, xii. 42; Luke vi. 22.) The meaning of this clause is, "excommunicate you."

This was the highest punishment which the Sanhedrim had at this time power to inflict, as all civil power was in the hands of the Romans. The Jews had already agreed to excommunicate those who confessed Jesus to be the Christ (John ix. 22), and they had acted accordingly. (Verse 34, xii. 42.) Those who were thus cast out they despoiled of their goods. (Ex. x. 8.) *Yea, the time cometh that, or when whosoever killeth you, &c.* This was soon fulfilled in the case of Stephen and others. (Acts vii. 58; comp. viii. 1, ix. 1, 2.) The *Zealots*, not waiting for the judgment of the Sanhedrim, executed summary vengeance on many of the followers of Jesus. They were esteemed by the Jews as good men and filled with zeal in the cause of God. And at last, at the Jewish war, after immense slaughter of their brethren, they held themselves to be men without offense.

Will think that he doeth God service, or will think that he offereth sacrifice to God. Our Saviour's foretelling to His disciples here, is, that His and their enemies should think it not only lawful, but acceptable to God, and of the nature of a sacrifice, which propitiates for other offenses, to put them to death! "See here," says an old writer, "a conscience bravely glossed, where the error looked like religion and atonement, and yet these Jews that did so, were given up to the direst punishments that ever any nation did groan under. (Rom. x. 2, xi. 8-10; Acts xxiii. 1; 2 Tim. i. 3; 1 Tim. i. 13, 15.) That is certainly a very deplorable time, when men think they honor God by persecuting the truth and the disciples thereof. It may be said, until the end of the world, this 'time cometh,' and therefore our patience must not end until the term of our lives expire."

3. And ^athese things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

^aChap. xv. 21; Rom. x. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 8; 1 Tim. i. 13.

Because they have not known, &c. (See notes on chap. xv. 21.) Their blindness and self-deception as exhibited in their wicked course were by no means guiltless, since they thus acted through ignorance which was willful. One sin leads on to and begets another. Early ignorance is developed into later crime. Sins of omission are succeeded by sins of commission. Op-

portunities neglected pass into wickedness with a high hand. See how our Lord, who had before spoken of their sins as a consequence and proof of their ignorance of the *Father* (chap. xv. 21), here justly conjoins *Himself* "the Father, nor me." Had they known the Father, as they vainly boasted, they would have recognized and acknowledged *Him*. Had they acknowledged *Him*, as indeed they ought, they should have known the Father.

4. But ^athese things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And ^bthese things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

^aChap. xiii. 19 and xiv. 29. ^bMatt. ix. 15.

It is here implied that the thought that "these things" had been fully foreseen by the Saviour, would prove their comfort and their stay. (Comp. verse 1 and see Matt. xxiv. 25.) *Because I was with you.* At an early period of the disciples' connection with Jesus, there was no need that He should *fully* disclose the scenes of trials through which they were to pass. It was more appropriate to that period that they should rejoice in their privileges, and should be receiving religious instruction. Besides, if troubles should arise while He was with them, He could personally advise and protect.

5. But now ^aI go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me. Whither goest thou? 6. But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

^aVerse 10, 16; chap. vii. 33, xiii. 3 and xiv. 28. ^bVerse 22; chap. xiv. 1.

After Jesus had said what was sufficient to satisfy them that He was to die and go to His Father, and stated to them how much this would prove for their advantage, they make no further inquiry. For this neglect He gently reproves them, as it indicated too little value for the peculiar blessings of His kingdom, the hope of which would have been sufficient to preserve their minds from too much depression. He, however, sympathizes with them, as sorrow, produced by fearful apprehensions of the consequences of His departure, had filled their hearts. Were our eyes open to see clearly the reasons of God's Providence toward us, or would we humbly *ask* Him to instruct our souls, we should often find reason to rejoice where we now suffer our hearts to be overwhelmed with sorrow.

7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.
[Chap. vii. 33, xiv. 16, 26 and xv. 26. *Acts ii. 23; Eph. iv. 8.]

Though you are too full of grief to look beyond the present trouble, though you are dumb with grief, tongue tied and cannot ask anything further, *nevertheless* I will tell you what is the real state of the case, "that it is expedient for you that I go away," that this is really for your good, how much soever it may appear to the contrary, for—and so He proceeds to add the reason of this—"If I go not away, &c.

The Comforter. (See on xiv. 16, 17, 26, xv. 26.) Observe that even in the hour of His sorrow and trial, Jesus considers, not what is expedient for *Himself*, but for His *disciples*. What rendered it "expedient" that Christ should go away, was, that the Holy Ghost was not to be given until the Son of man had returned to the Father. It is here evident that the Holy Spirit, the great gift of the New Covenant, is bestowed on man only through the atonement and mediation of Him, who is expressly said to have been "delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.) It could not be "expedient" to part with a greater good for a less, nor could it be said to be an expediency to part with an equal good for an equal. If, therefore, it was expedient that Christ should go, that the Spirit might come, *that* must have been, in His esteem, a good superior to the continuance of His own mere bodily presence.

8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9. Of sin, because they believe not on me, 10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more, 11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

*Acts ii. 22-37. *Acts ii. 32. *Chap. iii. 14 and v. 32. *Acts xxix. 18. *Luke x. 15; chap. xii. 31; Eph. ii. 2; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14.

When he is come. This gift (it has well been said) is not a mere fluid or emanation shed off from the Divine essence or person, it is a *He*, the essence or Person Himself. The qualities, actions, efficiencies of a living agent are, through the whole passage ascribed to this Comforter. There is no alternative left but either to pervert the passage, or to acknowledge herein the presence of the Third Person of the adorable Trinity.

Our Lord had told His disciples at the

close of the preceding chapter, that they should be witnesses for Him, because they had been with Him from the beginning. This led them to think that the whole weight and stress of the Christian cause in this world pressed upon their own shoulders. What are we for this? Never trouble yourselves, says Christ, when I go, the Paraclete shall come—the advocate or pleader—and He shall make strange work in the world when once He comes, He shall take up my cause, whereas I have been traduced and charged as a deceiver. He shall convince the world of *sin*, because they believe not in me, and of my *righteousness* and the equity of my righteous cause, and, therefore, of the very completing and perfection of that righteousness which is to be had by me, which depends, thereupon, and of *judgment*, when I shall be known to be enthroned, and to have all government, and principality and power put under me, or into my hands—and so the Christian cause shall live, and spread, and triumph, when I am gone, and so much the more for my being so. It is not of gross unbelief only, or of an open rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, that the Holy Spirit has to convince the world, nor is it to a bare conviction of this truth, like what prevails in all Christian countries, that men are brought by His teaching. When He, the Spirit of truth cometh, His operations are *deeper* than this amounts to: it is of an *opposition of heart* to the way of salvation that He convinces the sinner, and to a cordial acquiescence with it that He brings him. Those who are born in a Christian land, and who never were the subjects of gross infidelity, stand in no less need of being thus convinced than others. Nay, in some respects they need it more. Their unbelieving opposition to Christ is more subtilé, refined and out of sight than that of open infidels, they are less apt, therefore, to suspect themselves of it, and consequently stand in greater need of the Holy Spirit to search them out and show them to themselves.

12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

*Mark iv. 33; 1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12.

Ye cannot bear them now. Because of their prejudices in favor of their own nation, the law of Moses, &c. (Comp. Luke xxiv.

25.) Though Christ had many things to say, He found that His disciples could only bear general truths, yet in saying what He did, He sowed the *seeds* of the whole system of theological knowledge and heavenly wisdom, which the Holy Spirit afterward *watered* and *ripened* into a glorious *harvest* of light and salvation, by the ministry of the Apostles. "When God doth conceal any truths from His people for the present," says *Gurnall*, "see His candor and sincerity, opening the reason of His veiling them to be, not that He grudged them the communication of them, but because they could not then *bear them*."

13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.
*Chap. xiv. 17 and xv. 26. *Chap. xiv. 26; 1 John ii. 20, 27.

The Spirit of truth. (See on xiv. 17 and xv. 26.) *He will guide you into all truth*, literally, *all the truth*, which I would now say unto you, if you could bear it, and if the proper time for its communication had come. (See on xiv. 26.) *Not speak of himself*, literally, *from himself*. The messenger Spirit should not have a message of His own separate and apart from His Divine sender. Like the Son, He is not alone and independent, absolutely originating His own doctrine. *Whatsoever he shall hear*, that is, from the Father, what He shall receive in order to communicate to you. (Comp. xv. 15.) Thus there would be a perfect harmony between the instructions which Jesus had given and the more full disclosures to be made by the Spirit. The Spirit was to complete, in the work of instruction, what Jesus had commenced. *Things to come*, as Acts xi. 28, xiii. 1, xx. 25, xxi. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1; Eph. iv. 11; 2 Peter i. 14 and Rev. everywhere.

14. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

The testimony of the Spirit, in whatever form it was given, would fit the Apostles for testifying of Christ. In the Epistles we see the accomplishment of the promise, *He shall glorify me*. Three of the Apostles had seen the glory of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. But there is a glory which cannot be seen by human eyes. The Spirit reveals *this* glory to the *souls* of all true believers. Unbelief is the veil that

hides the glory from the heart; but when the Holy Spirit, by His might, takes away this veil, then the glory of Christ shines into the inmost soul, true believers look with open and unveiled face into the Gospel glass (or mirror), and behold the glory of the Son of God. *For he shall receive of mine*, &c. He shall bring you in remembrance of all things that I have told you. The proper office of the Holy Spirit is, not to institute and bring in new ordinances, contrary to Christ's doctrine previously taught, but to expound and declare those things which He had before taught, so that they might be well and truly understood.

15. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.

*Matt. xi. 27; chap. iii. 35, xiii. 3 and xvii. 10.

The words, *All things that the Father hath are mine*, are true in the fullest extent of meaning in which they can be understood. "All the perfections of His nature—all His prerogatives—all His possessions are mine. I and my Father are one." (Chap. x. 30, v. 19.) While this is true, there can be but little doubt that the reference here is to the doctrines and revelations made by the Spirit to the Apostles. "Every part of the mystery which was kept secret from former ages and generations," "hid in God since the foundation of the world," has been unfolded to me, and I am, as Mediator, authorized through the Spirit to make it known to you, that ye may make it known to your fellow-men.

16. "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me," because I go to the Father. 17. Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? 18. They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 19. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me. 20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. 21. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

*Verse 10; chap. vii. 33, xiii. 33 and xiv. 19. *Verse 28; chap. xiii. 3. *Isa. xvi. 17. *Verse 6. *Luke xxiv. 41, 52, 53; chap. xiv. 1, 27 and x. 20; Acts ii. 46 and xiii. 52; 1 Peter i. 8.

From themes so sublimely mysterious as those descanted on in the verses immediately preceding, our Lord now condescends to resume those topics of consolation which were suited to His disciples' present

condition. *A little while, &c.* The "joy of the world" at their "not seeing Him" seems to show that His removal from them by death was what He meant, and in that case, their "joy at again seeing Him" points to their transport at His reappearance amongst them on His resurrection, when they could no longer doubt His identity. At the same time the sorrow of the widowed Church in the absence of her Lord in the heavens, and her transport at His personal return, are certainly here expressed. Though if we "see not" our blessed Saviour as they did, it is not that He is not present with His Church, but that we make a veil by sin and worldliness to hide Him from our eyes; yet even to His truest servants this world is not a place of perfect joy and peace. On the contrary, Christ's servants, more or less, here weep and lament, while the world rejoices. Christ's servants have their share of common earthly trials, and, besides these, they are exposed to opposition and ridicule on account of their religion, and mourn also over past and present sins.

"Again, a little while," says Jesus to His servants, "and I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Just as a woman remembers no more her pain, when her new-born child smiles upon her, so shall the faithful Christian think nothing of the cross which on earth He bore so meekly, when in the morning of the resurrection he shall see his Master in the clouds of heaven, and with humble faith look up to Him as the Saviour whom he trusted and followed along the rugged path of duty. The "world" may "rejoice," but while they laugh, all things are serious round about them. God is serious, who exercises patience toward them; Christ is serious, who shed His blood for us; the Holy Ghost is serious, who strives against the obstinacy of their hearts; the Holy Scriptures bring to their ears the most serious things in the world, the whole creation is serious in serving God; all that are in heaven or hell are serious; how then can they be gay? (Rom. viii. 22; 2 Sam. xi. 11.)

23. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. ^aVerily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

^aMatt. vii. 7 and xxi. 22; chap. xiv. 13 and xv. 7, 16.

In that day. No specific day or period of time is here referred to by our Lord, but the whole future, beginning at the time of His resurrection. It is as though He had said: "Your minds are now in darkness and perplexity in view of the circumstances of trial by which you and I are surrounded. But soon the darkness and sorrow which possess you, will pass away. You will then see clearly the relation of my suffering and death to human redemption, and in my resurrection and reappearance, you will find the pledge of my presence and faithfulness to the very end. Then you will enter upon that dispensation of spiritual light and blessedness, which in the end will leave nothing for you to desire, nothing which you will not understand. In that day of consummated bliss, you will have occasion to ask me nothing, all these points of present mystery and obscurity being fully cleared up to your mind." (See 1 Cor. xiii. 12.)

Verily. Our Lord, as this word shows, here begins an altogether new subject, connected indeed with what has gone before, and even arising out of it, but yet distinct, and complete in itself, and this is to ask blessings. "There is not in this verse," says *Trench*, "a contrast between asking the Son, which shall cease, and asking the Father, which shall begin, but the first half of the verse closes the declaration of one blessing, namely, that hereafter they shall be so taught by the Spirit as to have nothing further to inquire; the second half of the verse begins the declaration of altogether a new blessing, that whatever they shall seek from the Father in the Son's name, He will give it them." He who before had said (chap. xiv. 13, 14,) "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do," here says, "Whatsoever He will give it you." So complete is the Divine unity.

In my name, that is, prayer offered by them as His disciples, devoted to His interests, and acting under His authority. Here is the warrant by which Christians from the earliest times have concluded all their petitions with the sacred name of Jesus. In His name, through His mediation, uttering that, trusting in this, ye may ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (Chap. xv. 7.)

21. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

¹Chap. xv. 11.

In my name. While Christ was with them, not having been exalted to His Mediatorial station at the right hand of God, prayer had not been offered through Him. The basis on which they were to be heard and accepted of God, was the obedience and death of Jesus Christ, as an atonement for sin. Hence the command now given was an advance on that in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 7), the appended clause *in my name*, revealing the ground of the efficacy of prayer. "Prayer *in the name of Christ*, and prayer *to Christ*, presuppose His *glorification*." The disciples had not as yet had, at least comparatively, just views of His character as the Mediator. He calls them to come henceforward with boldness to the throne of grace, and to "*ask*," when He is gone, in His name, with the most confident hopes and largest expectations, that their joy might be full. Christ is our Advocate, to hand our petitions to the Father. "All our prayers are but cyphers, till Christ's intercession be added. Cyphers in arithmetic stand for nothing, till a figure be added. (xiv. 6, xv. 7; Gen. xliii. 3.)

Why is there so little of the Life of God in our soul, or the Love of God in our hearts, or the Peace of God in our bosoms, or the Image of God in our lives? Chiefly because we are so little in prayer, cordial, fervent, humble, persevering prayer, because we talk so much *about* God in public, but so little *with* God in private.

25. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father.

Proverbs, that is, figurative language, not intended to be understood by everybody, and perhaps, for a time, not understood by the Apostles themselves. *I shall show you plainly of the Father.* The proof which these words afforded of His acquaintance with their secret souls, enabled them to depend more confidently on the promises and assurances which He proceeded to add. And this conviction that Christ is acquainted with our most secret sorrows, and is ever ready and willing to relieve them, is indeed the groundwork of all such comfort as religion affords amidst the troubles of life.

The promises here made to the disciples are the treasury to which we should resort for consolation whenever we are downcast and perplexed; for these promises are the heritage of God's Church in all ages.

26. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

¹Verse 23. ²Chap. xiv. 21, 23. ³Verse 30; chap. iii. 13 and xvii. 8.

That day, &c. (See notes on verse 23.) This is reconciled with what is there said, by referring it to the commencement of that great time-period, when there still existed the necessity of prayer for more perfect light and knowledge. *And I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.* Our Lord's words, in connection with what follows, "*for the Father Himself loveth you*," seem plainly intended to convey this meaning: "Not to mention or dwell on my intercession with the Father—which will assuredly be put forth, and will as assuredly be successful, for the Father always hears the Son—the love of the Father, both to you and me, secures that He will give you whatsoever ye ask in my name, for He does love you, and loves you because you love me. We are not to think of the intercession, any more than of the atonement, as that which makes God love His people. Both are the mediums through which benignity, guided by wisdom, manifests itself to men in consistency with—the glorious illustration of—the claims of righteousness. The Father does not love them because Christ intercedes for them. Christ intercedes for them because they are the Father's, the object of His peculiar love; a love which is eternal, sovereign and of which He can find no cause out of Himself.

Because ye have loved me, and have believed, &c. In a certain sense, love precedes as well as follows faith. Each of these reacts upon the other. (Chap. i. 16.) Yet principally love is here put first, as Christ was first speaking of love; and then He proceeds to speak of faith, in order to prepare the way for that profession of faith which afterward the disciples utter, and which thus He put even into their mouth. *That I came out from God.* (See notes on next verse.)

28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." 29. His disciples said unto him, *Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.* 30. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

^cChap. xiii. 3. ^sChap. xxi. 17. ^bVerse 27; chap. xvii. 8.

As Christ had before contracted the precepts of His Father (the Law, Matt. xxii. 37-40), so here, being ready to depart, He contracts the history of His own life (the Gospel) for the remembrance of His disciples, saying, *I came forth from the Father, &c.* He "went out from the Father," when He was incarnate, He "came into the world," at His nativity: again, He left the world, when He was crucified, and He went to the Father, when He ascended. The disciples immediately on these words tell Jesus, *Lo, now speakest thou plainly, &c.* Let us beseech Him, that it may be no parable to us, but that we may so understand and remember His "coming out from the Father," for love of us, that in love to Him, we may seek to leave the world, and follow Him to the Father. (xiii. 3; Heb. xiii. 13, 14.)

Now we are sure. The emphatic *now* they earnestly repeat. So delicately and effectively had the great Master suited His words to their hearts as to convince them anew that He knew their hearts. *That any man should ask thee*, that is, "that any should put questions to thee." The purport of these words is—Thou knowest us so perfectly, and what all our doubts and difficulties are, as to render it unnecessary to apply to Thee by questions.

31. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

There was a too confident expression of their faith, to which our Lord plaintively alludes, showing them how little they knew their own hearts. There was no irony, but the tone of deep solicitude and tender affection. Would that your faith were so confirmed that it would be proof against all trial and temptation. But, alas, there will soon occur that which will discover your undue confidence in your own strength. The question was evidently asked to put them on a full examination of their hearts.

32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

^aMatt. xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27. ^bChap. xx. 10. ^cChap. viii. 29 and xiv. 10, 11.

The Saviour declares, though yet in a proverb, that already they had entered upon that final hour, whose close should witness the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy, "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad," to their own homes, to their former occupations, to seek their own safety by a timid and almost selfish flight. What a picture is this of desertion! They who had all confidently declared, while the danger was yet distant, that they would follow Him to prison and to death, when the danger draws nigh, "all forsook Him and fled."

I am not alone, &c. Christians, between whom and Christ there is a relation, and a conformity founded upon it, *may* be alone, by the bereaving dispensations of Providence. But it is a blessed truth, that whoever dies, the Lord lives, whoever fails He is firm. They *ought* often to be alone with God. There they can hold the freest and fullest communion with Him, there they become acquainted with themselves, there they shake off the influences of the world, and there the Lord will show them His covenant. They *must* die alone. But, with David they can say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for *Thou* art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

33. These things I have spoken unto you, that ^ain me ye might have peace. ^bIn the world ye shall have tribulation: ^cbut be of good cheer, ^dfor I have overcome the world.

^eIsa. ix. 6; chap. xiv. 27; Rom. v. 1; Eph. ii. 14; Col. i. 20. ^fChap. xv. 19, 20, 21; 2 Tim. iii. 12. ^gChap. xiv. 1. ^hRom. viii. 37; 1 John iv. 4 and v. 4.

The Saviour would not end this discourse with sorrowful words. The beginning of it was, "Let not your heart be troubled." The end was, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He does not promise His people a *prosperous* life, but He does promise them a *peaceful* one. *In the world ye shall have tribulation*, but in me ye shall have peace." This is a mystery to the world, because they imagine that happiness arises from prosperous circumstances. It is true *their* happiness proceeds from nothing else, but the happiness of the people of God flows from a sense of forgiving love and a hope of eternal glory.

1. What is meant by "offended?" 2. What did Jesus predict concerning His disciples? 3. How was it expedient for Christ to go away? 4. Of what was the promised Comforter to reprove the world? 5. How was He to glorify Jesus? 6. What did our Lord say to His disciples, when they did not understand His saying, "a little while, &c.,?" 7. What encouragement have we to "ask" in Christ's name? 8. How is verse 28 to be understood? 9. What did Jesus ask His disciples? 10. How have His disciples peace in Him? 11. Why should they be of good cheer in the tribulation through which they pass?

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Christ prayeth to His Father to glorify him, 6 to preserve his apostles, 11 in unity, 17 and truth, 20 to glorify them, and all other believers with him in heaven.*

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come. glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: *Chap. xii. 23 and xiii. 32.

Having closed His conference with His disciples, our blessed Lord proceeds to His prayer of intercession with the Father. "Christ, the eternal High Priest," says *Beza*, "being about to offer Himself, by solemn prayers consecrates Himself as the sacrifice, and us with Him, to God the Father. This prayer, therefore, has been the foundation of the Church of God from the creation of the world, is now, and will be, to the consummation of all things."

"Plain and artless as this address sounds, says *Luther*, "it is so deep, rich and wide, that no one can find its bottom or extent."

These words spake Jesus, that is, what is related in the preceding chapters. *Lifted up his eyes to heaven.* Hitherto His glance had been horizontally directed upon His listening Apostles, but now our Evangelist beholds Him turn His eye upward. This is the natural direction of the eye in prayer, the habitation of God being regarded as high above the firmament.

Father—the first appealing word of the eternal intercession, simply Father, a name of God unknown to the world before the Son revealed it. It is worthy of notice that He does not say *Our Father*, for God was His Father in a sense which could not be shared by His disciples, nor *my Father*, for this would represent Him as praying for Himself apart from His disciples, as in Matthew xxvi. 39, 42, "but simply *Father*, that great name in which all the mystery of Redemption is summed up."

The hour is come. Our Lord here speaks of the hour in which He was about to finish by His death the work which His Father had given Him to do "on the earth." (Comp. verse 4; chap. vii. 30, viii. 20.) This hour, the most signal in the annals both of time and eternity, was marked by the union of wide extremes, by strange contrasts and wondrous results. 1. It was an hour of the deepest humiliation, and yet of transcendent glory. 2. It was marked with the greatest of human crimes, and the most affecting displays of the Divine mercy. 3. It was an hour in which wicked men and the ever-blessed God accomplished opposite and contrary purposes. 4. It was the hour of the triumph and overthrow of hell. 5. It stands distinguished from every other hour, as a point of time standing between the eternity of the past and the future, and related to each in a manner which marks no other from the beginning to the end of the world.

Glorify thy Son, receive thy Son to the glorious condition in heaven which has been appointed for Him. (Comp. Mark xvi. 19; Phil. ii. 9-11.) *That thy Son also may glorify thee.* The Father would be greatly honored by the extension of the Gospel, and the success which was to attend it, when, after the ascension of Jesus, the Spirit should be sent into the world.

2. ^aAs thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

^bDan. vii. 14; Matt. xi. 27 and xxviii. 18; chap. iii. 35 and v. 27; 1 Cor. xv. 25, 27; Phil. ii. 10; Heb. ii. 8. ^cVerses 6, 9, 24 ^dchap. vi. 37.

Christ is to be regarded here as a constituted Ruler. This He is as Mediator. Considered as the eternal Son of God, He has a sovereign, governing power, which, as it was original and natural to Him, can never be lost, more than the Godhead.

(Col. i. 15, 16; Heb. i. 2.) But as He is Mediator, God-man, He is a Governor, too, by constitution. All power is given Him both in heaven and earth. The Father hath given all things into His hand. (Chap. xiii. 3, on which see notes.)

That he should give eternal life. Life eternal is that which Christ intends for His people, and He will never rest satisfied till He crown His other mercies to them with putting them in possession of this inestimable gift. *To as many, &c.* (See verse 6, also chap. vi. 37, 38, &c.) In the original it is in the neuter gender, the better to express the universality of the proposition *All*, and everything that the Father gave Him in the covenant of redemption, whatever kind of people they are, Jews or Gentiles, bond or free; and not only all of them, but *all*, that is in every one, the whole man, soul and body, as the Saviour intimates also in saying (chap. vi. 40), that "He will raise them up at the last day," which must be understood of the body; and so "all that the Father gave to Him, shall come to Him," wholly, entirely, without any exception or reserve. (1 Thes. v. 23.)

3. And ^athis is life eternal, that they might know thee ^bthe only true God, and Jesus Christ, ^cwhom thou hast sent.

^aIsa. liii. 11; Jer. ix. 24. ^c1 Cor. viii. 4; 1 Thes. i. 9.

^bChap. iii. 34, v. 36, 37, vi. 29, 57, vii. 29, x. 36 and xi. 42.

This is life eternal, &c. That is, not only the way to eternal life, but also the beginning and first rudiments of it, seeing the same knowledge, when completed, or the full beatific vision of God, is eternal life in its fullness and perfection. *That they might know thee, &c.* To "know the only true God," is to acknowledge that the true God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and has committed the whole work of salvation into His hands, and withal so to acknowledge Him *with effect*, as not only, in return for this love, to worship God with our whole heart and mind, but also to seek our salvation from this love of God by His Son.

To *know Christ* is to know Him as a Saviour, the sole Giver of salvation, and cordially to worship and receive Him as such.

Some have used this verse, but utterly

in vain, to impugn the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ. (See verses 2, 5.) That Jesus here speaks of *the only true God*, in distinction from idols, and not to the exclusion of Himself appears from His speaking of Himself, as the object of the same fiducial knowledge with the Father, and from His distinguishing Himself from the Father, not by any essential title, but merely by His office—character, viz.: *Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* (See Deut. xxii. 12; Judg. x. 16; 1 Sam. vii. 3; Ps. lxxxi. 9; Isa. lxiii. 11.) And the same Apostle who recorded this prayer expressly says of Christ, *This is the true God, and eternal life*, in opposition to idols. (1 John v. 20, 21.)

4. ^aI have glorified thee on the earth: ^bI have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

^aChap. xiii. 31 and xiv. 13. ^bChap. iv. 34, v. 36, ix. 3 and xix. 30.

Jesus glorified His Father by the doctrine which He preached, by the miracles which He wrought, by the unspotted purity and innocence of His life, and by His unparalleled sufferings at His death. *I have finished the work, &c.* That is, I am now about to finish it. He speaks of what He had resolved to do as already done.

Observe, 1. That this work of redemption is work that glorifies God. 2. That every man has his work, his proper work, assigned him by God. 3. This work must be finished here upon earth. 4. That, when we have done our proportion of work, we may expect our proportion of reward. 5. That it is a blessed thing at the hour of death to be able to say in sincerity and uprightness, that we have glorified God in the world, and have finished the work which He appointed us to do. 6. As the one offering of Himself by Jesus was sufficient, a great indignity is put upon Him by any attempt to add to His work. We want no penance, no purgatory—His blood cleanseth from all sin. We want no mediator, no patron—but our "Advocate with the Father." 7. Christ's finished work should relieve and encourage us under all our imperfections. We ought to be humbled for our deficiencies, and we shall deeply bewail them before God if our hearts are right with Him. But the foundation of our hope lies not here. We glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus

Christ. We live through Him. We are accepted in the Beloved. We are complete in Him.

5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory ^{which I had with thee before the world was.}

^{Chap. i. 1, 2, x. 30 and xiv. 9; Phil. ii. 6; Col. i. 15, 17; Heb. i. 3, 10.}

In this passage our Lord speaks of glory in reference to the future and the past. He refers to the future when He prays that His Father would now glorify Him, that is, after His sufferings, He refers to the past, when He says that He had glory with the Father before the world began. The import of the prayer is, that His original glory might be manifested in a particular manner, or after a temporary obscuration. We have here an answer to an objection, that Christ cannot be conceived to pray for the same state of glory which, on the supposition of His pre-existence (which is here undeniably taught) He enjoyed before His humiliation, because it had never been lost. But it had been concealed from the eyes of men by His voluntary abasement, and it would be displayed in a new light, by His exaltation in our nature to the throne of the universe, and by the result of His administration in the perfection and eternal happiness of His people.

6. I have manifested thy name unto the men ^{which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.}

^{Verse 26; Ps. xxii. 22. Verses 2, 9, 11; chap. vi. 37, 39, x. 29 and xv. 19.}

From praying for Himself the Saviour now comes to pray for His disciples. How did the disciples feel when they heard their beloved Master speak of *them* to His Father; for they must have known it was of *them* He spake, when He said, "*The men whom thou gavest me*, &c. Are the Apostles the *only* men that the Father has given to the Son? Blessed be His name, they are *not*. They were representative men, the whole body of believers are also included in the words. An innumerable multitude have, as provided for in the economical counsels of the Divine Three, been given to the Son, as the fruit of His infinite sufferings.

Thy name—thy whole character toward mankind. *I have manifested*. "I have brought it into light, and caused it to shine in itself and to illumine others." Nature showed a little in creation—the Mosaic dispensation more in revelation, but the

full manifestation of God, His nature, and attributes, came only by Christ. *Thou gavest me*. None are given to Christ but those that were first the Father's. The character of the Father is not merely externally, but internally, savingly manifested in the souls of Christ's followers. The practice which they pursue, is thus stated, "*They have kept thy word*." By the Word of God, we are to understand the Divine law, and all the ordinances of His appointment. This implies, 1. *The reception of it*. We cannot be said to keep that which we have not previously received. 2. *Obedience to it*. They keep it so as to reduce it to practice. 3. *Continuance in it*. The disciples had kept God's Word pure from the doctrines and commandments of men, and persevered in it, and so must we.

7. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

That all things, &c. That is (appears from the next verse), that all "words" (the doctrines), whatsoever Thou hast commissioned me to speak, are indeed from Thee. There is nothing in the original answering to the word *things*. The Apostles had learned and recognized that these doctrines were not fabricated by Jesus, but given from God.

8. For I have given unto them the words ^{which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.}

^{Chap. viii. 28, xii. 49 and xiv. 10. Verse 25; chap. xvi. 27, 30.}

"If any man will do His will," said our Lord once before, "he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." (vii. 17.) This was realized in the case of these disciples. They walked according to the light they had, and they received more light. They walked faithfully, and to them was given the assurance of faith. (xv. 15.) They were obedient, and therefore they were blessed; for, "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." So that they could say, each one, "I know in whom I have believed;" for, "He that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance."

9. I pray for them: ^{I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.}

^{I John v. 19.}

The word in the original is not so much, "I pray," as "I ask," or "make request," and so, in verse 20. *For them*—not as individuals merely, but as representatives of all

such in every succeeding age. (See verse 20, and notes.) *Not for the world*—for they had been given Him “out of the world.” (Verse 6.) “In that prayer for eternal life,” says *Hooker*, “which our Saviour knew could not be made without effect, He excepteth them for whom He knew His sufferings would be frustrate, and commendeth unto God His own. (See Matt. xxv. 34; Rom. viii. 33.)” The simple sentiment which is here after the manner of John expressed positively and negatively, is that the world in its state of unbelief and rebellion against God, is not included in the intercessory prayer which Christ is now offering. This does not however imply any decree of exclusion, by which they who are of the world are debarred from salvation by Him. The idea is simply that the intercessory prayer of Jesus embraces those only who are the actual subjects of His redeeming love. It cannot be denied, however, that His omniscient eye ran down the ages of time, and took in at one comprehensive glance, not only His disciples who then surrounded Him, but also all those “who should believe on Him through their word.” (Verse 20.) *For they are thine*, this is stated, as the reason or ground, why the Father could give them to the Son in the compact of redemption. They were His, not simply as His creatures, but in the embrace of His everlasting love.

10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.—*Chap. xvi. 15.*

These are very high and strong expressions, too grand for any mere creature to use, as implying that all things whatsoever, inclusive of the Divine nature, perfections and operations, are the common property of the Father and the Son. And this is the original ground of that peculiar property, which both the Father and the Son have in the persons given to Christ as Mediator. The words, *and I am glorified in them*, cohere closely with the last words of verse 9. We are reminded thereby that Christ is glorified in His saints, by their life (1 Cor. x. 31), and by their death. (John xxi. 19.)

11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.
Chap. xiii. 1 and xvi. 28. 1 Peter i. 5; Jude 1. Verse 21, &c. Chap. x. 30.

No more in the world. “I am just going to

leave the world, and therefore they shall stand in need of peculiar assistance and support. Though my struggles are at an end, theirs are not; though I have gotten beyond the scenes of strife, I cannot sever myself in spirit from them, left behind and only just entering on their great conflict.” *Holy Father*, an expression He nowhere else uses. “*Father*,” is His wonted appellation, but “*Holy*” is here prefixed, because His appeal was to that perfection of the Father’s nature, to “keep” or preserve them from being tainted by the unholy atmosphere of “the world” they were still on. *Through thine own name*—rather, “in Thy name,” in the exercise of that gracious and holy character for which He was known.

Those whom thou hast given me. (See notes on verses 2, 8, 9.) *That they may be one, &c.* “Sin,” says *Leighton*, “broke all to pieces, man from God, and men from one another. Christ’s work in the world was *union*. To make up these breaches He came down, and began the union which was His work, in the wonderful union made in His person that was to work it, making God and man one. And as the nature of man was reconciled, so, by what He performed, the persons of men are united to God. Faith makes them one with Christ, and He makes them one with the Father, and hence results this oneness among themselves, centering and meeting in Jesus Christ, and in the Father through Him, they are made one together.”

12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition: that the Scripture might be fulfilled.
Chap. vi. 39 and x. 28; Heb. ii. 13. Chap. xviii. 9; 1 John ii. 19. Chap. vi. 70 and xiii. 18. Ps. cix. 8; Acts i. 20.

While I was. The word is proleptically used, as Christ had not yet actually left them. It will be seen that the great standpoint of this prayer is, by way of anticipation, after His glorification had commenced. *I kept them in thy name*, I preserved them in the knowledge and love of Thyself, through my teaching and care. *Those that thou gavest me, &c.* (See notes on verses 2, 6, 11, 12.) In the preceding verses those who were given to Christ are stated to have “kept His word,” and believed in *Him*,” but Judas had always been a hypocrite, and was now a traitor and apostate, and therefore Christ could not mean to in-

clude him in that number. (vi. 66-71; verses 70, 71, xiii. 18, 30, verses 18, 21, 27-30.) And if in this verse we understand by those "given to Christ," such as were given Him to be His Apostles, without reference to faith, or "the election of grace," we cannot explain the preceding verses in that sense, because they are verified in none but true believers, of which number Judas never had been.

The son of perdition. (2 Thes. ii. 3, 4.) "The son of perdition" signifies one, who deservedly perishes. *That the Scripture might be fulfilled.* The Scripture was fulfilled, the sin of Judas was foreseen in God's counsel, and foretold in His Word, and the event would certainly follow after the prediction as a consequence, though it cannot be said to *follow from it* as an effect. (See Ps. xli. 9, lxix. 25, cix. 8.) Most modern commentators are of opinion that our Lord has no particular passage in view (as Ps. iv. 10, which He at another time applies to this purpose, in John xiii. 18), but rather alludes to the *prophecies in general* concerning His Passion.

13. And now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

In the world. For as yet He *was* in it, but was just going to leave it and go unto the Father. His last words, considering their conduct, might have been reproachful, or at least reproving: but the things He now spoke were adapted to encourage, and *designed* to comfort them. "*My joy.*" Observe its *nature*. This joy is not the joy which Christ has, when He sees the travail of His soul, and is "satisfied," but the joy of which He is the medium, author, source, and only source. *These things I speak . . . that, &c.* The joy of the believer is not a visionary thing. It is not the produce of delusion or ignorance. It flows from conviction, it appeals to the word of the Saviour. Observe the *measure of this joy*—"fulfilled in themselves." They possessed it already, but defectively. In conversion a good work is begun, but it is carried on until the day of Christ. Christian experience is progressive. Some from various preventions have little of the pleasures of religion, others walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Observe, also, the *importance* of this joy, as attested

by the concern our Saviour here expresses. He knew the importance of this possession—to the honor of our religion and the commendation of the ways of godliness to others—to our zeal and activity in the Divine life—to our weanedness from the world—to our support in trouble, and our comfort in the valley of the shadow of death.

14. ^aI have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them: because they are not of the world, ^beven as I am not of the world.
^cVerse 8. ^dChap. xv. 18-19; 1 John iii. 13. ^eChap. viii. 23; verse 16.

And. The things connected are, to receive God's Word, and to be hated by the world. Fidelity in following and preaching the Word of God in its purity is inconsistent with the friendship of the world. There is no danger of being hated by the world, when, through fear of displeasing it, we abstain either from following the way of truth or from teaching it, for from the time that we act thus, we ourselves are of the world. (See on verse 16; also on chap. xv. 18-25.)

15. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

^aMatt. vi. 13; Gal. i. 4; 2 Thes. iii. 3; 1 John v. 18.

I pray not, &c. The world being continually vexatious and troublesome to the followers of Christ, they may, perhaps, frequently desire to be taken out of it, and placed "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." But though the difficulties, trials and sufferings, to which His disciples would be exposed, would be many and great, yet Jesus did not thus pray for them. He knew it would neither be for His glory, nor for the good of mankind, nor for their own advantage, that they should be taken out of the world. (See 1 Peter ii. 9; Matt. v. 14, xiii. 33; 1 Cor. iii. 8; Rev. xxii. 12, xx. 12; Heb. vi. 10; Gal. vi. 7-10.) Observe, 1. It is the province of God to take us out of the world. "In His hand thy breath is, and His are all thy ways." 2. This world is a proper situation for the righteous to live in for a season. By their remaining here the wicked have instances of religion before them, which encourage as well as condemn. It is in the very nature of religion to render Christians active in doing good. The state of society, bad as it is, would be far worse, not to say intolerable,

were the righteous to be withdrawn, and the licentiousness of sinners to be no longer repressed, or counteracted by their rebuke, their example, and their influence. 3. There is evil in the world to which Christians are exposed, and by which they may be injured. There is the evil of destructive error. There is Satan who desires to "sift them as wheat." (Luke xxii. 31.) There is evil from the snares of the world, whether of prosperity or adversity, or those laid by the people of it, and from the tribulation of it. 4. The Divine protection is essential to their security. Nothing equals the dependence of the Christian: but herein lie all his spiritual resources, for when he "is weak, then he is strong." When in himself he can do nothing, he forms an alliance with Omnipotence, and can do all things. 5. It is encouraging to remember that our Lord and Saviour prays for our preservation. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

16. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."—Verse 14.

Of. This sentiment is expressed also in verse 14, but in a different order of words, which simply shows the cause of the world's hatred, and accords with the next verse, 15. Here, however, *not of the world* stands as the reason why Jesus invoked for them His Father's protecting care. Their virtual separation from the world, even while yet living in it, which was there implied, is rendered in this reiteration of the words, more prominent and impressive. Their separation from the world was in one sense as real, as though they had been removed out of it. (Phil. iii. 20.) The non-conformity of believers with the world, and their conformity with Christ is a sure pledge that the Father will keep them from the evil of the world, and that they will not lose the good things which grace has begun in them, for this is an argument why He should "keep them from the evil."

17. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

"Chap. xv. 3; Acts xv. 9; Eph. v. 26; 1 Peter i. 22. 12 Sam. vii. 23; Ps. cxix. 142, 151; chap. viii. 40.

Sanctification, or being renewed, and made like to God, is a necessity. (2 Thes. ii. 3.) It is so, 1. As being correspondence

to the Divine character. 2. As arising from the command of God which is found in every part of the Divine record. 3. In order to evince our faith and union to Christ. Faith without purity is vain. 4. For the advancement of God's glory. It is not to be expected that anything but a holy Christian can be instrumental and beneficial in advancing the cause of religion in the world. 5. For the peace of our minds. Without purity there can be no peace. 6. In order to qualify us for the heavenly kingdom. We must be like God if we would be happy in eternity, there must be a *meetness* for heaven, as well as a *title* to heaven. (Lev. xix. 2, xx. 7, xxi. 8, &c.) *Sanctify them, &c.*, not initially, for so they were sanctified already, but progressively: let them increase more and more in grace and holiness. Learn hence, 1. That such as are already sanctified, ought to pray and strive for higher degrees of sanctification. 2. The Word of God is the great instrument in His hand for His people's sanctification. "*Thy truth.*" There is an emphasis in the appropriation—*thy truth*: for it is not every kind of truth that sanctifies, but the truth of God: "*the truth as it is in Jesus.*" It is by the Word of truth, either communicated in writing, or addressed orally to men, that the church has been extended, and that the salvation of individuals in that church is promoted, and their relation to Christ, their turning to God, their growth in grace, their establishment in peace, purity and meetness for heaven, secured. Divine truth conduces to our sanctification, by the holy objects of contemplation it reveals, by the powerful motives it presents, by the excellent examples it exhibits, and by the Spirit of holiness that attends it, for His influence is necessary to the success even of His own Word. 3. That the Word of God is a Divine truth, an eternal truth, an infallible truth, an holy truth. (See notes on verse 19.)

18. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."—Chap. xx. 21.

Here the Saviour draws a gracious analogy between His mission from the Father and their mission from Him, that this latter may likewise be an object of interest to Him. The Apostles had the same

commission which Christ had, considered as *man*—they were endued with the same Spirit, and His Word through them was accompanied with even the same success.

19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

1 Cor. i. 2, 30; 1 Thes. iv. 7; Heb. x. 10.

I sanctify myself. The word to sanctify does not here mean to renovate or purify, but to consecrate or devote. Jesus could not be sanctified in the former sense, because His nature was not depraved or defiled by sin. Under the law, when persons or things were dedicated to God, they were considered as hallowed or holy, and to use them for any common purpose was to profane them. Thus Jesus consecrated Himself to be an atonement to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. He here gives us a glimpse of the nobleness and the blessedness of doing, and denying one's self, anything for others' sake: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." What if one suffer and almost sacrifice himself for others' good? This is Christ-like. *That they also might be sanctified.* This sanctification differs much from the former. It does indeed take in the notion of dedication, but it also denotes renovation and purification. At present, indeed, the work is not complete, but it is begun, and is advancing. "*That they also might be sanctified.*" This shows us what a connection our sanctification has with the sacrifice of Christ. Observe, 1. How precious and invaluable must Christ have deemed this sanctification, since He considered nothing too great or expensive to procure it for us. 2. They do not improve His death aright who seek from it hope but not holiness. 3. Those are badly instructed in the mystery of sanctification who think to gain it from some slavish, legal, superstitious, self-righteous methods of their own, instead of repairing to the sufferings of Christ, the only fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.

20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

"I pray for these," says our Lord—that is, for the Apostles, but He adds, "I pray not only for them, *but for them also,*" &c.

He extended His view through all coming time, and embraced in His intercession all who should become His followers. "We may justly write this comfortable text in letters of gold," says *Luther*, "as it relates to all. For it is our glory and consolation, our treasure and pearl, so that for us Gentiles the whole Scriptures do not afford a more comfortable saying than this. (Isa. liv. 6-14)."

21. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

1 Verses 11, 22, 23; chap. x. 16; Rom. xii. 5; Gal. iii. 23. Chap. x. 38 and xiv. 11.

"This prayer," says *Dr. Chalmers*, "was made for the establishment, not only of such a real, but of such an ostensible unity among Christians as could be seen by the world, and as might lead the world to believe in the mission of our Saviour." "The special mercy and particular blessing which Christ prays for on behalf of believers," remarks *Burkitt*, "is a close and intimate union betwixt the Father, Himself and them, and also betwixt one another, such an union as doth in some sort resemble that union which is betwixt God and Christ—not an unity of essence and nature, but of wills and affections. Here Christ intimates one special advantage that would redound to the world by this desirable union betwixt the ministers and members of Christ, it will, if not convert, yet at least convince the world that I and my doctrine came from God." The following testimonies of eminent theologians on the union of Christians will be read with interest: "He has not the love of God, who does not seek the union of the Church."—*Augustine*.

"I confess I would rather, much rather, spend all my time and days in making up and healing the breaches and schisms that are amongst Christians, than one hour in justifying our divisions even therein, wherein on the one side they are capable of a just defense."—*Owen*. "Thousands have been drawn to Popery, and confirmed in it by the divisions of Protestants. We take the position and believe it tenable, that the Gospel cannot accomplish its great triumph and collect the redeemed from every land, until the law of Christ be fulfilled by these Protestant sects I can as willingly be a martyr for *Love*, as

for any article of the Creed.”—*Baxter*. “O, how do I long to see bigotry and party zeal taken away, and all the Lord’s servants more knit together! Would that all the names among the saints of God were swallowed up in that one of Christian.”—*Whitfield*. “Believers are often tied with pack-threads by their little fingers, into small unions, but the great unity which binds their hearts together, and will last, when the pack-threads shall be destroyed by a touch of the fire, is their unity in the Son of God. Comparatively speaking, I see no other sectarianism worth fighting for, and they who fight well for that, enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, have but little leisure or inclination for the small and unpurposed business of subaltern skirmishes and squabbles.”—*Rev. J. M. Mason, D.D.* “That which gives life to Churches is not their diversities of government, or worship, or of discipline, but that “most holy faith” which is common to them all The union of all true Christians! That is the Reformation of the nineteenth century.”—*Rev. J. H. Merle D’Aubigne, D.D.* (See on next verse.)

22. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, “that they may be one, even as we are one: 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.”—*Chap. xiv. 20; 1 John i. 3 and iii. 24. 2 Col. iii. 14.*

The glory which thou gavest (“hast given”) *me, &c.* The last clause of verse 22 shows the meaning of the first. It is not the *future* glory of the heavenly state, but the secret of that *present* unity just before spoken of, *the glory*, therefore, *of the indwelling Spirit of Christ*, the glory of an accepted state, of a holy character, of every grace. *May be one*—for that “glory” has its source in a spark of Divine love in the heart, and that love melts into one its various possessors, so that there is one love, one glory, one Church. *Even as we are one.* Evincing, as the Father and the Son had always done, the same great aim and plan, not pursuing different interests, or counteracting each other’s purposes, or forming parties, but seeking the same ends by the same means. This is the union between the Father and the Son. Always in the creation, preservation and redemption of the world, they have sought the same object. And this is to be the model

on which Christians should act. Consider 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, where the participation of Christ in the Lord’s Supper is noticed as the very condition of that oneness of believers, of which our Saviour here, for the third time, speaks.

I in them, and thou in me, &c. Observe, 1. Christ takes up His abode in His people by His Spirit, so that they become one with Him. 2. The Father dwells in Christ, not only as He is one God with Him, but also as He is man, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, so highly is our nature dignified in His Person. (See notes on verse 26.) 3. Although there can be no union between God and fallen man immediately, yet through Christ this union is made up, and Christ being in us as believers, and we united to Him, the Father also, in Him, is in us, and we in Him. 4. It is by our union with Christ, and with God through Him, that our union among ourselves is perfected. 5. Whatever excellence the Lord confers upon every particular believer, yet their perfection consists in their union among themselves, and with Christ their Head and Fountain, and with the Father in His fullness through Him, for no one member has the perfection of the whole body, but of a part only, nor has it that perfection separate from the body, but in it, and being united with it, to supply its own proper function; and the whole body, thus united, has its perfection in and from Christ and the Father.

That the world may know, &c. When they shall see the concord and agreement of Christians in doctrine, worship and affection. Too little is it considered how necessary the union of believers is to convince the world of the excellency of Christ and His doctrine, hence it is again here referred to as a forcible argument pressing this union. *And hast loved them, &c.* Every page almost in the Bible breathes forth this mystery of Divine Love. As it is frequently inculcated, so is it no less strongly represented.

24. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: *a* or thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.
1 Chap. xii. 26 and xiv. 3; 1 Thes. iv. 17. 2 Verse 5.

Here is our Lord’s petition for the glorification of His people. *Father, I will, is a*

remarkable expression. Who but God could with propriety have spoken thus to God? Yet there is nothing authoritative, nothing imperious here. It is rather the language of a dying testator, willing away possessions which were His own to give. I will this to my people. I will that they spend an eternity in my presence and glory; such is my love to them, that heaven will not content me unless they "be with me where I am." *That they also, whom thou hast given me, &c.* Six times in this chapter does Christ describe His people as "they whom Thou hast given me." (See on verses 2, 6, 9.) *Be with me where I am*, that is, in His Father's house with Him. The Saviour thus prays as if His happiness would be incomplete, the travail of His soul unsatisfied, if every member of His beloved family were not with Him, if even the youngest, weakest, feeblest were not there. *That they may behold my glory*, is to be constructed with *be with me where I am*, and not with *I will*, as is done by some expositors. The verb *see* in this connection has the idea also of *partake*. "No mere spectator could see his glory." —*Alford*. (Comp. Rom. viii. 17-39; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. iiii. 18; 1 John iii. 2.) *Which thou hast given me*, refers to His Mediatorial glory, His essential glory being that which can neither be given nor taken away.

For thou lovedst me, &c. Christ reminds the Father of His love to Him before the world was. When there was no earth, no sun, no man, no angel—when He was by Him—then Thou lovedst me. Who can understand this love, the love of the uncreated God to His uncreated Son? There is everything in Christ to draw the love of His Father. The Saviour's argument is this: If Thou love me do this for my people, for they are part of me. See how Christ's prayer will be answered for you, Christians! He does not plead that you are good and holy, He does not plead that you are worthy, He only pleads His own loveliness in the eyes of the Father. Look not on them, He says, but look on me. Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. Learn to use the same argument with God. This is asking in Christ's name—for the Lord's sake—this is the prayer that is never refused.

25. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.
 *Chap. xv. 21 and xvi. 3. *Chap. vii. 29, viii. 55 and x. 15. *Verse 8; Chap. xvi. 27.

O righteous Father. This is the sixth time that Christ in this prayer has called God, Father. In verse 11, when praying for His people's sanctification, He said, *Holy Father*, making use of that attribute which is the cause of all holiness in the creature, but now, praying for their glorification, He says, *O righteous Father*, righteous in making good Thy promises both to me and them. *The world hath not known thee*, that is, hath not known Thee aright, the unbelieving and unsanctified part of the world having no saving knowledge of God, not living answerably to what they knew to be their duty. Did they but know Thee, they could not but love Thee. This is the Saviour's brief word of appeal to the just God against a rejecting world.

But I have known thee. Christ knew the Father so as no one else ever did, knew on what grounds He went in His undertaking, knew His Father's mind in everything, and therefore, in His prayer, came to Him with confidence, as we do to one we know.

And these have known, &c. Hereby they are distinguished from the unbelieving world. Note, 1. To know and believe in Christ, in the midst of a world that persists in ignorance and infidelity, is highly pleasing to God, and shall certainly be crowned with distinguishing glory. Singular faith qualifies for singular favors. 2. It is the great sin of the unbelieving world that they do not know God. Whatever knowledge they pretend to have, they have no solid impression of it. They do not know God in Christ practically and savingly, and therefore all they know beside is nothing. They do not love God, and true knowledge, in Scripture language, imports also love. They do not practice what they know.

26. *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.
 *Verse 6; chap. xv. 15. *Chap. xv. 9.

Here is a reference to past instructions and future tuition yet to be enjoyed. *Thy name*. By the name of God here is particularly meant His will and purpose concerning our salvation, and His grace and

mercy therein displayed. Can we imagine anything more important than the truths our Lord came to reveal? *I have declared.* Christ revealed God's name when He was upon earth in His own person, but now that He is in heaven, He does it by the instrumentality of others. He does it externally by the Word—internally by His Spirit. The Spirit illumines the mind, takes away the veil of ignorance from the heart, and causes the true light to shine.

And will declare it. Here is an intimation of the progressive manner in which the revelation of the character of God is communicated. By the outpouring of the influences of His Spirit, He taught the disciples much more after He left the world. So He carries on the work of instruction now in the minds of His people. "They shall go from strength to strength." "He that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Have we learned of Christ? There are three marks belonging to such: they have been taught the evil of sin in the school of the law, the love of Christ in the school of the Gospel, and the lesson of patience in the school of affliction.

That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them, may be cherished toward them, that they may share in the love which Thou hast bestowed on me. This would be a consequence of their receiving increased knowledge of the Father, and of being influenced by that knowledge to a stronger affection and confidence toward the Saviour.

And I in them. There are two kinds of union between Christ and His people—a legal union and a spiritual, or, as it is sometimes called, a mystical union, so called because the union is obscure or mysterious. The legal union is that which was formed between Christ and His people, when He was appointed their federal head—an union in law, in consequence of which He represented them and was responsible for them. The spiritual union is that which is formed in regeneration, and is the foundation of communion with Christ in the blessings of His purchase. (See Eph. i. 4, 6, 11, 13; Col. i. 24; Rom. vi. 3, 4; Col. ii. 12; Rom. vi. 5, 6, 8; Gal. ii. 20; Phil. iii. 9; John xv. 5; 1 Peter ii. 4, 6.) "The relation of discipleship in the primitive Church," says *Prof. Lewis*, "was a reality affecting other aspects of Christian truth. Christ was in the Christian, as He was in the Church His earthly body. It was no figure employed to represent a mere following or discipleship. His life was in their life. Hence His sufferings were their sufferings, His resurrection not only the pledge but the ground of the new life then working in their souls, and destined eventually to quicken their immortal bodies, and so His satisfaction to law was their satisfaction, His obedience their obedience, His righteousness their righteousness imputed to them rightly, because it was really theirs as it was really His. They were *Christophori*, Christ-bearers." The Spirit of Christ actually dwells in the souls of believers, and by faith they receive not only the benefits of Christ but Himself. Hence He is said to live in them, and they are said to abide in Him.

1. What did Jesus, as He lifted up His eyes to heaven, say? 2. What is "life eternal?" 3. Did Christ finish the work that had been given Him to do? 4. Had He glory with the Father before the world was? 5. Explain verses 9-11. 6. What is meant by the words "that they may be one, as we are?" 7. What is said about the son of perdition? 8. Why did Jesus pray not that His disciples might be taken out of the world? 9. How are Christians sanctified? 10. How is verse 21 to be understood? 11. What does Christ ask for those whom the Father has given Him? 12. Explain verses 25 and 26.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 *Judas betrayeth Jesus.* 6 *The officers fall to the ground.* 10 *Peter smiteth off Malchus' ear.* 12 *Jesus is taken, and led unto Annas and Caiaphas.* 15 *Peter's denial.* 19 *Jesus examined before Caiaphas.* 25 *His arraignment before Pilate.* 36 *His kingdom.* 40 *The Jews ask Barabbas to be let loose.*

WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

*Matt. xxvi. 36; Mark xiv. 32; Luke xxii. 39. †2Sam. xv. 23.

The brook Cedron flowed through a deep vale to the east of Jerusalem. "The first breach," says an eminent theologian, "that the enemy made into the city, was at the brook Cedron, where they took Christ, and on the same day that Christ was taken, was the city taken, on the same feast day, at the same feast of the year. The Emperor commanded the Jews to be whipped there, where they had whipped Christ. Thirty Jews were sold for a penny, as they sold Christ for thirty pence."

2. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. 3. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

*Luke xxi. 37 and xxii. 39. †Matt. xxvi. 47, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 43; Luke xxii. 47; Acts i. 16.

Knew the place, &c. What an aggravation of the guilt of Judas! The place, which, of all others, should have been hallowed in his mind by the most sacred associations, the very spot in which his Divine Master had by His example "taught him how to pray," was the scene of his black and monstrous deed of ingratitude and hypocrisy. Let us not, however, be ready to condemn Judas in this. The House of Prayer may be the place where we also betray Jesus, though we "oftentimes resort thither," as His disciples. (ii. 16; Isa. i. 11-15; Luke xiii. 1.) *A band of men, &c.*—that part of the cohort then stationed in the temple, or it might possibly be only the Jewish guard. *Lanterns* seem to refer here to lamps filled with oil. (See Matt. xxv. 1, 3, 4.) *Torches* (literally *lights*), may denote any blazing substance carried in the hand, in the manner of links and torches made of pitch and tow. *Weapons, i. e.,* swords and staves. (See Matt. xxvi. 47; Mark xiv. 43.) The lights with which this band of murderers were provided, prove the preparations made to explore

any cave or corner where the object of their search might possibly, they conceived, be hidden.

4. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5. They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9. That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

*Ps. iii. 6 and xxvii. 3; Prov. xxviii. 1. †Jer. viii. 12. ‡Chap. xvii. 12.

See notes on Matt. xxvi. 49.

The whole life of Jesus was a martyrdom; and what rendered that martyrdom still more terrible, was the perfect foreknowledge He possessed of the torments He should endure in His passion. *Jesus of Nazareth.* Twice Jesus answers to the name by which they sought Him, though it was a name of reproach (see chap. i. 46; vii. 52), and twice in answering He proclaims His own eternal name, the two Greek words rendered *I am*, by the very idiom of the language corresponding to the Hebrew translated "I AM THAT I AM," in Ex. iii. 14. The first solemn mention of this name, and the superhuman bearing of Him who justly claimed it, struck them to the ground. (See Isa. xi. 4.) They were all unnerved, and, like the soldiers afterward at His sepulchre, "did shake, and become as dead men." So though they knew that He who questioned them, He whom they were addressing, was even the One they sought, they cannot speak but in this indirect manner, as fearing directly to say, "Thee." When the people, it has been well observed, would have forced Him to a crown, He withdrew, and hid Himself (chap. vi. 15); but when they came to force Him to a cross, He offered Himself: for He came to this world to suffer, and went to the other world to reign.

If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way. Even in the most trying moment of our Lord's own peril, what care, what thoughtfulness, what affectionate consideration for His disciples! What encouragement is here for us if we are Christians! *Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none,* most mercifully manifested in part, every day, and at every period of the Christian's



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life, but to be still more triumphantly, O, how triumphantly declared on that great day, when He shall stand before His Father, and say, "Behold, I and the children"—yea, all the children—"which Thou hast given me."

10. ¹⁰Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.
¹¹Matt. xxvi. 51, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 47; Luke xxii. 49, 50.

The very action of Peter, in striking at the head, seems to show the vehemency of his character. The Evangelist gives the name (*Malchus*), that those, who then read it, might have opportunity of inquiring into the truth of the account. (Mark xv. 21.) And he mentions that he was the *high priest's servant*, because, in addition to the miracle of the cure itself (Luke xxii. 50-53), this shows that it was performed upon one of those who came to take Jesus, and who shortly after struck Him on the face.

11. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?
¹²Matt. xx. 22 and xxvi. 32, 42.

See notes on Matt. xxvi. 52.

Any zeal is proper for religion, but the zeal of the sword and the zeal of anger, this is the bitterness of zeal, and it is a certain temptation to every man against his duty. The Saviour's reproof of Peter for drawing his sword, even in His own cause, for His sacred and yet injured person, teaches us not to use the sword, though in the cause of God, and for God Himself, because He will secure His own interest, only let Him be served as Himself is pleased to command. (2 Tim. ii. 24; James i. 20.)

The cup which my Father, &c. This clause is peculiar to John, and is in sympathy with the language employed in our Lord's hour of agony in the garden. Scarcely had an hour elapsed since he had most earnestly prayed that this cup of suffering might pass from Him, but it was His Father's will that He should drink it. This is here denoted by *hath given me, i. e., hath put into my hands to drink. Shall I not drink it?* This question is rhetorically put for an emphatic affirmation, that it was His duty to render cheerful and submissive obedience to the will of His Father.

12. Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, 13. And led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.
¹⁴Matt. xxvi. 57. ¹⁵Luke iii. 2, on which see notes.

The captain—the præfect of a cohort. At the Passover, and the other great feasts, the Romans sent a whole band of a thousand men to guard the porticos of the temple. *And bound him.* The greater love any one has for Christ, the more attentive will He be in considering the particular circumstances of His sufferings. John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and who loved Jesus with a most ardent affection, is the only Evangelist who takes notice of the *binding* of our Saviour. *The high priest that same year.* This is added because of the frequent change in the office under the Romans.

14. ¹⁴Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.—Chap. xi. 50.

Now Caiaphas, &c. (See on xi. 50.) *Gave counsel, &c.* John here doubtless refers to the counsel of Caiaphas, to show that he was fully prepared to carry out whatever orders Annas might give for the destruction of Christ. It is a matter of great joy to the wicked to see their advice followed, but this joy, which is an effect of the wrath of God, will last but a short time, and will be punished with an endless sorrow.

15. ¶ ¹⁵And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. 16. ¹⁶But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. 18. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold; and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

¹⁹Matt. xxvi. 58; Mark xiv. 54; Luke xxii. 54. ²⁰Matt. xxvi. 69, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 66; Luke xxii. 54. ²¹Ps. xxvi. 4, 10; 1 Cor. xv. 33; Eph. v. 11, 12.

Another disciple—"rather the other disciple"—our Evangelist himself, no doubt. *Known unto the high priest.* (See on verse 10.) *Went in with Jesus.* His intimacy with the high priest was such, that he was admitted at the same time with Jesus and His accusers. Peter, who could claim no such privilege on the ground of acquaintanceship with any of the officials, was obliged for the time to remain without at the entrance. *Then went out, &c.* All this is very natural. John having

secured his own admission, passed in with the crowd, and afterward came out and brought in his friend, as here narrated. *Her that kept the door.* It is customary, even at the present day, in the East, for the doors of the wealthy to be superintended by a portress, who receives a fee for her services from the visitors. "*He saith, I am not.*" Who can doubt that this denial of Peter was attributable in no small degree to his not only going amongst the servants of the high priest, but even sitting down among them? (Luke xxii. 56.) No man conceives the length to which he afterward sins, when he first enters into an evil way. . . . If you desire safety, you must resist temptation in the bud: if you suffer it to blow and blossom, depend upon it, you will not resist it then: it will grow till it bear fruit, more bitter than the fruit of Sodom. (Gen. xxxix. 12; 2 Kings viii. 13; Ps. i. 1.) *A fire of coals.* It was the coldest hour of night, the hour that precedes the dawn, and the servants and officers had kindled a fire in that end of the hall where they were gathered. Peter did not wish to be recognized, and the best way he thought to preserve his incognito was to put at once the boldest face he could upon it, act as if he had been one of the capturing band, and had as good a right to be there as others of that mixed company, as little known in this palace as himself.

19. ¶ The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20. Jesus answered him, *I spake openly to the world, I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.* 21. *Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them, behold, they know what I said.* 22. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by *struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?* 23. Jesus answered him, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?* 24. (Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.) 25. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. *They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples?* He denied it, and said, *I am not.* 26. One of the servants of the high priest, being *his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did I not see thee in the garden with him?* 27. Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew.

¶ Matt. xxvi. 55; Luke iv. 15; chap. vii. 14, 26, 28 and viii. 2. ¶ Jer. xx. 2; Acts xxiii. 2. ¶ Matt. xxvi. 57. ¶ Matt. xxvi. 69, 71; Mark xiv. 69; Luke xxii. 58. ¶ Matt. xxvi. 74; Mark xiv. 72; Luke xxii. 60; chap. xiii. 38.

See on Matt. xxvi. 57, 71-74.

The high priest asked Jesus concerning His *disciples*, and His *doctrine*. "By what bond or pledge to one another are the members of this new society united, what secret instructions have they received,

what hidden objects have they in view." *Jesus answered him, I spake openly, &c.* Neither as to my disciples, nor as to my doctrine: neither as to the instructions given to my followers, nor as to the bonds of their union and fellowship with one another, has there been anything of the concealed or the sinister, not one doctrine for the people without, and another for the initiated within, no meetings under cloud of night in hidden places for doubtful or dangerous objects, and *in secret*, that is, in the sense in which I know that you mean and use that term, "have I said nothing."

Why askest thou me? This questioning was superfluous. It was a mockery. If they really wished for information, they had only to ask any of those around, whom He seems to point to, or in some way to indicate. Some of those designated were His utter enemies. Here is a good example for all the ministers of God's Word to follow, teaching them to deliver that Word so purely and sincerely, that, if they be called into question about the same, they may be bold to appeal to the consciences of their hearers, although they be wicked men. (Acts xxiii. 6; 2 Cor. iv. 2; Titus ii. 8.)

Struck Jesus. One of the officers who stood by chose to consider the answer disrespectful to the high priest, and smote Jesus on the mouth. It is not certain whether this was done with the palm of the hand, or with a rod (as the margin renders), the staff of office: the original only says, gave Him a blow. But what a cowardly, brutal, and base act was this! And what a judge this must have been to permit such a thing to be done! *If I have spoken evil, &c.* Gently Jesus expostulates. He who could have presently summoned "more than twelve legions of angels," calmly puts up with the cruel affront, contenting Himself with quietly pointing out the anomaly and injustice of the act; punished first and heard afterward! beaten before the judgment seat! What a travesty of justice is here!

Sent him bound, &c. By noticing this circumstance, the Evangelist means to show that in this respect, also, they proceeded against Jesus, quite contrary to all justice and equity, and even to the cus-

toms and laws of the Jews. For prisoners, when under examination, were loosed from their fetters, that they might make their answers with the greater freedom, but our blessed Lord was obliged to stand before them bound, with the manacles on His hands, as He was sent from Annas to Caiaphas the high priest.

Warmed himself. Here we have an account of Peter's second and third denial. His "warming himself" almost seems to be mentioned in some contrast with Christ's being *bound*, for both are in this chapter mentioned twice. (Rom. xv. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 3.) *Said, I am not.* In reference to Christians, an old writer observes: "Some have denied them to be saints, others deny them to be men. We must go a middle way: reverence their sanctity, pity their infirmities—learn to distinguish between the purity of the fountain and the impurity of the vessel. They have their flaws, and slips, and foils, that Christ only may be the "King of Saints," and "the Holy one of Israel." (1 Sam. ii. 2.) *Did I not see thee in the garden with him?* Many would die with Christ, that would not endure a hard word for Him. Let us accustom ourselves to suffer patiently even the least things, for he will never be able to overcome great ones who has not learned to overcome small difficulties. (Jer. xii. 5.) *Denied again.* As those Christians, who have the strongest faith and resolution may be alarmed at Peter's fall, so his repentance may inspire the most wretched sinner with a hope of acceptance with God. (Gal. vi. 1; 1 Tim. i. 13-16; see on Matt. xxvi. 71-4.)

28. ¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment; and it was early: and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.
13. Matt. xxvii. 2; Mark xv. 1; Luke xxiii. 1; Acts iii. 13. Acts x. 28 and xi. 3.

Then, or so then, marking the progress of the narrative. *From Caiaphas,* literally, *from* (the palace) *of Caiaphas.* (See verse 24.) *The hall of judgment*—the prætorium of Pilate the procurator. Cæsar, the Roman emperor, who had conquered the Jewish nation, had appointed Pontius Pilate to be their governor. He alone had the power of sentencing any man to be put to death. On this account the chief priests and elders led their captives to his

judgment seat, for no punishment less than *death* would satisfy their malice. *It was early.* This shows with what haste they urged on the preliminary steps to the Saviour's execution.

And they themselves went not, &c. Having brought their holy prisoner to Pilate, the Jews refused to enter into the hall of judgment. And why? Because they feared lest they should be defiled by entering into the dwelling of a Gentile, and that they should not be able to keep the Passover, for that feast was celebrated during a *whole week*, and many peace-offerings of the herd and of the flock were eaten, beside the unleavened bread and paschal lamb. What must Pilate have thought of the Jewish religion, when he saw these men at once so much occupied with empty forms, and so much distorted with evil passions! Many think ill of the Christian religion from the same cause. They see persons who would not on any account miss attending Church or the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, filled with envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness. The fault, however, is not in the *religion*, but in the hearts of its professors. (See notes on Matt. xxvii. 11-25.)

29. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30. They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32. That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.
Gen. xlix. 10; Hos. iii. 4. Matt. xx. 19; chap. xii. 32, 33.

See notes on Matt. xxvii. 11-25.

Pilate then went out, &c. There was an elevated tessellated pavement in front of the palace, where the governor often set his judgment seat when such cases as that stated in verse 28 occurred. Hither Pilate came out, when he understood that he was wanted, the prisoner being, meanwhile (for better custody, perhaps,) taken into the fore court of the palace itself, among the soldiers. *What accusation, &c.* Pilate assumes the appearance of unbelief and indifference, but he was able to take a more unprejudiced view of the matter than the Jews, and cannot think, after all he has hitherto heard of the Nazarene, and feels at that moment that they would be able to bring any serious charge against him.

Like as with Pilate, so it is still with every one who looks unprejudicedly into the sacred volume. Such an one will not be able to rid himself of the impression of the spotlessness of Jesus, which nothing can shake or neutralize.

If he were not a malefactor, &c. Uttered in a sarcastic tone, this reply would be of a very irritating character. Uttered, however, in a tone of courteous suavity, it apologizes for troubling Pilate, assuring him that nothing but the fact that they had a malefactor could have brought them there. Their real purpose, under either meaning, is to precipitate the governor into the slaying of Jesus. If those Jews won't tell Pilate what kind or degree of criminality it is that they attribute to this man, he, Pilate, won't put himself as a blind tool into their hands. "If it be your judgment, and your judgment alone that is to rule this man's case, 'Take ye him, then,' said Pilate, 'and judge him according to your law'—a refusal on Pilate's part to do the thing which they first hoped that they might get him to do off-hand, a refusal to countersign their sentence, whatever it was, and by whatever evidence supported. It was as much as saying that so far as he had yet heard or known anything of this case, it was one with which their own law, as administered by themselves, was quite competent to deal. Thus they were obliged to explain to the governor, what he had known well enough from the first, but what they had not been candid enough to tell him, that it was a sentence unto death which they wished to get executed, a sentence which they were not at liberty to carry out.

It is not lawful, &c. (See on verse 28.) They were not permitted to do so. If, on one occasion, they tumultuously stoned a supposed heretic to death, the Roman authorities probably leniently overlooked it. But in order to a formal accusation, and death by crucifixion in particular, they could not do without superior consent. Hence they openly, though with stifled rage, confess their dependence on the Roman tribunal. Their thirst for revenge upon the Nazarene, however, this time outweighs their national pride. The man they hate is doomed to be crucified

and to perish ignominiously. Such are their thoughts. But the Lord in heaven also exercises an influence in the affair. The Evangelist remarks, *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, &c.* John has here reference to the words recorded in chap. xii. 32, of his Gospel. (See notes on Matt. xxvii. 11–25.)

33. "Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34. Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35. Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? 36. Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?—Matt. xxvii. 11. 37. Acts iii. 13.

The accused is to be compelled to make his own confession. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" asks Pilate, and means, therefore, the well known, expected One, the Messiah. Jesus answered this question by another, the object of which is, whether Pilate himself had seen Christ presenting Himself in any such way as he would expect from that King of the Jews; it is an indirect reference to the fact, that the governor well knew the baselessness of the charge. "The point of Christ's reply is," says *Calvin*, "that this accusation was without any color of truth." With this corresponds also the rejoinder of the governor, that he had never troubled himself about the Messiah. *Bengel* says, "This latter part of the question Jesus wishes to be noticed by Pilate; Pilate, not without anger, catches at the first part."

36. "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence,'

37. 1 Tim. vi. 13. 38. Dan. ii. 44 and vii. 14; Luke xii. 14 chap. vi. 15 and viii. 13.

My kingdom. Jesus, in these words, evades Pilate's last question, and returns to the topic of His royalty, and yet in so doing He answers Pilate's question, what He has done. He has performed the part of a heaven-sent king. *Not of this world.* "I have a kingdom which I have come to establish. The Jews were right in saying, that I claim to be Christ the King. But *my kingdom is not of this world.* It originates not with men, it has its seat in no regal city of earth. It is supported by no standing armies, such as give strength and security to earthly potentates. Unlike all human governments in its origin, principles and means of supremacy, it is from above, and has 'its seat in the hearts and affections of men.'" *If—of—of this world,*

is emphatically put (in the Greek) at the beginning of the clause. The *world* defends its kingdoms by force of arms. *My servants*—who are not of this world. (Nay, but they are the *legions of angels*, of whom He thinks, recalling what He had said when apprehended.—*Stier*.) *Would fight*. Each agent acts in its own sphere.

Be delivered. Pilate was already contemplating this, verse 31. Other warriors prepare their horses and their chariots, their bows, their spears, and their shields, but Messiah disarms His followers in order that they may overcome. *Not from hence*. Our Lord only says whence His kingdom is *not*—first simply affirming it, next giving proof of it, then reaffirming it. This was all that Pilate had to do with. The *positive* nature of His kingdom He would not obtrude upon one who was as little able to comprehend it, as entitled officially to inform about it. (See on verse 37.)

37. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my words.

^cChap. viii. 47: 1 John iii. 19 and iv. 6.

Pilate's next question seems somewhat too sarcastic. "Art thou then a king?"—thou, a prisoner, and rejected of thine own people. Even so. Pilate in jest here spake the truth. *Thou sayest that I am a king*, that is, "thou truly sayest that I am a king, it is very true: I am a king." The phrase rendered "thou sayest," signifies *it is so*, a phrase of modest assent and affirmation. *To this end*, &c. Two objects are mentioned here, the first has reference to His royalty, by which He asserts that He was no adventurer, but was born a King, such as the wise men of the East correctly honored when they hailed Him as the new-born King of the Jews. The second has reference to His bearing witness. In the words, "was I born," He indicates His incarnation. But, lest Pilate, or any one else, should erroneously suppose that Jesus included His whole origin in these words, He adds, "came I into the world," thereby intimating His heavenly descent, and His existence before He appeared in the flesh yea, before the world was. Thus before Pontius Pilate Jesus witnesses that good confession, of which an Apostle speaks afterward. (See 1 Tim. vi. 13.) He, the

King of Truth, who is Himself the Truth (chap. xiv. 6), bears witness unto the truth, and all who love it, and are sincerely desirous to know, receive and submit to it, hear His voice. (See chap. i. 9, 17; Rev. i. 5, iii. 14, xix. 11.) We ought highly to esteem such testimonies as are here given of the eternal and Divine nature of Jesus from His own lips. Their value is increased in an age like the present which is so full of skepticism, and which so boldly dares to stamp the Lord Christ as a mere man.

38. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, ^aI find in him no fault at all.

^aMatt. xxvii. 24; Luke xxiii. 4; chap. xix. 4, 6.

Many understand Pilate's question, "What is truth?" as if he had said, "Is this now a time to think about truth, when Thy life is in danger? *What is truth*, that Thou shouldest venture so much for it?" "But," says *Gurnall*, "a gracious soul may better ask in a holy scorn, What are riches and honors? What are the fading pleasures of this cheating world? Yea, what is life itself, that any, or all of these should be set in opposition to truth? Oh, sirs, look, what has your love, that will command purse, credit, life and all. Every man goes where his love carries him. If the world has your love, on it you will spend your lives; if truth has your hearts you will catch the blow that is made at it, in your own breasts, rather than let it fall on it." (Zech. iii. 8; Rev. xii. 11.) To the question, "What is truth?" there can be but one reply, be it what it may, for though there are ten thousand shades and degrees of error, there can be none in truth, truth is indivisible, and can be but one. If, then, the Word of God be true, as it is, this is truth eternal, as well as life eternal, "to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." For this, let us sacrifice, and be content to sacrifice, everything. Nothing will sustain us in a dying hour, nothing will support us upon a dying bed, but truth.

He went out. "If it once comes to this," says *Dr. Owen*, "that you shall say, that you have nothing to do with religion, as rulers of the nation, God will quickly manifest that *He* has nothing to do with you, as rulers of the nation." *I find in him no fault at all*. Thus Pilate witnesses to our

Lord's innocence, and yet proposes (verse 39) to act toward Him as if He were guilty. He has neither the courage to condemn nor to release Him, on the ground of His accusation, but thinks that by promising to the Jews that they should avail themselves of a practice recently established of setting a malefactor free at the paschal season, the ends of either party may be attained. Neither will Pilate do violence to his own conscience, nor will the honor of the High Priest be compromised. In such crooked policy the Roman governor was signally and deservedly defeated. (See notes on Matt. xxvii. 15-25.)

39. "But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?"

^aMatt. xxvii. 15; ^bMark xv. 6; ^cLuke xxiii. 17.

At the passover. Therefore the Passover was on that day. And on that day the assembled people made their request of Pilate. *Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?* using the epithet, in the belief that they, as well as he, will look upon its claimant more as an object of pity than of condemnation.

40. "Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas." "Now Barabbas was a robber."

^aActs iii. 14. ^bLuke xxiii. 19.

Then cried they all again, or, simply, according to another reading, which is well

supported, *Then they all cried.* The preceding part of our Lord's trial, as related by this Evangelist, makes no mention of their crying in this manner before. *A robber.* Tragic addition! Pilate offers Barabbas and Jesus for their choice. (Matt. xxvii. 17.) Whosoever commits any action which Jesus has forbidden, whoever cherishes any feeling or temper which Jesus disapproves, whoever prefers a gainful injustice, an angry passion, an evil lust, to the service of his Lord and Master, every such person by his deeds, if not by his words, declares as plainly as the Jews did, "I will not have *this man* to reign over me, *but Barabbas!*" I will have none of the purity and self-denial of Jesus; I like drunkenness, and rioting, and debauchery far better. I will have none of His humility, give me pride. I will have none of His gentleness, give me anger. I will have none of His tender-heartedness, give me an easy, careless indifference to the sufferings and griefs of others. How many in every place think thus, though they may not say it! Yet, there can be no doubt that every sinful action is an open rejecting of our Lord and Master, and a preferring of some vile Barabbas to Him. (Josh. xxiv. 15; Ps. lxxiii. 24, 25, xlv. 21; see notes on Matt. xxvii. 15-29, and Luke xxiii. 4, &c.)

1. What is said of the brook Cedron? 2. What is said of Judas? 3. What question did Jesus ask of His enemies? 4. What effect had the answer, "I am he," upon them? 5. What did Peter do? 6. What did the Saviour say to Peter? 7. What did our Lord's enemies then do with Him? 8. What is said of Peter? 9. What was Christ's reply to the high priest? 10. What did one of the officers do to Him? 11. How often did Peter deny that he was one of Christ's disciples? 12. Into what hall was Jesus led? 13. State Pilate's interview with Him. 14. What was Christ's reply to the question, "Art thou a king then?" 15. What did Pilate say to the Jews? 16. Whom did the Jews prefer to have released to them rather than the Saviour?

CHAPTER XIX.

¹ Christ is scourged, crowned with thorns, and beaten. ⁴ Pilate is desirous to release him, but being overcome with the outrage of the Jews, he delivered him to be crucified. ²⁵ They cast lots for his garments. ²⁶ He commendeth his mother to John. ²⁸ He dieth. ³¹ His side is pierced. ³⁸ He is buried by Joseph and Nicodemus.

THEN *Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. ² And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe. ³ And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. *Matt. xx. 19 and xxvii. 26; Mark xv. 15; Luke xviii. 33.

See on Matt. xxvii. 26, 29-31, and Mark xv. 15.

Scourged him. Caused Him to be scourged. This was foretold by Jesus. (Matt. xx. 19. See Ps. cxxix. 3; Isa. liii. 5.) The Son of God bound to a marble pillar! whipped! Well might the stone have wept at such indignity, have blushed beneath the purple tide those cruel thongs drew forth. O, wondrous love! which led the Saviour thus to give His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to those who plucked off the hair! In this world the Saviour is still scourged. To the cold marble column of philosophy, so called, oft found in colleges and schools—reason has often tied Him, while the learned rabble and unbelieving herd have put their thoughts together to form a thong with which to whip His life away. So is Jesus scourged by polite and gentle usage, which would have His words kept back, and thoughts attenuated by the rack of carnal policy.

And the soldiers platted a crown, &c. It was meet and right that He who was made a curse for us, who came to absorb all its bitter elements in Himself, should be crowned with thorns. Well did they symbolize our sins, and the piercing wounds they give. “O wondrous crown! each piercing thorn points to Thy inmost love, Thou Saviour of the lost! No other head was ever adorned like Thine. Forever dear to us, then, be this crown of thorns, and amid the pomp and pageantry of life, the passing blaze of human glory, oh may the sacred head of Christ appear to pale its fires, and may we never forget those sacred griefs which bought our freedom from the dreadful curse! *A purple robe.* This may have been the “gorgeous” one in which Herod arrayed and sent Him

back to Pilate. (Luke xxiii. 11.) *Hail, King of the Jews!*—doing Him derisive homage, in the form used on approaching the emperors.

⁴ Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

¹Chap. xviii. 38; verse 6.

Pilate's conscience still struggles against putting an innocent person to death, and he is for trying whether Jesus might be released, even after He had been scourged, without undergoing any further punishment. *Behold, I bring, &c.* Most remarkable and important assurance! For thus was the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world presented by Pilate to the priests of the Jewish people, in its spotless innocence, according to the law, so that, before it is slain, they may themselves take a view of it, and see that it is without blemish. But the Father would not have permitted His beloved Son to be thus barbarously treated, if no trespasses had been imputed to Him. Though the eyes of the Roman judge were incapable of seeing into this mystery, yet the Holy Spirit assures us (2 Cor. v. 21), “That God has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” Hence Christ is likewise termed, “The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” (John i. 29.) It was for our sins, therefore, as our Surety, that Jesus was insulted, reviled, crowned with thorns, buffeted, and cruelly scourged.

⁵ Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

Behold the man! exclaims the heathen judge, deeply affected, and faintly impressed with an idea of some superior being. Ah, had Pilate clearly known, what he only obscurely felt, he would at least have said, “You have here before you the moral pattern of our race, the flower of humanity, and holiness personified.” “Behold the man!” The hope is once more excited in the Governor, that he would still be able to accomplish the liberation of Jesus. “Now,” he thinks, “the bloodthirstiness of the prisoner's bitterest enemies will certainly be satisfied. In the presence of one so full of dignity and meekness, the fury of the most

cruel must subside, and right feeling return even to the most hardened." Let us see what occurs.

6. "When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him; crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.—Acts iii. 13.

The chief priests and officers are exasperated against the Holy One of Israel, and have nothing left for Him but the implacable cry, "*Crucify him! Crucify him!*" Thus they are judged. In the manifestation of Him who was "fairer than the children of men," our fallen nature has taken occasion to make it evident that its corruption is radical, its disease desperate, and its inmost tendency nothing else than enmity against the Most High God. The many thousand additional proofs of this which history furnishes, we may dispense with, after our race, in the murder of the Lord from heaven, has pronounced sentence upon itself, and filled up the measure of its guilt. The mute sufferer in the purple robe and crown of thorns, sits in judgment upon it, and silently testifies that without mediation and an atonement, the seed of Adam, in its whole extent, is exposed to the curse. The hatred of Jesus which thus manifested itself toward Him, is only the mature fruit of a seed, which in our natural state, grows openly or secretly in us all. *Take ye him.* This is not a legal permission to crucify Him, but a declaration that the crime must rest with them, it must be at their peril. I cannot, says Pilate, condemn a man without a fault.

7. The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

^aLev. xxiv. 16. ^eMatt. xxvi. 65; chap. v. 18 and x. 33.

As the Jews could not persuade Pilate that Christ was guilty under the Roman law, they endeavored to show that He deserved death under the law of Moses, and to prevail with him to grant them His punishment. Who can bear with the hypocrisy of the sinner, who makes even his crimes a matter of conscience and religion? But who can satisfy himself that he is entirely free from this temptation? Calumny always suppresses whatever may be of advantage to those whom it designs to ruin, and conceals all the proofs of their innocence. Christ "made Himself the

Son of God" indeed, but then He likewise proved Himself to be so, by doing the works of the Son of God, and restoring life to the dead.

8. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid: 9. And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. ^aIsa. liii. 7; Matt. xxvii. 12, 14.

He was the more afraid, that is, he dreaded a sedition among the Jews, from His knowledge of their great obstinacy in anything with which their religion might seem to be concerned. "The principal duty of a judge," says *Lord Bacon*, "is to suppress force and fraud, whereof force is the more pernicious, when it is open, and fraud, when it is close and disguised. A judge ought to prepare his way to a just sentence, as God useth to prepare His way by raising valleys and taking down hills. So, when there appeareth on either side a high hand, violent prosecution, cunning advantages taken, combination, power, great counsel, then is the virtue of a judge seen, to make inequality equal, that he may plant his judgment as upon an even ground. (Deut. i. 13-17; 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7; Job xxxii. 21, 22.)"

Jesus gave him no answer. Christ could not plead guilty, for He had committed no sin, nor not guilty, for He was then guilty of all our sins: neither could this distinction be mentioned to a heathen judge. The true reason of our Lord's present silence, however, seems to have been that Pilate's irresolute conduct rendered him unworthy of any further information. He had already received sufficient information to guide him, were he disposed to follow the dictates of truth, or even of his own conviction.

10. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee; and have power to release thee?

Knowest thou not, &c. Little he knew the reason of this silence: and vain his thought that this victim might be moved either by the hope of life, or by the terror of an ignominious and cruel death. Thus the Lord was fulfilling that prophecy of Isaiah, "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

And Pilate here by this very question criminales and condemns himself. For he confesses he has power to release Jesus, and if, as he also confesses, he believes Jesus to be innocent, why does he then deliver him to be crucified?

11. Jesus answered, *Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*—*Luke xxii. 53; Chap. vii. 30.*

Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above, unless Divine Providence had allowed me to come into thy power. Therefore he that delivered me, &c. It may be said, if the power was *given from above*, he, nor they, were guilty of any crime: but this is objected to no purpose, for the word “given” in this place is permissive, as if He had said, “He has permitted these things to be, but this does not exempt you from being blameworthy.” (Isa. iii. 14; Luke xii. 48; Acts ii. 23.) God is the Author of all good, by His Grace working it, the permitter of all evil by His Patience enduring it, the orderer and disposer of both, by His Mercy rewarding the one, by His Justice punishing the other, and by His Wisdom directing both to the ends of His Eternal Glory. (Isa. xlv. 7; Amos iii. 6; Rom. xi. 36.) “God,” says *Augustine*, “works by means of what is evil, but is not the author of evil itself.” (Rom. ix. 17; James i. 13.)

Hath the greater sin. Then Pilate had some sin. He who was counted as a criminal accused His judge of sin! That judge was compelled to say of His prisoner, “I find no fault in Him.” But the reputed criminal found great fault in His judge. Yet not the greatest. The high priest who had delivered Him up to Pilate, had the greater sin. There are then degrees of sin. Why was the high priest more guilty than Pilate? Because he had *gone out of his way* to destroy Jesus, whereas Pilate had been called to pronounce sentence in the regular execution of the office to which he “was ordained of God.” (Rom. xiii. 1.) There were many other circumstances that increased the sin of Caiaphas—his knowledge of the Scriptures, his malicious motives, and his false accusations. God knows all the aggravating circumstances

of our sins, and all the *palliating* circumstances also.

12. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, *“If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cesar.”*
1st Luke xliii. 2. 2nd Acts xvii. 17.

From thenceforth Pilate sought, &c. Miserable temporizer! Had Pilate been an honest and upright man, He would not have “sought to release” Jesus, but would instantly and at all hazards have set Him free. But Pilate was a timid, time-serving man, with just conscience enough to make himself uncomfortable, and with just integrity enough to ruin the best of causes, and even to increase, as he obviously did, the sufferings of Him whom he seemed to have some desire to save. From Pilate’s character we may learn, 1. How little, how less than little, Christ and His people have ever profited by human policy and carnal friends. 2. That though we may acknowledge a duty, and even make a conscience of it, and take some little pains in its performance, it will avail nothing before God, unless we strive to the very uttermost, and if need be, at the loss of reputation, power, place, and profit, to carry it into effect. 3. That it is not only difficult, but absolutely impossible to follow the convictions of conscience firmly, and the guidings of Divine light faithfully, without being careful to keep only a loose hold of all worldly enjoyments, and worldly interests, and especially upon worldly popularity.

Whosoever maketh himself a king, or, whoever calleth himself king. The sentence of which these words are a part is true, when we read “king,” not “a king.” Judea formed part of the Roman empire. Nothing is more certain than that whoever in Judea called himself king, in the sense in which the word was commonly understood, opposed Cesar. But it did not therefore hold, that whoever called himself “a king” opposed Cesar, for if the kingdom to which he laid claim was without the bounds of the Roman empire, the title in no wise interfered with the rights of the emperors.

13. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

That saying, rather, these words. These

words were true, but, as applied to *Christ*, false. "But," says *Alford*, "tyrants weigh words, not facts, and Pilate knew it." *In the judgment seat.* The judgment seat was outside the judgment hall, in Gabbatha. *Called—in Greek,* is not added, for John wrote in Greek. (Comp. verse 17.) *Pavement.* The Greek word thus rendered, designates a tessellated stone pavement, laid with various kinds of stones, and so like a painting. *Gabbatha* signifies an elevation. John gives the Hebrew as well as the Greek name of the platform, to indicate that Pilate pronounced judgment solemnly, not from a level, but from the high judicial seat. According to Suetonius, such a pavement was carried about on his expeditions by Julius Caesar.

14. And ^{it} was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour; and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!—¹Matt. xxvii. 62.

The *Preparation*—preparation of all things necessary, the day before the Sabbath, that they might be under no temptation to violate the sabbatical rest, was expressly commanded in the law. (Ex. xvi. 5, 23.)

About the sixth hour. This account seems to differ from that given by Mark, who says (chap. xv. 23), "*It was the third,*" or "*about the third hour.*" The best solution of this appears to be given by those who consider the day as divided into four parts, answering the four watches of the night. These coincided with the hours three, six, nine and twelve, or in our way of reckoning, nine, twelve, three and six, which suited also the solemn times of sacrifice, and prayer in the temple, that in cases wherein they did not think it of consequence to ascertain the time with accuracy, they did not regard the intermediate hours. Mark says, "*about the third hour,*" from which we have reason to conclude that the third hour was past. John says *about the sixth hour*, from which it is probable that the sixth hour was not yet come. This apparent discrepancy does not in the slightest degree impair the credibility of the Evangelists. Who would regard any two modern historians as contradicting each other because, in relating an event which had happened between ten and eleven in the forenoon, one had said it was past nine o'clock, the other, it

was drawing toward noon? LeClerc observes that John wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, and may have, like the old Romans, calculated the beginning of day from midnight, and Mark, like his nation, have counted from the rising sun, say six o'clock, the third hour would thus answer to the Roman sixth. (See notes on Mark xv. 25; Matt. xxvii. 45.)

15. But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.—¹Gen. xlix. 10.

Away with him, &c. Our Lord endured a variety of contradictions. As to His Person, He was denied to be the Son of God; as to His office, He was not received as the promised Messiah; as to His doctrine, He was declared to be a deceiver; as to His miracles, He was denounced as though He had been a conjuror, and dealt with the devil; as to His conversation, He was defamed as a glutton and a wine-bibber, a profane fellow and a Sabbath-breaker, a companion of publicans and sinners; and as to His very life and being, Barabbas was preferred to Him. *We have no king but Cæsar.* By saying this they publicly renounced all hopes of their promised Messiah, according to their own views of His character as a temporal king, and at the same time spoke in direct opposition to their general conduct in rebelling against the Romans.

16. ¹Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him away. ²Matt. xxvii. 26, 31; Mark xv. 15; Luke xxiii. 24.

Then delivered he him, &c. This was not done by Pilate till after he had washed his hands (Matt. xxvii. 24), intending by that symbolical action to show that he was innocent of the death of Christ. (See Matt. xxvii. 26, &c.; Mark xv. 16, &c.)

And they took Jesus and led him away. Judgment was no sooner given, than the prosecutors, having gained their point, resolved to lose no time. 1. Lest Pilate should change his mind and order a reprieve. Those are the worst enemies to our souls, that hurry us to sin, and then leave us no room to undo what we have done amiss. 2. Lest there should be "an uproar among the people," and a greater number against them than they had with so much artifice gotten to be for them. It

were well if we would be thus expeditious in good, and not stay for more difficulties.

17. ¹And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, *Golgotha*;

²Matt. xxvii. 31, 33; Mark xv. 21, 22; Luke xxiii. 26, 33. ³Num. xv. 36; Heb. xiii. 42.

See on Luke xxiii. 26; Matt. xxvii. 32-34.

Our Heavenly Father sometimes sees good in the treatment of His spiritual children, to let great trials and great weakness meet together, to lay on crosses at those very moments when we appear the most unfit to bear them. If such a season ever visit us, let us remember that there is One to whom this case is no new case, and who, although now in heaven, never sees a weak and fainting sufferer, upon whom fresh trials are accumulating, without calling to mind the heavy cross which He bore in His toilsome journey up Mount Calvary, or without stretching forth a hand to help and succor him. By musing on the sorrows of Jesus, we shall forget our own. *Which is called, &c.* It is worthy of remark that John calls the place where Jesus was crucified the *skull-place*, and gives, by way of interpretation, its Hebrew name, *Golgotha*. Matthew and Mark, on the other hand, designate the place by the name, *Golgotha*, and give as the interpretation of it, *the place of a skull*. Luke refers to the place by its Latin name, *Calvaria, Calvary*. Such a comparison evinces the truthful independence of the Evangelists.

18. Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

Where they crucified him. Christ upon the cross! Be still and know that He is God. He is traveling in the greatness of His strength. Christ crucified is "the power of God." (See on Matt. xxvii. 33, 4, 5.) *And two others, &c.* (See on Matt. xxvii. 38; Luke xxiii. 32, 33.) The purpose of God was accomplished by Christ's being "numbered with transgressors." He suffered *among* sinners, and *with* them, and *for* them. Jesus was within sight of both these wretched men, one of them yielded to the power of Christ's love, melted under His look, and gave in his submission, the other tempted Jesus, instead of trusting Him. The sinner saved and the sinner lost are very near each other, and

both very near the same Jesus. The cross divides them. They have all to do with Christ crucified. He is either the savor of life, or the savor of death to them. (See on next verse.)

19. ¹And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

³Matt. xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26; Luke xxiii. 33.

A title. A white board with an inscription in black letters, prepared by the order of Pilate. *On the cross*, over the Saviour's head. Let it not be forgotten that the name "Jesus" was set upon the cross, over our Saviour's head, to teach us that it is a Name which, set upon the head of all our crosses, will make them easy. The thought of Jesus, the reference to that Holy Name, the suffering under that, will give both a sweet odor and a pleasant relish to whatever it is we suffer. Come what can, the love of God in Jesus sweetens all. (Matt. i. 21; 2 Cor. iv. 11.)

And the writing was, &c. Each of the Evangelists has given us a portion of the title, from which we may construct the perfect whole. May not one reason for this be, that in this remarkable example we might have a rule for directing our own reasonings concerning the parallelisms in the Gospels, that we should look upon each of the four Gospels by itself as perfectly true, and truly perfect, and yet as having a relation to the other three, and lending its aid to consummate the One Four-fold Gospel? May not another reason be, that we should not confine our attention to *one* of the Four Gospels, but examine and compare them all, and that our faith and patience, our humility and diligence, should be tried by this exercise of examination and comparison, that it should be our *moral probation*, that our tempers should be tested thereby, and that it should be seen whether we ourselves have the spirit of the Gospel? If we have that spirit, then we shall not speak of discrepancies in it, but shall see one of the clearest proofs of its Divine Unity and Truth, in the various forms in which the same substance is presented to the inward eye. (See Matt. xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26; Luke xxiii. 38, and notes on

all.) The superscription was written in three languages, in modern Hebrew for the Jews, in Greek for the whole world, in Latin for the soldiery and any other of the Roman people. There was the language of the people of the country, the language that then prevailed most in the world, and the official language. The language of the accusers, the language of the world which should reverse the unjust sentence, the language of the unworthy judge.

21. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

Pilate's answer to the comment and request of the Jews, reads as a kind of remorseful protest against his late shameful weakness. He resolutely declines to alter what he has written. It may be, he felt it to be nothing more than the truth. It is certain it would not be grateful to the Jews. He has suffered enough, so he thinks, from these tormentors. But to be angry with those who have led us into sin, is no expiation of our sins. "At the same time, who sees not," it has been well asked, "that (as in the case of Caiaphas) what was spoken in cruelty, was overruled by a higher power to a lofty issue, that there was Divinest truth in what was meant for mockery and insult." (See on Matt. xxvii. 37.)

23. "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did." Matt. xxvii. 35; Mark xv. 24; Luke xxiii. 34. *Ps. xxii. 18.

Then the soldiers, who were on duty at the crucifixion, four in number. (See on Matt. xxvii. 35.) When they had crucified Jesus, *i. e.*, had nailed Him to the cross, and erected it in its place. Took his garments, &c. These assistant executioners, cowering down together, at the foot of the cross, part the wide upper garment and divide it among them. On more closely examining the underclothing, they see in it a singular piece of art, for the dress is without a seam, woven entirely in one piece. This vesture, they think, ought not to be cut, and hence they agree to cast lots for it. They do so, and he who is so fortunate as to win, be-

comes the possessor of the whole garment. These soldiers, without any idea of it, are fulfilling, by their division of the garments, and their casting the lot for the unseamed vesture, a Scriptural prophecy of almost a thousand years old. (Ps. xxii. 18.) The fact that the whole of the four Evangelists mention the division of the raiment, is a pledge to us of its symbolical importance and divine meaning. As a garment covers the nakedness of the body, preserves it from heat and cold, and both cherishes and adorns it, so the righteousness of Jesus Christ covers the shameful nakedness of the soul. (Ps. xxxii. 1; Isa. lxi. 10, &c.; Gal. iii. 27; Rev. iii. 18.) "Put ye on the Lord Jesus." (Rom. xiii. 14.) Putting on the Lord Jesus includes both our justification and sanctification. Christ is not only made our righteousness, but likewise our sanctification (1 Cor. i. 30), and therefore they, who are for having only His righteousness as a covering for sin, but deny His sanctifying power, and do not seek after holiness, as it were, rend Christ's coat, and are worse than these pagan soldiers.

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head."

These things therefore the soldiers did. Who could have less intention of fulfilling the Scripture than these soldiers, who did not so much as know that any such occurrence had been foretold? Hence John, who was an eye-witness of the whole transaction, thus refers with wonder to the Divine wisdom in so directing these circumstances, that men unknowingly fulfill what it has determined, and yet not by compulsion, but still retaining their full freedom.

25. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene." Matt. xxvii. 55; Mark xv. 40; Luke xxiii. 49. *Luke xxiv. 18.

His mother. (See on next verse.) Mary the wife of Cleopas, was the sister of our Lord's mother; James and Josés were children of that Mary. (Matt. xxvii. 56.) Mary Magdalene. (See on Luke viii. 3.) What are those qualities which are represented in those who were nearest to the cross? In John, we have calm courage, exemplary purity, Divine love. In Mary Magdalene, devout watchfulness and earn-

est penitence. In the other Mary, faithful patience and quiet constancy. But, as to the mother of our Lord, she is hid, as if designedly, by a cloud from our view, and of her character we can know but comparatively little. A work of blood is our salvation, and we, as we would be saved, must draw near, and gaze upon it in faith, and accept it, as the way to heaven.

26. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, *Woman, behold thy son!* 27. Then saith he to the disciple, *Behold thy mother!* And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.
*Chap. xiii. 23, xx. 2 and xxi. 7, 20, 24. *Chap. ii. 4. *Chap. i. 11 and xvi. 32.

The disciple whom he loved, the Evangelist himself. He saith unto his mother &c. Hence it is supposed that Joseph her husband was dead, whence Jesus takes care that she should not be destitute. Neither her own danger, nor the sadness of the spectacle, could refrain her from performing the last office of duty and tenderness to her son. This was a noble instance of fortitude and affection. Now a sword struck through her tender heart, and pierced her very soul! probably she became overwhelmed and unfit to attend at the sepulchre, at least, she is not mentioned afterward, except that she continued with the disciples. The compassion and love of her son, to say nothing of His condescension, must remain without a parallel. *Woman.* This shows that nothing disrespectful was intended in chap. ii. 4.

Behold thy son, i. e., behold in him one who will discharge toward you all the duties implied in the relationship of an affectionate son. *Stier* eloquently remarks: "The burden of the world's redemption with all its increasing horror of sin, lies upon His soul, boundless anticipations, now gradually receding and passing away, of the glory to be obtained had filled His spirit, yet He has room for the exercise of the minutest care."

Then saith he to the disciple, &c. In this instance of filial piety we see how truly the man Jesus was touched by the affections of man's nature, and how the mighty interests of His mission did not make Him forget the common charities and relative duties of private life. There must then be something wrong about any one who makes public duties an excuse for neglect-

ing what he owes to those with whom God has joined him in these sacred bonds, as son, or father, or husband, or brother, and of all these bonds none has a more divine obligation than that of which our Lord on this occasion so tenderly and touchingly showed His sense, the duty which we owe to parents. *Unto his own home.* Doubtless to his own immediate residence in Jerusalem, next to his home in Galilee, and finally, perhaps, to Ephesus, his last abode in Asia Minor. That John had a home at Jerusalem is implied by the phrase *from that hour*, as he remained some time in Jerusalem.

28. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, *I thirst.*—*Ps. lxix. 21.*

That all things were now accomplished—i. e., the moment for the fulfillment of the last of them, for there was one other small particular, and the time was come for that too, in consequence of the burning thirst which the fevered state of His frame occasioned (*Ps. xxii. 15.*)

That the scripture (Ps. lxix. 21) might be fulfilled, &c. Jesus well knew that the declaration of His thirst would draw on Him a fresh insult, yet He was far from declining any additional suffering, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, and that the truth of it might be confirmed by a new seal. Let us beware of undervaluing the Word of the living God, or contemptuously using it as a dead letter. Rather let us honor it as the voice of the Supreme Majesty of heaven, choose it for the rule of our faith and practice, and be willing to suffer anything that the Scripture may be fulfilled in us. (*2 Tim. iii. 12.*)

29. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.—*Matt. xxvii. 48.*

Vinegar. (See on *Matt. xxvii. 34, 48; Luke xxiii. 36.*) *And they—"one of them" (Matt. xxvii. 48), filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon (a stalk of) hyssop, and put it to his mouth.* Though a stalk of this plant does not exceed eighteen inches in length, it would suffice, as the feet of crucified persons were not raised higher. As we gaze upon the soldiers putting the saturated sponge to the dry and parched lips of the languishing Jesus, by way of derision, instead of a cordial to support His drooping spirits, how we are amazed,

on the one hand, at the obduracy and barbarity of the human heart, and that these wicked men should be so utterly void of humanity and compassion, and, on the other hand, at the greatness of our Saviour's love to mankind; who endured all this for our sake! If the world should give us a disagreeable sour potion in our distress, may it be sweetened by the memory of His love and patience!

30. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished;" and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.—[Chap. xvii. 4.]

Received the vinegar. (Ps. lxi. 21; see on verse 29.) *It is finished.* This was the sixth remarkable word of Christ upon the cross, uttered as a triumphant shout, when He saw the glorious issue of all His sufferings now at hand. (Zech. iv. 7.) That which He said He did. If there be any theme that may challenge and command our ears and hearts it is this; for the sweetest utterance that ever fell from the lips of Jesus, and the most meritorious act that ever He did, are met together in this His last breath. In the one, we see Him triumphing, yielding in the other, yet so, as He overcomes. (See notes on Luke xxiii. 46.) It was not that the Saviour bowed his head, because He expired, but because He bowed His head, He then expired: by the mention of this, the Evangelist shows that He was "Lord of all." (Chap. x. 18.) We could never have atoned for our own sins. Our tears could not have washed them away. We never could have made amends for them by good works. Therefore Jesus offered up *Himself* a sacrifice for us. *Gave up the ghost*—gave His spirit up, namely, into the hands of the Eternal Father (Luke xxiii. 46) whereby a separation was made between His soul and body, but no disunion of them and His Deity. They were disjoined one from another, but not from Him that took them both together. Rather, by virtue of that remaining conjunction, they were again united after their separation. The Word was once indeed without either soul or body; but after it was "made flesh," it was never again parted from the one or from the other. Jesus on the cross! How unspeakably touching is the appeal that is made to us, as we see His head hanging down with languishments of kindness more than

weakness, His arms stretched as if to indicate His readiness to welcome us to His embrace, His side opened, not only to shed blood for us, but to make us a passage to His very heart, and hear Him, as it were, exclaiming, "O my Father, here I charge myself with all the guilt of those whom I love, here I lay down my life, that they may have eternal life, let me be crucified, so they be glorified!"

31. ¶ The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was a high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 42. xxi. 23.

The preparation. (See on verse 14; also Mark xv. 42.) *The bodies should not remain, &c.* The law of Moses enjoined those hanged to be buried before night. (Deut. xxi. 23.) Our Lord's enemies, in all they did, pretended a zeal for God, very unlike their general conduct. The result of this zeal, on this occasion, tended to prove that Jesus had already died, and also to fulfill the Scripture. Their fathers did not always observe this law. (2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10.) *A high day.* "A very solemn festival," as being not only an ordinary Sabbath, but the extraordinary one on the 15th of Nisan, from whence they reckoned the weeks to Pentecost, and also the day for presenting and offering the sheaf of new corn: so that it was a treble solemnity. (See Lev. xxiii. 10, 11; Exod. xxiii. 19.) *Their legs might be broken.* It was a common custom to break the legs or other bones of criminals on the cross. The Jews, supposing that none of these crucified persons might be dead so soon, besought Pilate to hasten their death, in the usual, but cruel manner. They knew not that the object of their hatred had forever escaped from their hands, and that they would never have the opportunity of inflicting another pang upon His sacred person. How hateful to God was the worship of those men in His temple, on the approaching Sabbath! The words spoken by Isaiah applied to them: "When ye make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." (Isa. i. 15.) Their hands were imbrued in the blood of the Son of man. How could His Father bear

them in His presence? Let us never imagine that we can please God by our services, while we are stained with unpardoned sins—sins not *abhorred*, not *confessed*, not *forsaken*. None can truly please Him but those who are cleansed from guilt by faith in His Son.

They brake not his legs. They break the legs of both the others, they pass Jesus by. There is every sign, indeed, that He is already dead, but why not make His death thus doubly sure? Perhaps even over the spirits of those rough and hardened men, the Saviour's looks and words, the manner of His death, the darkness and the earthquake, which they connected in some way with Him, may have caused a feeling of awe to creep over them, restraining them from subjecting Him to that rough handling which they were ready enough to give to the others. However this may have been, the shield of that prophecy—"A bone of him shall not be broken," guarded His limbs from their rude and crushing strokes.

34. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
 1 John v. 6. 8.

One of the soldiers, not to be restrained, and to make sure that the seeming death of Jesus was real, lifts his spear as he passes by, and thrusts it into the Redeemer's side, a strong, rude thrust, sufficient of itself to have caused death, inflicting a wide, deep wound, that left behind such a scar, that Jesus could say to Thomas afterward, "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side." Christ, in all probability, died from rupture or breaking of the heart. *James Begbie*, M. D., F. R. S. E., Fellow, and late President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and Physician to the Queen in Scotland, in a letter to Rev. William Hanna, LL.D., dated April 26th, 1862, and in which J. Y. Simpson, M. D., F. R. S. E., and John Struthers, M. D., F. R. C. S., of the same city, concur, says: "I cannot help accepting, as correct, the explanation which Dr. Stroud has offered, and which you have adopted, and so strikingly applied—of the physical cause of the death of Christ, namely, rupture of the heart, and consequent effusion of blood into the pericardium, the investing sheath of that organ. Such a lesion accounts for the phenomena

recorded in the Scriptures regarding Him, namely, the earlier than usual cessation of life during crucifixion, and the issuing of blood and water on the piercing of His side with the spear. It must be borne in mind, however, that rupture of the heart is comparatively a rare affection, and that the cases of it on record are, so far as I know, limited to those advanced in life, or to such as have been laboring under some degeneration of the structure of the organ, a condition which renders it liable to be torn when subjected to the pressure of severe physical exertion, or the weight of mental agony. Now in regard to Christ, we know that at the period of His death He was in the prime of life, and that as morally He was 'holy, harmless, and undefiled,' so physically He was without spot or blemish. How intensely does this consideration magnify the sufferings He endured! We see Him in the agony in the Garden, and under the bloody sweat. We follow Him to Calvary, and see Him under the hiding of His Father's face, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. We cannot estimate the anguish of His holy human soul during these awful hours, when there was drawn from Him that most touching language, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' but we can, in some measure, understand how His bodily frame, subjected to the full weight both of mental and bodily suffering, should yield and give way at the fountain of life, and how Christ, in His death, should thus literally fulfill the prophetic words of Old Testament writings concerning Him—"Reproach hath broken my heart." I shrink from treading further on this sacred ground."

Came there out blood and water. What a stream that was! There is a spiritual meaning in it. Our Lord's death has a double efficiency—to satisfy and to sanctify. The blood atones for sin. Before it was shed the penitent malefactor trusted in it, and was pardoned. But sinners are not only *guilty*, they are also *impure*. From Jesus flows the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to cleanse and sanctify. (See chap. vii. 39.) By coming to Jesus we receive the *double blessing*. By the precious blood we are acquitted of the guilt of our sin

by the purifying Spirit we are purged from its stain and power. Neither of these blessings is to be found unless in the Cross. We have the same idea in the familiar hymn—

"Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

35. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

He that saw it, &c. It has been thought that John was led to put such stress upon this incident of the crucifixion, and to press into such prominence his own testimony as an eye-witness to its reality, on account of the convincing refutation thus afforded of two strange heresies that sprang up early in the Church: the first, that Jesus had never really died upon the cross, but only passed into a swoon, from which He afterward revived; and the second, that it was not a real human body of flesh and blood, but only the appearance of one that was suspended on the cross. It may have been that the Evangelist had these beliefs in view. But whatever was his immediate object in testifying so particularly and so earnestly to the fact, it only puts that fact so much the more clearly now before our eyes, authorizing us to assume it as placed beyond all doubt, that within an hour or so after Christ's death—for it could not have been much longer, when a deep incision was made in the side of the Redeemer, there visibly flowed forth a copious stream of blood and water. (See notes on verse 34.)

And he knoweth that he saith true, &c. The Evangelists write in that artless, calm and unguarded manner, which is natural to persons confident of the undeniable truth of what they assert; they do not write with that scrupulous caution which would argue any fear that they might be confuted. They simply relate the naked facts, and leave them to stand upon their own evidence. They relate the most amazing, the most moving things with the most cool serenity, without any passionate exclamations and warm reflections. They relate the most tragical circumstances of our Lord's condemnation and death, calmly mentioning matter of fact, without any invectives against the Jews, without any high

eulogies upon Christ's innocence, without any rapturous celebrations of His grace in suffering all these things for sinners, and without any tender lamentations over their deceased Master. It is impossible for a heart, so deeply impressed with these things, as theirs undoubtedly were, to retain this dispassionate serenity, unless laid under supernatural restraints, and there appear very good reasons for this restraint upon them, namely, that the Gospel history might carry intrinsic evidences of its simplicity and artless impartiality, and that it might appear adapted to convince the judgments of men, and not merely to raise their passions. In this respect the Gospel history is distinguished from all histories in the world.

36. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.
37. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.
Ex. xii. 46; Num. ix. 17; Ps. xxiv. 20. Ps. xxii. 16, 17; Zech. xii. 10; Rev. i. 7.

Here again we find the soldiers coming in, unconscious witnesses, agents in the fulfillment of prophecy, carrying out, and testifying to a double Scripture, first concerning Him, and then concerning all the people. In reading the history of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must consider Him, 1. As accomplishing all the Scriptures of the Old Testament. 2. As doing everything in the spirit and power of the world's Redeemer from sin and spiritual death, all outward and visible works, wrought on the bodies of men, being so many pictures of those inward and spiritual works which He is continually working by His Spirit on, and for, our souls. 3. We must ever join ourselves to Him, as being with Him, dying with Him, rising with Him, &c., He being made "one with us" by assuming our nature, we "one with Him," by believing and being baptized. (Mark xvi. 16.) Then have we studied the Scriptures to purpose, when the life of Jesus, foreshowed of old, and accomplished in the body of His flesh, is manifest in ours. (Rom. vi. 3-11; Gal. ii. 20.)

38. ¶ And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39. And there came also Nicodemus, (which at the first came to Jesus by night,) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. 40. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41. Now in the

place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42. "There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

^bMatt. xxvii. 57; Mark xv. 42; Luke xxiii. 50. ^cChap. ix. 22 and xii. 42. ^dChap. iii. 1, 2 and vii. 50. ^eActs v. 6. ^fIsa. liii. 9. ^gVerse 31.

See on Matt. xxvii. 57-61; Mark xv. 42; Luke xxiii. 50.

Joseph. We may consider this man, 1. in connection with prophecy. (Isa. liii. 9.) *Bishop Louth's* rendering has been universally deemed an improvement: "And His grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was His tomb." 2. In reference to his rank in life, he was "a rich man." How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! Yet we here see the camel drawn through the eye of the needle: for what is impossible with man is possible with God. 3. In connection with his infirmity and imperfection. The Jews had decreed that if any man confessed Christ he should be put out of the synagogue. Hence, many who believed on Him feared to confess Him. This was for some time the case with Joseph. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." It is this that leads many to ask, not whether such a thing be right, but what will people think and say of me if I adopt it? 4. In the increase and development of his Christian principle. For he now shows himself openly, and acts a noble and distinguished part. It required no little zeal and courage to own a regard for one that had been judicially executed under the charge of blasphemy and sedition, to come forward and publicly ask for his body, to give it an honorable interment in his own garden and his own tomb, which had never yet been used. Let us not decide upon the character of persons too soon. Let us not give them up because of some present weaknesses, much influenced perhaps by peculiar circumstances. Let us not despise the day of small things.

There came also Nicodemus, &c. The Evangelist (vii. 50) describes Nicodemus by this remarkable act of his life, "He, that came to Jesus by night;" here he adds, *at the first*. Observe the loving spirit of John, as designing to wipe away this stain from the character of Nicodemus, and with a gentle hand to "take this

mote from his brother's eye:" for it is, as if he had written: "Though *at the first* he was timid and time-serving, yet at the last he was bold and decisive. Behold, he now comes to Jesus openly, by day, and before the world, bearing the costly tribute of his faith and love." (Gal. vi. 1.) It is not to be immediately concluded, that no good is done, because people do not seem to be better for our labors. Where God's will is done, there good, sooner or later, must be the result. (ii. 22, vii. 39, xiv. 26; Mark iv. 27; Luke xv. 17, 18.)

A mixture of myrrh, &c. In the gifts of the wise men at the birth of Jesus, the gold is considered to imply His Kingship, and the frankincense His Divinity, and the myrrh His Humanity: now, on this occasion, the *myrrh* alone of them is found. It is our Lord's Humanity, which is embalmed. (Mark vi. 29; Acts ii. 24, 27.) *A hundred pounds*, a quantity becoming the embalming of a king. (2 Chron. xvi. 14.) The weight showed the riches of Nicodemus, and his respect for Christ. We should think nothing too great for our Lord. The Jewish tradition is, that on Jacob a profusion of spices was used. (Gen. i. 2.) At Herod's funeral were five hundred spice-bearers. Eighty pounds of opobalsam were used at the funeral of R. Gamaliel. *Wound it in linen clothes, &c.* "Nothing," observes *Dr. Arnold*, "to my mind affords such comfort to us, when shrinking from the outward accompaniments of death—the grave, the grave-clothes, the loneliness—as the thought that all these had been around the Lord Himself, around Him, who died, and is now alive forever more. (Rev. i. 18)." *Bury, rather, embalm.* It is certain that no nation was more careful than the Jewish to bury their dead, though, very probably, not one of an hundred was embalmed. But it had been predicted that Christ should be joined with the rich in His death (Isa. liii. 9) a circumstance which, before it happened, seemed very improbable.

There was a garden. It was in a garden sin was first committed, expiated (xviii. 1), and finally triumphed over. (i. 48; Ps. cxxxix. 2.) In a garden there is something emblematic and suitable, where nature dies and is again renewed, where the

seed perishes and is quickened, and brings forth an hundred-fold. (xii. 24.) "Bid death to thy board," says *Bishop Hall*, "lodge him in thy bed, talk with him in thy closet, walk with him in thy garden, as Joseph of Arimathea did." The mention of the *new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid*, may remind us that the circumstances of His birth and His burial were in one respect alike. He who was born of a virgin-mother, shall be laid in a virgin-grave. Thus they laid Jesus, as in a temporary resting-place, somewhat hastily, as the preparations for the Passover were going on, intending, doubtless, when they might, to return to the sepulchre and complete their labor of love,

ignorant now their fond care would be prevented, not yet suspecting the glories of the Resurrection morn. Jesus was laid even in the sepulchre, to prove to us the blessed truth that the grave shall retain none of His followers, for that it could not retain, even though it held Himself. There is something in the prospect of the cold, dark, prison-house of the grave, from which all nature shrinks. Happy, then, it is for the believer to know that there his Lord and Master has gone before him, that He has sanctified not only the believer's death, but the believer's grave, and there will watch over his precious remains until He reunites them to their never-dying spirit, and glorifies them with Himself.

1. What did Pilate do to Jesus? 2. What did the soldiers do? 3. What did the chief priests and officers cry out? 4. State Pilate's interview with Christ in the judgment-hall. 5. Was Pilate disposed to release Him? 6. What did he say to the Jews? 7. How did they reply? 8. Where was Jesus led? 9. How was He crucified? 10. What title was put on His cross? 11. What did the soldiers do with His garments? 12. What did Jesus say to His mother? 13. What to the disciple "whom he loved"? 14. What did Christ do when He had received the vinegar? 15. What was done to Jesus on the cross? 16. What is said of Joseph of Arimathea? 17. What of Nicodemus? 18. Where did they lay Jesus?

CHAPTER XX.

¹ *Mary cometh to the sepulchre.* ³ *so do Peter and John, ignorant of the resurrection.* ¹¹ *Jesus appeareth to Mary Magdalene,* ¹⁹ *and to his disciples.* ²⁴ *The incredulity, and confession of Thomas.* ³⁰ *The scripture is sufficient to salvation.*

THE first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

¹ Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1; Luke xxiv. 1.

The first day of the week. (See on Matt. xxviii. 1.) *Mary Magdalene.* (See on Luke viii. 2.) *While it was yet dark.* (See on Luke xxiv. 1.) *The stone taken away, &c.* (See on Luke xxiv. 2.) By setting Mary Magdalene's name in the very forefront of his account of the resurrection, our Evangelist marks, doubtless, the eagerness of her love, as well as prepares us for the amazing privilege which was in reserve for her of beholding, before any one else, her risen Lord. An old writer observes: "Mary did seek Christ in the *first day of the week*, and first hour of the day, but many defer to seek the Lord until the last week

of their life, the last day of the week, the last hour of the day, the last minute of the hour. Let us awake from sin with David, early, rise with Samuel, early, with Abraham send away Hagar, early, with Christ and His audience come to the Church, early, and seek the Lord with this holy woman, early. (viii. 2; Ps. lvii. 9; 1 Sam. xv. 12; Gen. xxi. 14." See note at the end of this chapter.)

² Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

¹ Chap. xiii. 23, xix. 26 and xxi. 7, 20, 24.

They have taken away, &c. The "they" may refer to Joseph and Nicodemus, and any with them, the "we" to the other Mary and Salome. "We know not," *we* women who have been to the sepulchre. A silent confirmation of the narrative of the other Evangelists—that Mary Magdalene had been accompanied by *others*—of whom John says nothing. A faithful soul

which thinks it has lost Christ, is deeply sensible of its loss—it sighs, it weeps and leaves no means untried to find Him again. It sometimes happens that Christ goes in some manner out of a heart which is His living sepulchre, by depriving it of His sensible presence only to try it, and a timorous soul is afraid that its own faults have driven or taken Him away. Solitude and grief are a plain indication of our love for that which we have lost, and when we have a love for it, we entreat everybody to assist us in recovering it. That humility which inspires us with a sense of our own weakness, and causes us to seek for assistance, is a very proper means to qualify us to find Jesus Christ.

3. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. 4. So they ran both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. 5. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. 6. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie;—Luke xxiv. 12. 7. Sam. xviii. 23. 8. Chap. xix. 40.

They ran both. “It is a sad, heavy thing to do anything, as in obedience to God, while the heart is straitened, not enlarged toward Him by His Divine love; but, that once taking possession and enlarging the heart, that inward principle of obedience makes the outward obedience sweet, it is then a natural motion. Indeed the soul runs in the ways of God, as the sun in its course, which finds no difficulty, being naturally fitted and carried to that motion. (Ps. cxix. 32; Cant. viii. 14; Acts viii. 30; 1 Cor. ix. 24–27.)”—*Leighton. Stooping down.* None but humble men and meek men can see these mysteries. He that will not stoop at Christ's grave, shall never be partaker of His death and resurrection. Here, in a literal sense, was a longing, eager, searching, inquiring look into the mysteries of our Redemption. (See Rom. viii. 19; 1 Peter i. 12.) *The linen clothes lie.* It is remarkable that whenever these coverings of our Lord's body are mentioned, they are never called (John xi. 44) “grave-clothes,” as in the case of Lazarus, but they are spoken of as the “linen clothes.”

7. And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. 8. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. 9. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. (Chap. xi. 44. 1. Ps. xvi. 10; Isa. xxvi. 19; Hos. xiii. 14; Acts ii. 25–31 and xiii. 34–37.

And the napkin, &c. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, it is said (chap. xi. 44), “He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin,” thus indicating that he was for the present rescued from death by the power of Christ, yet he must still be subject to it, and die again—but here the living Lord, who, by His own Divine power, on this third day rose again from the dead, leaves behind Him these cere-cloths and relics of the grave, showing that, being risen, He “dieth no more, death hath no dominion over Him.” (Acts xiii. 34–37; Rom. vi. 9; Heb. vii. 23–25.) “Tremble not,” says *Toplady*, “at the thought of laying aside your weak, sinful, mortal body. You will receive it again, not such, as it now is, frail, defiled, and perishable, but bright with the glory, and perfect in the image of God. The body is that to the soul, which a garment is to the body. When you betake yourself to repose at night, you lay aside your clothes until morning, and resume them, when you rise. What is the grave but the believer's wardrobe, of which God is the door-keeper? In the Resurrection morning the door will be thrown open, and the glorified soul shall descend from heaven to put on a glorified robe, which was indeed folded up and laid away in dishonor, but shall be taken out from the repository, enriched and beautified with all the ornaments of nature and grace. (Luke xv. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 43.)”

Then went in also that other disciple. Here we see a sort of unconscious influence, the silent force of example. Peter follows John to the sepulchre, and John follows Peter into the sepulchre. *And he saw, and believed.* Saw what? Not yet his Lord, but the relics of his Lord, and the place where his Lord had been. All these persuaded him, and the real truth now first flashed across his hitherto darkened mind: and now the day begins to break, and the shadows flee away, and the clouds are rolling off, and the sun is risen on his soul, the eyes of his understanding now at length are opened, and he believes the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. (Chap. ii. 22.) “Blessed indeed,” so presently we read, “are they that have not seen, and yet

have believed," but blessed too was he who believed from what he here saw, who was the first to believe. *For as yet, i. e., up to this time. They knew not—they comprehended not.* The word *scripture* refers to the predictions which Jesus had made in regard to His own resurrection. (See Matt. xvi. 21, xx. 19; Mark x. 34; Luke xviii. 31-34.) *That he must rise, &c.* The necessity was founded upon the immutable word and promise of God (Ps. xvi. 10), upon the principle of life inherent in Jesus as the eternal Son of God, and upon the redemptive economy by which Christ was to rise from the dead and become the first fruits of them that are held in the power of the grave. (1 Cor. xv. 20.) This slowness of heart to believe, this ignorance, not of the letter, but of the meaning and spirit of the Scripture, on the part of the disciples, may seem strange to us who have been favored with these eighteen centuries of ever accumulating experience and proof. Nor may we indeed acquit them of spiritual dullness and want of discernment, while we yet see how this clears them of all charge of enthusiasm, and adds to the credibility of their witness. *To their own home, literally, to themselves.* Reference is had to their place of sojourn, for it must not be supposed, that they had a permanent place of abode in Jerusalem. Luke (xxiv. 12) has the same form of expression, which is the more remarkable as being one of quite infrequent occurrence.

11. ¶ ^aBut Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. 12. And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.—^bMark xvi. 5.

See notes on Matt. xxviii. 2.

Brief was the stay of those two men. But Mary, arriving perhaps by another direction after they left, lingers at the spot, weeping for her missing Lord. As she gazes through her tears on the open tomb, she also ventures to stoop down and look into it, when lo! *two angels in white* as from the world of light (see on Matt. xxviii. 3), appear to her, in a *sitting posture*, as having finished some business, and awaiting some one to impart tidings to. *One at the head, and the other at the feet, where Jesus had lain*—not merely proclaiming silently the *entire* charge they had had of the body of Christ, but rather,

possibly, calling mute attention to the narrow space within which the Lord of glory had contracted Himself, as if they would say, come, see within what limits, marked off by the interval here between us two, *the Lord* lay! Mary *stood* weeping at the sepulchre, and Jesus came to her, the devout woman *ran* to tell the disciples, and He met them in the way. In every state, if we do our duty, our Lord will not fail to reward us. If we delight in retirement and contemplation, His visits will comfort us. If we labor faithfully in an active life, in the midst of our business, His blessings will meet us. (vi. 37, xi. 20; Job xxi. 15; Ps. ix. 10; 1 Tim. iv. 8.)

"I need no picture of Mary Magdalene, or any other saint," says *Cecil*, "I want no aid to my conceptions from anything studied by an artist; the life is before me, I see the principle itself, actually and visibly in exercise. . . . What are all the splendid exhibitions which the world presents to our attention? What are its monuments compared with this? What are all the grand sights, either of ingenuity or beauty, after which people so eagerly run? Show me such a sight, as *Mary standing weeping at the sepulchre!* Such a monument, as this, of humility, patience, love and faith, set up in the Christian Church, infinitely surpasses in real grandeur and worth all the most splendid monuments of worldly greatness and distinction. (Gal. iii. 1.)"

13. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? she saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.—Ps. xlii. 3, 5, 11; Jer. xxxi. 16.

Woman—a perfectly respectable address. *Why weepest thou?* Asked, not because they knew not why she wept, but to open the way to make her know that there was no reason to weep. *They have taken away.* (See on verse 2.) As before to the two disciples, so now to the two angels, she naturally opens her grief. What a remarkable evidence of the intensity of Mary's grief is afforded by the fact, that even a vision of angels does not interrupt it! She is so completely absorbed by this one feeling, that there is no surprise, no symptom of astonishment: she answers the inquiry proposed to her, as if she had conversed with angels all her life. Yet this very

thing may serve to show how exalted already, and even under these circumstances, was her idea of Jesus, for, if she had not felt Him to be more than man, would she not have been more moved by the sight of these, than at the loss of Him?

14. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and ¹⁴knew not that it was Jesus. 15. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.
¹⁴Matt. xxviii. 9; Mark xvi. 9. ¹⁵Luke xxiv. 16, 31; chap. xxi. 4.

She turned herself back, that is, from looking into the sepulchre. *And knew not*, &c. Probably the different dress of our Lord from what He was accustomed to wear, or the tears in her eyes, in that morning gray, might prevent Mary from recognizing Jesus at first. *Woman*, &c. (See on verse 13.) *Why weepest thou?* Our Lord begins, as the angels had begun, and it is to teach us, that the words of angels are spoken by command of God. These were the very first words Christ spake to any after He rose from the dead. For His mission was to bind up the broken in heart, and the end of it, we know, will be to "wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. xxv. 8; Rev. vii. 17, xxi. 4.) But He proceeds further and deeper than they. *Whom seekest thou?* He proceeds to ask: for only in finding Him whom her soul seeketh, can the ever-flowing fountain of her grief be stayed: and in His question is implied the encouraging promise, "They that seek shall find." Mary longs to see the dead body of Christ, and complains of the loss of that, and, behold, she sees Him alive, who "is able to do for us exceeding abundantly, even above all that we ask or think." *Have borne him hence*. Observe, no mention is made by Mary of the name of Christ. She is so taken up with the thoughts of her Saviour, that she supposes that everybody thinks of Him as well as she, and that any one must read in her heart the name of Him whom she seeks. "My soul, if thou at any time lose the presence of thy God, seek Him with diligence and perseverance; seek Him with prayers, and sighs, and tears, and, be sure, at last thou shalt find Him with joy. He hides not Himself that we may not find Him, but that we may seek Him, and be thereafter more fearful to lose Him. Despair

not, He again will show Himself: only go on, and seek Him still with hope, and thou shalt be sure to find Him at last with joy. (Cant. ii. 14; Luke ii. 43-46.)"—*Austin. Tell me where*, &c. Grief is unreasonable. Had an enemy taken away the body, would he have told Mary where he had laid it? The mourner was so transported with sorrow that she knew not what she said, or what she did, she could not distinguish faces, nor remember voices, all was confusion and perplexity.

16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabbouni, which is to say, Master.

Mary, said Jesus. There was something in the accents of that well-known voice when it pronounced her name, which left no possibility to doubt the speaker, her eyes were directed by it to the object of her solicitude, her heart was filled with gladness. *And saith unto him, Rabbouni*, which is to say, *Master*, casting herself (as would appear from the next verse) in her ecstasy, at His feet. How touching and beautiful a comment is this upon our Lord's own words, "My sheep hear my voice," they know the voice of their Shepherd, when they hear it in His word and in His providences, in His blessings and in His chastenings, as distinctly and as immediately as Mary Magdalene knew who was speaking to her at that moment in the garden of the sepulchre. This is a high mystery, but we write as concerning Christ and His Church; for is it not said that He shall manifest Himself to them as He does not unto the world, and does not experience fully justify it, when they hear a voice which the world cannot hear, and see a hand which the world cannot see? Shall we ever hear our own names uttered by our Lord? Are they now written in His book? Can we wonder that when Mary had found her Lord she was unwilling to part from Him?

17. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father: and to my God, and your God.
¹⁷Ps. cxlii. 22; Matt. xxviii. 10; Rom. viii. 29; Heb. ii. 11. ¹⁸Chap. xxvi. 28. ¹⁹Eph. i. 17.

Touch me not, &c. It is manifest from this and other passages (such as verse 27), that the reason why Mary was forbidden to touch her risen Saviour was not because the thing was impossible. Indeed, if it had been so, the prohibition had been unne-

cessary, for we need not be forbidden to do that which cannot be done. Mary had the testimony of two of her senses, sight and hearing, that it was the Lord, and she now seeks the testimony of a *third*, namely, of *feeling*, in order to be sure that it is a body and not a pure spirit which addresses her. The knowledge of Christ by internal consciousness is better far than that by sight or hearing. "Is it impossible," says the *Rev. William Archer Butler*, "that Jesus, in this singular prohibition to weeping and astonished Mary, might have alluded to *this spiritual contact* which was to be the consequence of His ascension—to this inward grasp which the abiding of His Spirit was to allow—so that those who of old had seen and heard the Lord, were thenceforth to know Him as it were by touch and feeling, by direct and palpable apprehension." It might be proper to touch Jesus at His own invitation, and so to answer an important end (see Luke xxiv. 39), and yet improper to do so without it. By comparing the passage with Matt. xxviii. 9, 10 (on which see notes), it appears that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary who was with her *did touch Him*, for they are said to have "held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him." There is reason to think, therefore, that the words, *Touch me not*, were used mainly to induce Mary to *desist* from what she was doing, and that on account of His having more important employment for her—"Go, tell my brethren!" This agrees with the reason given, "*Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended*, &c. This was as much as if He had said, You need not be so unwilling to let go my feet, as though you should see me no more: I am not yet ascended, nor shall I ascend at present. Yet do not imagine that I am raised to a mere mortal life, or am going to set up a temporal kingdom in this world. . . . No. . . . *I ascend*, &c. This teaching He bids her go and communicate unto His brethren: remind the disciples of His former words, and let them know that this is the season of their accomplishment, even that going to His Father of which in His final charge He had so frequently spoken. (See chap. xvi. 16, 17 25-28.) Like Joseph in his glory, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb.

ii 11, 12.) *I ascend*, &c. Mary had called Him "Master," implying thus that she was His servant and handmaid; but now He graciously calls her sister, for His saying here implies as much. As by a woman came the first news of death, so by a woman came also the first notice of the resurrection of the dead. And the place fits well, for in a garden they came both. *Leighton* says, "He says not to our Father and our God, but severally, *mine* and *yours*, teaching us the order of the new covenant, that the Sonship of Jesus Christ is not only more eminent in nature, but in order, is the spring and cause of ours, as *Cyril* well observes. So then, He that here puts this word in our mouths, to call God *Father*, He it is by whom we have this dignity and comfort that we call Him so. (See on Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.)"

13. "Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

^aMatt. xxviii. 10. Luke xxiv. 10.

The reasons which induced our Lord to appear first to Mary Magdalene, were, we suppose, as follows: 1. To display to His Church the sovereignty and abounding riches of His grace. Human reason, if it had been consulted, would have said, Let the risen Mediator go, from His sepulchre to the streets of Jerusalem, and show Himself there in triumph to the people who crucified Him, or, with eager haste to His beloved disciples, and gladden their sorrowful hearts. But, His first act after His resurrection is to comfort and honor this humble Mary. 2. To elevate woman in society, and in Divine privileges. Male and female were not, then, "one" in Moses, as they are now "all one in Christ Jesus." They had neither that place in the Church, nor that rank in society which they now enjoy. Nor was it in the mind of the Saviour that any such invidious distinction between the sexes, as took its rise in the appropriation in the Second Temple of a particular court to the females, called "the court of the women," and continued in a greater or less degree until His day, should be perpetuated. Besides, never did a solitary female appear among Christ's enemies, either during His life or at His crucifixion. And He knew how closely identified with all the best charms and

charities of social life, is woman's elevation to her proper station of dignity and influence. Hence our Lord's appearing first to Mary, was at once of special good will to the sex, and an emancipation of them from human impositions. 3. That He might put honor on her earnest seeking of Him, and on her singular obedience and love. Jesus seldom manifests His sovereignty alone. As we look more closely into what He does, we can generally discover in His doings something beyond it. It was the loving, affectionate, the conscientious, the seeking, earnest Mary, whom He thus honored in the morning of the Resurrection day.

19. ¹Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

²Mark xvi. 14: Luke xxiv. 36; 1 Cor. xv. 5.

The same day. This is added to show that our Lord's appearance to the Apostles, was on the very day of His resurrection. *At evening.* It must have been when the evening was somewhat advanced, for His appearance to the disciples on their way to Emmaus had taken place previously, and it was not until the day was far spent (Luke xxiv. 29. *The first day of the week.* A day ever since dedicated to the special service of Him who on this day rose from death! This was the first time the Church had ever met, and lo, Jesus Christ was found to be there, in the midst of them! Consider the repeated sanction which His presence gave to the next "Lord's Day," (see verse 26; Rev. i. 10; also Acts ii. 1.) Observe, too, the many indications that the first day of the week became regarded thenceforth as the Christian Sabbath. (See Acts xx. 7; also 1 Cor. xvi. 2.) *Came Jesus.* He came unexpectedly. Without apprising them of His being near, He entered the room where they were assembled. *Bloomfield* says: "As a beautiful economy similar to that which we observe in nature, may be discerned in our Lord's working of miracles, by which no *more power* is employed than is necessary to accomplish the purpose in view, we may suppose with the best commentators (as *Calvin*, *Grotius*, *Whitby* and *Campbell*) that our Lord caused the doors to preternaturally open of themselves, as

the angel (Acts v. 19, 23) "opened the prison doors in which the Apostles were confined." (See also Acts xii. 10.) Thus, as it is observed by *Calvin*, "the circumstance of the doors being barred was purposely introduced, as containing in it an illustrious *specimen* of the Divine power inherent in our exalted Saviour, who, we may suppose, by thus entering not without a miracle, intended to afford His disciples a striking proof of His Divinity." This seems alluded to at verse 30. *Peace be unto you*—not the mere *wish* that even His own exalted peace might be theirs (chap. xiv. 27), but conveying it into their hearts, even as He "opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures." (Luke xxiv. 45.)

20. And when he had so said, he showed unto them *his hands and his side.* ³Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.—4Chap. xvi. 22.

He showed unto them his hands, &c.—not only as *ocular* and *tangible* evidence of the *reality* of His resurrection (see on Luke xxiv. 37–43), but as through "the *power* of that resurrection," dispensing all His peace to men. *Then were the disciples glad, &c.* They were so for the following reasons: 1. It gave proof that He had escaped the fury of His foes. 2. It afforded an evidence of His character, and a confirmation of His mission and doctrine. (See Acts i. 22, ii. 32, iii. 15.) 3. It proved the acceptance of His sacrifice, and the completion of His obedience, in behalf of His believing followers. 4. It was a proof of their participation in the blessings which He has procured beyond the present state, a pledge of their entrance into heaven. He rose as the Head of His body, the Church. 5. They had thus a pledge of His protection of His Church from its enemies, and of its final triumph over all. Let us keep a serious celebration of the joy which belongs to every remembrance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Sabbath is set apart for the veneration of a risen Saviour. We should follow Him from the cross to the crown: "weep with Him when He wept; rejoice when He rejoiced," and be glad, like His disciples, "when they saw the Lord." This joy is not like that of the world, agitated, but pure and calm, it composes the spirit, it refines the affections.

21. Then said Jesus to them again, *Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* Matt. xxviii. 18, chap. xvii. 18, 19; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Heb. ii. 1.

Again. (See on verse 19.) *Peace be unto you.* This language was sweet especially considering the troubles of their hearts to whom it was primarily addressed. It is as though Jesus had said, All is well as to the past, and all shall be well as to the future. The commission itself is sweet. Nothing could well be more grateful to those who loved Christ than to be employed by Him on such an errand, and to have such an example to imitate. Jesus came to offer Himself a sacrifice for sin, and by His blood to obtain eternal salvation for poor lost sinners. Yet notwithstanding this disparity between His mission and that of His ministering servants, there are various points of likeness between them. 1. The great objects of Christ's mission were to glorify God, and to seek and to save lost souls, and theirs are the same. 2. In executing His mission, as Mediator, Christ was always under the direction of Him that sent Him, and the ministers of Christ, as His servants, must be the same. 3. Christ, in the execution of His mission, had great difficulties and trials to encounter, and His servants must expect the same. 4. Christ was not sent forth in His undertaking without a promise of support in it, and a glorious reward for it. If many waters could have quenched His love, it had been quenched, but Divine Omnipotence supported Him. As His Father sent Him, so sends He His ministering servants. Faithfully has He promised to be with them always to the end of the world. The joy set before Him encouraged Him to endure the cross, they also shall have their reward—they shall enter into the joy of the Lord.

22. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost:* 23. *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.*—Matt. xvi. 19 and xviii. 18.

He breathed on them. &c. A symbolic act, denoting the bestowal of the Holy Ghost according to His promise. Not that the promise is here fully accomplished, for this did not take place until the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, but it was a precursor and pledge of that which was so soon to be realized in all its abundant

fullness and richness. This *breathing forth* is in beautiful accordance with what is said in chap. xv. 26, that the Spirit proceedeth forth in His work from the Father and the Son, although this was not to take place until the ascension of Jesus to His glorified state in heaven. (Chap. xvi. 7.) Here is proof of Christ's Divinity, He inspired those ambassadors, gave them the Holy Ghost. *Receive ye, &c.* Surely this is the voice of a God, and not of a man. *Holy Ghost.* We are not to suppose that the word "holy" denotes the holiness of the nature of the Blessed Spirit, because holiness, being a property of the Divine essence which belongs equally to all the Persons, cannot be attributed to one of them by way of eminence or distinction. It would be as improper always to call one of them wise, or almighty, or just, or good, while no such adjunct was connected with the names of the others. There can be little doubt that the epithet, holy, refers to His official character. He is the Author of all the holiness which adorns the creation, and particularly in the economy of redemption He sustains the character of the Sanctifier. (Titus iii. 5.) He comes forth from the Father, to restore His image in the soul of man, and all the virtues and the graces are the effects of His mighty operations.

Whosoever sins ye remit, &c. If there is no reference here to the miraculous gift of discerning spirits, by which the Apostles could certainly judge of the state of individuals, and pronounce a sentence upon them which would be ratified in heaven, nothing further can be intended than that, as preachers of the Word, they were authorized to declare the character of those who should be justified, and of those who should be condemned, to assure believers of eternal life, and unbelievers of eternal death. (See on Matt. xvi. 19 and xviii. 18.) The absolute power of forgiveness, or condemnation, was not vested in the Apostles, any more than the power to perform miracles, although this was conferred in similarly unqualified terms. As Jesus had been the authorized messenger of the Father, able to communicate without mistake His will, so the Apostles were to be fully authorized to act in the Mes-

siah's place, as making known the great principles of the new religion, and able to answer the inquiry, Who shall receive forgiveness of sin, and from whom shall forgiveness be withholden? They would be qualified to instruct men respecting the will of God in reference to pardon, and whatever principles they should announce as regulating the pardon of sin, those would be the principles recognized in heaven. This fullness of qualification, which would render them the authoritative ambassadors of the Messiah, and interpreters of His will, would proceed from the influence of the Holy Spirit.

24. ¶ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.
Chap. xi. 16.

Thomas called *Didymus*. (See on chap. xi. 16.) *One of the twelve*. They are still called "the twelve" by a familiar figure of speech, though two, as we know, were wanting: a part being put *synecdochically* as it is termed, according to Greek usage, for the whole. The disciples had congregated like a family of orphans deprived of their head. They were together like a nest of unfledged birds, from whom the murderous hand had carried off their dam, beneath whose sheltering wing they used to find repose. They had entered an "upper chamber," and shut their door upon the cold bleak world, to show that no comfort was to be expected from *without*. But Thomas *was not with them*, when Jesus came to them in the evening, on the day of His resurrection. We are not told how it happened that Thomas was absent at this time. Had he been there, he would probably then have been convinced of the blessed fact that Christ had risen, as the other Apostles were: and hence we may well remind ourselves how unwise it is to neglect religious ordinances.

25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, "We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.'

¶ 1 Cor. ix. 1 and xv. 5. ¶ Job ix. 16; Ps. lxxviii. 11, 32, xcv. 8, 10 and cvi. 21, 24.

No sooner had Thomas returned, than his fellow-Apostles said to him, with a rapture becoming the discovery, *We have seen the Lord*. Upon hearing this, who would not have expected that Thomas, after some inquiry, would have exclaimed, "Happy you who have been privileged with the

sight of a risen Saviour! Oh that I had been with you! Could I have foreseen that He would have honored this place with a visit, nothing should have induced me to quit the sacred spot." But instead of this emotion which was so natural, he avows his determination not only to have the evidence of sense, but to trust no one's senses but his own. *Except I shall see in his hands, &c.* We have already seen that one cause of Thomas' unbelief was his absence from the assembly of his fellow-Christians. Another was his establishing an improper criterion of truth. The report of Christ's resurrection was made to him by men whose veracity he did not doubt, for they had been for three years his companions, and he knew them, in a matter of such moment, to be incapable of falsehood, and yet he refused to credit it. He declared that he would see, and put his finger into the print of the nails, which had been used in the crucifixion, and thrust his hand into the side, which had been pierced by the soldier's spear, or else he would reject all other evidence. And yet, how strange was the conduct of Thomas! Had he constantly judged according to the rule here laid down for himself, how little could he have believed at all! He could not have believed that ever there was such a law-giver as Moses, or such a prophet as Isaiah, or anything recorded in the Jewish Scriptures, for nothing of all this had he seen or heard. It might easily be shown how absurd would be the adoption of this rule by ourselves, as it was applied to countries, persons and events, which we have never seen, but in which we believe on the testimony of others. How many things are certainly true, the truth of which falls not within the compass either of reason, experience or sense.

26. ¶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, *Peace be unto you*.

After eight days. Note again the day on which this occurred, the first day of the week, the Lord's day, the Christian Sabbath, weekly festival of the Resurrection, duly to keep which is at once our duty and our privilege. (See on verse 19.) "Every Lord's Day ought to be a day of *spiritual resurrection*. Every succeeding

Lord's Day ought to prepare us for the day of the Lord. Then "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory." *His disciples were within*, &c. Thomas this time was with the Apostolic band, no longer absent, not forsaking their assembling even in the sadness of his spirit. *Then came Jesus*, &c.—as before, the Lord greets them with His "comfortable words," now for this third time repeated, speaking peace to their yet anxious minds, and even for this hitherto excepted and restless one pronouncing His peace. (See on verses 19, 21.) For eight, days in just punishment of this his unbelief, Thomas walks in gloom, while the other Apostles, and the faithful women, and many a humble disciple, are walking in the light, he was like some low and gloomy vale, untouched, ungladdened by the rays of the risen sun, while all the neighboring heights long since were smitten and lighted up with His glory.

27. Then saith he to Thomas. Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing. *1 John i. 1.

Behold the condescension of our Lord and Saviour in dealing with this man. (See on verse 29.) *Reach hither thy finger*, &c. Observe the evidence of Christ's Omniscience which was shown by His acquaintance with the disposition of the erring disciple, and by His using word for word in His prescription, the terms which had been employed in asserting the existence of the disorder which he was about to remove, although He had not been personally present to see or hear when this asseveration was made. It is evident that our Lord retained after His resurrection the memorials of His Passion—there were marks of the nails and of the spear. John saw Him after His ascension as "a lamb that had been slain." These marks, which served to prove the truth of His resurrection, will forever remind us of the way in which our happiness was procured, and excite us to adoration and praise. In all the Divine dispensations, truth is gradually revealed, and here we have a conspicuous example of this progressive system. An angel first announces the event. The empty sepulchre confirms the women's report. Our Lord's appearance showed

He was alive, that to the disciples at Emmaus proved that at least His spirit lived, that to the eleven demonstrated the reality of His body, and the evidence given Thomas decided that the self-same body that had been crucified was risen from the dead. *Be not faithless, but believing*. "Do not become unbelieving. Thomas was *doubtful*, not unbelieving. Our Lord warns us, through him, that if we miss opportunities of having our scruples removed, if we close our eyes to the evidences of the truth, our *doubts* will be hardened into *unbelief*."—*South*. Let us be watchful against all symptoms of unbelief. Let us live with the recollection that the unseen world, with all its powers and realities, is not far from every one of us.

Note, 1. The failings of the disciples are ingeniously detailed in the Book which makes us acquainted with their history, whether the writer be himself the character he records, or whether he describes the lives and actions of others. In either case there is evident strict impartiality—not a fault is shielded or shadowed by prejudice—not an error is concealed from mankind, but the whole truth is faithfully, fearlessly and prominently exhibited. Strong evidence is thus furnished that the pen with which they wrote, was one that was free from all the imperfections of our depraved nature, and one that was guided by a wisdom that yields no more to human weakness than to wrath, in the accomplishment of its records and the fulfillment of its purposes. 2. The unbelief of Thomas was overruled by the Saviour for His own honor and the good of His Church. If the disciples of our Lord had been men of easy credence, men of hasty persuasion, men who, without examination, would receive as true any tale that corresponded with their wishes, their deposition would have been suspicious. But, instead of this, they were full of doubts, and admitted nothing till evidence extorted conviction. They yielded with backwardness to the force of evidence, obstinately adhered to preconceived opinions, pertinaciously held the ground they had once taken, opposed anything new and unexpected, and hesitated to admit as a fact that which tallied not with their own experience. Hence

their testimony is so much the stronger.

28. And Thomas answered and said unto him. My Lord and my God.—1 Tim. iii. 15; Rev. v. 9, 14.

And Thomas answered, &c. Here is additional evidence that the unbelief of Thomas was overruled by Christ for His own honor. *My Lord and my God.* This exclamation implies, 1. A full and decided conviction of the truth of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. (See Rom. i. 4.) 2. A conviction of our Saviour's essential dignity and supreme Divinity. This is language which could not have been employed in addressing the most exalted creature without the guilt of impious blasphemy. 3. An humble hope of personal interest in Christ as our Lord and God. Thomas, being conscious of His faith in the risen Redeemer, claims interest in Him, and all who believe the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, who trust in the promise and repose in the Saviour for salvation, may also claim interest in Him as *their* Lord. 4. Holy joy and humble triumph in the Redeemer. 5. Thomas' admiration of our Lord's condescension, and shame on account of His former incredulity. "My Lord and my God, I admire Thy kindness in bearing with my infirmities, and I am ashamed and humbled at the recollection of my previous unbelief." 6. A deep sense of obligation to the risen Redeemer, subjection to His authority, and devotedness to His service. Accordingly, Thomas addressed Him as His Lord and God. Every Christian receives Christ in the whole extent of His Mediatorial character, and while he listens to Him as his instructor, and relies upon Him as His atoning and interceding High Priest, he submits to Him as His Sovereign, and obeys Him as His Lord.

29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

72 Cor. v. 7; 1 Peter i. 8.

Because thou hast seen me, &c. The evidence to which Thomas yielded was the evidence of the senses—touch, and sight, and hearing. And the feeling which arose from this touching, and feeling, and demonstration, Christ pronounced to be faith. Observe, then, it matters not *how* faith comes, whether through the intellect, as in

the case of Thomas, or in the heart, as in the case of John. God has many ways of bringing different characters to faith, but that blessed thing which the Bible calls faith is a *state* of soul in which the things of God become glorious certainties. Remark again this; The faith of Thomas was not merely satisfaction about a fact, it was trust in a person. The admission of a fact, however sublime, is not faith, we may believe that Christ is risen, yet not be nearer heaven. It is a Bible fact that Lazarus rose from the grave, but belief in Lazarus' resurrection does not make the soul better than it was. Thomas passed on from the fact of the resurrection to the person of the risen: "My Lord, and my God!" Trust in the risen Saviour—that was the belief which saved his soul. It is not belief *about* the Christ, but personal trust *in* the Christ of God, that saves the soul. *Blessed are they that have not seen, &c.* Jesus said on another occasion, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see." (Luke x. 23.) The former of these passages pronounces a blessing upon those who saw the fulfillment of what others have believed, the latter upon those who should believe the Gospel upon the ground of their testimony, without having witnessed the facts with their own eyes. There is no contradiction in these blessings, for there is a wide difference between *requiring sight as the ground of faith*, which Thomas did, and *obtaining it as a completion of faith*, which those who saw the coming and kingdom of the Messiah did. The one was a species of unbelief, the other was faith terminating in vision. Faith, which is the great instrument employed by God in man's restoration, is belief in things unseen. The more, therefore, any one walks by sight rather than by faith, the less is his soul possessed of what God uses as the great means of blessing it. And if he be obstinate in requiring the evidence of his senses for what is otherwise sufficiently proved, such obstinacy shows that unseen things have little hold on his affections, little reality in his contemplations. Peter mentions it to the praise of those whom he addressed, that they loved their Saviour though they had not seen Him. (1 Peter i. 8.)

30. ¶ "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book : " Chap. xxi. 25.

Many other signs. The Greek word for signs here is often rendered miracles, for the miracles of Jesus were all signs, indicating the Divinity of the Author. The signs omitted in John's account, were done *in the presence of the disciples* of Jesus, and were consequently of as good authority as those related by himself. This was but a necessary piece of caution : for John wrote his Gospel late toward the end of his life, after the Apostles and disciples of Christ had spread the Gospel far and near, and had both by preaching and writing published the great works and signs, done by their Master. To prevent, therefore, the suspicions which some might be apt to entertain of their teachers, when they found the great evidences, insisted on by them, not mentioned by John, who, being the last writer of the Apostles, would naturally for that reason be supposed to be the most accurate, he declares, that he had not recounted all the signs, done by Jesus, but that there were many others, which, having been wrought *in the presence of His disciples*, might very well be taught and published by them, though omitted by himself. (xxi. 24, 25.) From this it appears that we are not to infer that the Evangelists were ignorant of a given fact because they omit to notice it. It is no presumption against the truth of the narrative because it is given by but one Evangelist.

31. ¶ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.
* Luke i. 4. * Chap. iii. 15, 16 and v. 24 ; 1 Peter i. 8, 9.

That ye might believe, &c. It is assumed that the things written are sufficient to carry conviction. "He that wrought such wonders in the world," says *Howe*, "restoring (upon all occasions as they occurred to Him) hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, soundness to the maimed, and life to the dead, even by a word speaking—He certainly was the Son of God. Here is sufficient evidence that doth speak the thing to any man's conscience that doth consider ; yea, He that did display such beams of His majesty and glory, living in flesh, that even the devils themselves were constrained to do Him homage, under that

notion, "the Christ, the Son of the living God," surely this must tell every man's conscience—this cannot but be the Son of God. *And that believing ye might have life through his name.* The term "life," thus applied, includes : 1. Pardon of sin. 2. A renewed nature. 3. Eternal glory in heaven. All this is obtained by "believing in the name" of Jesus Christ, believing that He is "the Christ, the Son of God." The belief, however, be it remembered, which is the means of giving us an interest in these blessings, is not a mere assent of the understanding to certain truths brought before it, but an acceptance of those truths by the heart as the principles on which it would regulate its thoughts, words and actions, even unto death. Thus John, in the very close of his Gospel . . . iterates the testimony with which he began it—to the Godhead of the Word who became flesh.

NOTE.

It is supposed that several women agreed to meet at the sepulchre, to embalm the body of Jesus, and that Joanna and some others with her, having undertaken to prepare the spices, purposed being there about sun rising (Luke xxiii. 55, 56, xxiv. 1-10), but Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Salome, came to view the sepulchre, as the day "began to dawn." (Matt. xxviii. 1.) Mary Magdalene seems to have arrived some short time before her companions (1), and observing that the stone had been removed, left them to wait for Joanna and her company, and returned back to inform Peter and John. In the meantime, the other Mary and Salome came to the sepulchre, and saw the angels, as recorded by Matthew and Mark. While these women returned to the city, Peter and John went to the sepulchre, passing them at some distance, or going another way, but the angel did not appear to them. After their return, Mary Magdalene saw a vision of two angels, and then Jesus Himself, as here related (Mark xvi. 9-11), and immediately after Jesus appeared to the other women as they returned to the city. (Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.) In the meanwhile, Joanna and her company arrived at the sepulchre, and, entering it,

at first saw nothing, only observed that the body was not there; but two angels appeared and addressed them, as the one angel had done the other women. (Luke xxiv. 1-10.) They therefore returned immediately to the city, and found the Apostles, before the other women arrived, and informed them of what they had seen, upon which Peter went a second time to the sepulchre, but saw no angels, only the clothes lying. (Luke xxiv. 12.) About this time the two disciples set off for Em-

maus, having only heard the report of these women, and neither that of Mary Magdalene, nor yet that of the other Mary and Salome. (Luke xxiv. 22-24, 33, 34.) These at length arrived, and informed the Apostles that they had seen Jesus Himself, and that two of them had been permitted to touch Him; and some time after, on the same day, He appeared to Peter. This is one of many ways by which the apparent differences between the Evangelists may be reconciled.

1. Who came early to the sepulchre? 2. What did she do? 3. What is said of Peter? 4. Where did the disciples go? 5. What did the angels say to Mary? 6. What did Jesus say to her? 7. In what circumstances did Jesus appear to the disciples? 8. What account is given of Thomas? 9. What is said of "many other signs?" 10. Why were "these" signs written?

CHAPTER XXI.

1 *Christ appearing again to his disciples was known of them by the great draught of fishes.* 12 *He diavth with them;* 13 *earnestly commendeth Peter to feed his lambs and sheep;* 18 *foretelleth him of his death;* 22 *rebuketh his curiosity touching John.* 25 *The conclusion.*

AFTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

After these things. There is reason to conjecture that more than a week elapsed before Jesus showed Himself as here related, although, as *Sier* suggests, it was most probably on the first day of the week, or our Sabbath. This would give two weeks as the interval between the appearance in xx. 16, and this at the Sea of Tiberias, or three weeks from the time of His resurrection. Nineteen days would then remain for His interviews with His disciples in Galilee, and His subsequent return to Mount Olivet, from which He made His ascension. *Shewed himself.* This expression implies that there was in His appearing something wonderful. (Mark xvi. 12.) *At the sea, on the shore of the sea. Of Tiberias.* It cannot be wondered that the disciples returned to their native sea, when the announcement is recalled, made first by the angels and repeated by the Lord Himself, that He was "to go before them into Galilee," and that "there they were to see Him." *On this wise, or thus.*

2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and ^aNathanael of Cana in Galilee, and ^bthe sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. ^aChap. i. 45. ^bMatt. iv. 21.

Simon Peter. (Matt. x. 2.) *Thomas*, who so late was doubtful. *Nathanael* (that is Bartholomew), of whom we have heard nothing since the day of his first call to Apostleship, and the mention of whose native town—*Cana in Galilee*—connects the record of this, our Lord's last miracle with the "beginning of miracles." *The sons of Zebedee*—James and John. John assumes as a thing known from the other Evangelists, who the sons of Zebedee were, as well as Zebedee himself. *Two other of his disciples*, doubtless Andrew and Philip. They were both from the same city (John i. 44), and their names are found connected on two (John vi. 5, 8 and xii. 21, 22), indeed on three (Mark iii. 18) occasions.

3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately, and that night they caught nothing.

These disciples seem to have been assembled together, for counsel, it may be, or devotion, and to them Peter proposes a return to their former occupation. They were in Galilee, expecting their Lord, waiting for His promised return: but they were poor, for they had left all to follow Him; and it was needful by honest labor to pro-

vide for themselves and for their households. So, moved thereto by their necessities, and not from any lust of gain, or weariness of their Lord's service, they return to a craft with which they were familiar, and go out of the house where they had been assembled, into the small fishing vessel which awaits them, and plied all night upon the waters of their native sea. But their task was an unprofitable one—that night they caught nothing—as at the first miraculous draught (see on Luke v. 5); no doubt so ordered that the miracle might strike them the more by contrast. The same principle is seen in operation throughout much of Christ's ministry, and is indeed a great law of God's spiritual procedure with His people. The fact that their Lord and their God could suffer the men He loved to remain in such a low estate and precarious condition, should teach Christians to submit cheerfully to poverty, as well as to behold with a feeling akin to reverence, the brother of low degree. This world is a place of fruitless toil, for men are not willing to be instructed. Like the disciples, they toil over the sea of life in the dark, fishing for happiness as they go, but generally in vain. Being unwilling to profit by the wisdom of those who have toiled over the sea before them, their net is mostly found on the *wrong* side of the vessel, while they are quite ready to throw the blame of their numerous failures on anything and everybody rather than themselves.

4. But when the morning was now come Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.—Chap. xx. 14.

When the morning was now come, &c. It is ever morning when Jesus visits His disciples. However dark the night, when He appears the light at length gets through the clouds, and the morning breaks. O what a bright morning broke upon the dark night of human sorrow at the Incarnation, when Jesus robed Himself in frailty, and for the first time placed His foot upon the shores of this guilty, wrecked, and storm-tossed world! And oh what a bright morning will burst upon the vision of the perfected just, when, standing upon that sea of glass which John saw in Apocalyptic vision, they be-

hold their glorified Lord: when, the full fruition of their hopes being realized, their sun shall no more go down, the days of their sorrow having forever passed away. *Jesus stood on the shore.* "What," observes an ancient writer, "does the sea represent, but this present world, which dashes itself with the tumults of business, and the waves of this corruptible life? What is represented by the solidity of *the shore*, but the perpetuity of eternal rest? It is as if our Lord spake to them thus, by facts, of the mystery of His resurrection: "Now from henceforth I appear not unto you on the sea (Matt. xiv. 25) being no longer exposed together with you to the disturbance of the waves. (Deut. xii. 9.)" *Knew not that it was Jesus.* The distance and the dimness of the morning light might account for their not knowing him. But still the narrative intimates that our Lord maintained, at least for a time, a supernatural reserve, so that His Apostles could scarce discern His identity. So, while His ministry and church are here on this *sea* of life, He ever stands on yonder high *shore* of immortality, earnestly watching them, though but dimly recognized by them.

5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.
6 Luke xxiv. 41.

Children, have ye any meat? This was in our Lord's wonted style to His disciples, making them tell their case, and so the better prepare them for what was coming. *Meat*—food. The original word expresses *something to be eaten with bread*, such as meat or fish. *Children.* This term would not necessarily identify Christ, but when they did recognize Him, they would feel it sweetly like Himself. It should be remembered that this honorable and endearing title was given by the Saviour to men, who, whatever might have been their former fidelity and attachment, had, within only a few days, forsaken Him and fled, had deserted Him in the hour of His utmost need, had abandoned Him on the very cross to which He had been nailed for their own eternal deliverance. On these poor, frail and inconsistent creatures, because He perceived in them "the root of the matter"—contrition, lowliness and love to Him, a willing spirit and a warm

heart—He bestows this high and delightful appellation. To *all* those who faithfully serve Him, Jesus addresses questions of a similar import: “Children, have you” what you need or desire? Have you supplies for the body and the soul? Have you strength, and peace, and joy? Have you an humble hope that your sins are pardoned, and a well grounded expectation of heaven?” Numerous are the discoveries which, even in this world of trial and perplexity, the real follower of the Redeemer makes of the compassion of the Master he loves and serves, and it will no doubt be one of the delightful occupations of heaven, to discover by its light, how early and how late, how constantly and how earnestly, in the midst of how much negligence and ingratitude on our own part, the grace of the Redeemer has been exerted in our favor, His wing spread over us, and His everlasting arm outstretched for our deliverance. *They answered him, No.* In this instance, the disciples of Christ are simply acknowledging a want of the body. They had no food, and, as is always the case in wants of this nature, they were sufficiently ready both to admit and to deplore the want of it. Bodily privations are not only keenly felt, but readily acknowledged, because the acknowledgment does not necessarily imply any fault in him who makes it. But this, alas! is not equally true as to the wants of the soul. In this case, men are neither quick-sighted to discover their necessities, nor free to confess them. Many of those who are, in fact, “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” are described in Scripture as considering themselves “rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing.” The great Teacher from the distant shores of eternity, now through His truth, says to every anxious laborer on the sea of life, “Have you any meat for your soul?”

6. And he said unto them, “Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.”—*Luke v. 4, 6, 7.*

The mysterious Stranger bids them *cast the net on the right side of the ship*. The result was so vast an enclosure of fishes that they were unable to draw it to land. (See notes on *Luke v. 4, 5.*) Behold what faith in the

words of Christ will do. The disciples had toiled all night in their own way, and taken nothing, while in a few moments’ labor, in accordance with the instructions of Christ, the net was filled! And when Jesus speaks to the guilty and self-condemned sinner, tells him what to do, and gives him the power to do it, O what a change transpires! and how richly is he blessed! and what a shoal of blessings comes pouring into the soul, until the man so favored is compelled to exclaim, Lord, it is enough! We may not, in these days, as in those of the disciples, expect that a miracle will be wrought for the benefit of those who comply with the will of God. It is, however, hazarding nothing to say, that every true servant of Christ, setting himself sincerely, and in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, to accomplish His will, may expect much from the grace and love of his Redeemer, acting by the instrumentality of ordinary means, but producing effects which may be considered as, in a sense, *beyond nature*. How striking, for example, are those *answers to prayer* which may not seldom be observed in the lives of the devout and consistent servants of God! How often are deliverances granted, are wants supplied, are calamities removed, are sudden fountains of hope and joy opened in the path of the destitute and disquieted soul! Let us strive, even amidst the worst emergencies and disappointments of life, to “cast the net on the right side of the ship,” or, in other words, to seek our happiness and interest in the very place, and after the very manner which our Lord Himself prescribes. He who has said that “to obey is better than all burnt sacrifice,” will fulfill every promise by which He invites us to a life of resignation and conformity to His holy will.

7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher’s coat unto him, for he was naked, and did cast himself into the sea. *Chap. xiii. 23 and xx. 2.*

That disciple whom Jesus loved, &c. John recognized Jesus first, reminded, as it would appear, by a former miracle of the same kind, and on the performance of which, Peter had exclaimed, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” (*Luke v. 8.*) Yet Peter was not at present struck

with the recollection himself. But no sooner does John say to him, *It is the Lord*, than the ship can hold him no longer, but at a place where the boat could not probably draw to land for the shallow water, girding himself with his *fisher's coat*, he plunges into the sea to reach Him! What rashness! What zeal! How perfectly in character does this man always appear! He was fervent, but acted by feeling, rather than reflection. He had a warm heart. The Lord had lately turned and looked upon him in the judgment hall, and he went out and wept bitterly. He had much forgiven, and he loved much. The Saviour had more than pardoned his late sad conduct, and had sent a message to him distinctly, "Go, tell my disciples, and Peter!" And how could he love Him enough? And love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.

8. And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

A little ship, probably the boat in which the disciples had been during the night. *Two hundred cubits*, equal to three hundred feet. The rest of the disciples followed slowly, but surely, dragging the net. Had all done like Peter, the fish had been abandoned, and the vessel left to be drifted and injured. While we admire some we must not condemn others. The dispositions and the duties of men are various; and while some perform splendid actions, and excite notice, others go ploddingly on in the sober discharge of their common calling—but they also have the testimony that they please God. *For they were not far from land*, &c. They were not far from Jesus. Only that hundred yards or thereabouts, and they shall converse with their dearest Lord, and in His heavenly company forget all their toil. This is that joy of the morning which awaits them after their night of heaviness. Let us think of this at any time, when in the night of our heart we wish for the day, saying, "When will the day break, and the shadows flee away?" "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." "The Lord is at hand," and with Him is peace, and we shall no more remember the anguish for very joy.

"When the shore is won at last,
Who will count the billows past?"

9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.
10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. 11. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

They saw a fire, &c. This might, indeed, be accounted for without supposing miraculous agency, but from the air of the passage it should rather seem that the fire and food were not only provided by Christ, but provided *miraculously*, as the draught of fishes had been a little before. Both of the miracles being probably intended to teach them, by symbolical actions, that their Lord could and would abundantly supply the *temporal* as well as spiritual necessities of His disciples. "O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him! The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." You serve a kind Master, and the world is His, and the fullness thereof—Jehovah-jireh! But we read, "Thou shalt eat the labor of thine hand," and nothing has such a peculiar relish as what is gained by the blessing of God upon our own endeavors. He therefore also said unto them, *Bring of the fish which ye have now caught, and Simon Peter went up, and drew the net*, &c. Thus, while they must have marveled and adored at what was nothing less than a miracle, they were not only supplied for their immediate use, but the sale of the capture would pay their expenses back to Jerusalem, and while waiting there for the promise of the Father. *A hundred and fifty and three*. The count took place, either at the command of Jesus, or from their own wish to preserve the remembering of the great miracle. *And for all there were so many*, &c. "In the Church of heaven, where there will be none but saints, how great soever the number of them be, yet will not the net be broken. There will be no longer any division or schism to be feared in the bosom of unity in the center of peace, in the kingdom of perfect charity. Vouchsafe, Lord, to give us a foretaste of these fruits of peace, and to shed abroad in our hearts the love of unity and the spirit of charity."

12. Jesus saith unto them, *Come and dine.* And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13. Jesus then cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.—Acts i. 41. See chap. xx. 19, 26.

Dine. The verb thus rendered, was applied by the ancients to any meal which was taken before supper. Many of our Lord's actions around these shores were symbolic of some great spiritual truths, and it cannot be doubted that morning hour and morning meal were fraught with momentous lessons to the disciple-guests, and to the Church in every age. Observe, 1. The disciples met their Lord while they were engaged in prosecuting their former calling. We are thus taught that, instead of worldly industry proving a hindrance and impediment to the religious life, it may rather, if not perverted and abused, become the very channel through which God delights to meet His people. 2. The disciples were reminded, by this renewed miraculous capture, of their former call and consecration as *Fishers of men*. They had forsaken Jesus, but He would have them know that the gospel-net is still to be entrusted to their hands, and feel assured that in the darkest hour of their worldly and spiritual toil, they might think of a watchful eye of heavenly love that would never suffer them to toil, unowned and unrecompensed. 3. There was thus taught the final glorious and safe ingathering of the whole Church of God. The fishermen are done with the sea of life, its storms and toils, and night watchings, they have planted their own footsteps on the heavenly shore, and brought their net unbroken along with them. It is a lovely picture of the Resurrection morn, when all divisions and separations among Churches and Christians shall be at an end; when every fish in the sea of immortal being, "all the children of God scattered abroad," shall be gathered in. Notwithstanding the vast aggregate, not one shall be wanting. 4. Christ thus demonstrated His own real and undoubted humanity—convinced the disciples that it was no shadowy apparition which, at that morning hour, saluted them and then vanished away, but *the Man Christ Jesus*—the same Adorable Being who had been known to them oft before on these same

shores in "the breaking of bread." 5. This feast was, as it were, a type of the nobler and better festival Jesus was then on His way to prepare for His Church in glory. When the world's long night-season is over, and the eternal morning dawns, they who have faithfully and manfully toiled, will find that Jesus, faithful to His own promise, has "come again to receive them unto Himself, that where He is there they may be also," and then shall they "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," in His Father's kingdom. *Durst*, or, *ventured to ask him*. Their backwardness proceeded from no other fear than that which may be in consequence of the most perfect esteem or veneration. *This is now the third time, &c.* Not the third time in succession—for He had appeared before this to the women, and to Cephas, and to James, and to the two disciples going to Emmaus. But the third time in kind: that is, the third time when the disciples were together. The Saviour seems to design to make His Apostles amends for the three days wherein they were deprived of the comfort of His presence. He obviates all suspicions of mistake and delusion, it being impossible that so many persons could be deceived all at once, and at so many different times. Throughout the Bible, "the third time" (a number ever Divinely allusive to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity), is either for confirmation or consummation.

15. ¶ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? referring lovingly to those sad words of Peter, shortly before denying his Lord, "Though *all men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet will I never* be offended" (Matt. xxvi. 33), and intending by this allusion to bring the whole scene vividly before his mind and put him to shame. "Christ puts Peter upon a three-fold profession of his love unto Him," says *Burkitt*, "answerable to his three-fold denial of Him; his three-fold denial required a three-fold confession. True repentance ought, and will be as eminent in the fruit and effects of it, as the saint's fall hath been."

Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He adds not, "more than these," but prefixes a touching appeal to the Saviour's own omniscience for the truth of his protestation, which makes it a totally different kind of speech from his former. Observe, Peter being asked of the *measure* of his love to Christ, answers only concerning the *truth*, being asked of the *quantity*, answers only concerning the *quality*. "For the quantity, it matters not so much with Thee, none loves Thee so much as he ought, but for the sincere quality, which is all in all with Thee—as for that, I appeal to Thyself" (See notes on verse 17.) *Feed my lambs.* By the "lambs" we are to understand *young and tender* disciples, whether in age, or Christian standing (Isa. xl. 11; 1 John ii. 12, 13), and by the "sheep," verses 16, 17, the more *mature*. (See notes on verse 16.) What is said to Peter is said to all the Apostles. Not *thy lambs or thy sheep*, but "*my lambs and my sheep*." (1 Peter v. 2.) Jesus not only provides shepherds, but pasture, the Gospel of which He is the subject. Feed them with thy mind, feed them with thy mouth, feed them with thy labors, feed them with the prayer of thy heart, the admonition of thy word, the view of thy good example. (1 Thes. iv. 1; 2 Cor. xii. 15.)

16. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

¹Acts xx. 28; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 25 and v. 2, 4.

Again. The repetition is designed to impart emphasis to the inquiry, and produce a deep impression on Peter's mind. *Lovest thou me?* Christ would not trust His people with one who did not love Him. It is by this a good shepherd is distinguished from a hireling. (John x. 11.) Love will inspire vigilance and boldness in feeding the flock, and defending them from danger. *Thou knowest, &c.* (See on verses 15, 17.) *Feed my sheep.* "*My sheep.*" They are Christ's as given Him by the Father. (John x. 29.) They are His as having purchased them with His blood. (Acts xx. 28.) And they are His as being the travail of His soul, the reward of His death, which "satisfied" Him. The word here rendered "feed" signifies the whole duty of a shepherd, and not merely to supply them with

food—to govern them, protect them, to care for them, or (as Peter himself expresses it) "to take the oversight of them." (See on verse 15.) To discharge this duty as it demands is a great matter. 1. It requires that a minister be divested of a selfish spirit. 2. That he be conversant with the Gospel. How else can he lead others into it? If he be worldly-minded, he shall feed their evil principles and propensities, but not their graces, at best, only their mental faculties. Many are thus fed by ingenious, speculative preachers. But the faithful pastor must feed his people's best principles—their faith, hope and love. Lord, who is sufficient for these things?

17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.—Chap. ii. 24, 25 and xvi. 30.

The third time. The kindness of our Lord to Peter is affecting, but the moral of it extends to us. When our Lord asks a disciple three times whether he loves Him, and puts him upon examining his heart, He teaches us that love to Christ is essential to our discipleship, and He gives to love the same eminence which it has always held among angels and men. It is "the first and great commandment." *Peter was grieved.* Peter now sees that it is his *three-fold* denial that demands his *three-fold* confession. He is *grieved*, not because the demand is made, but for the sad cause that renders it necessary. He had thrice said, *I know not the man*, he may now thrice declare how he *loves the man*. But the recollection of the sad scene of his denial of his Master melts him to sorrow in this hour of tenderest kindness and compassion. "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee—I do not say I shall never yield to temptation again—Lord, preserve me! And I wonder not that those who can only judge from outward appearance, think unfavorably of me, after all that I have done, but Thou seest the heart." We ought to stand clear with men, but it is a peculiar satisfaction, when we are misjudged of our fellow-creatures, to know that our witness is in heaven, and our record is on high. (See on verses 15, 16.)

19. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

¹Chap. xiii. 36; Acts xii. 3, 4.

Our Lord proceeds to predict the future martyrdom of Peter. In allusion to Peter's late alacrity in girding himself to go forth out of the ship to meet his Lord, (verse 7), the Lord draws a contrast between this vigor of his youth and the feebleness of his age, between the occurrences of the beginning of his ministry and Apostleship, and what shall happen at its close. In the expression, *whither thou wouldest*, may be a gentle reminder of his late desertion, but in its correlative *whither thou wouldest not*, we must not imagine that any unwillingness to suffer is implied. It can only mean that natural shrinking from a violent death which is common to us all, which may bespoken of even where such a death is, as it would be in this case, willingly embraced. Jesus Himself, with strong crying and tears, said, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Peter would, and would not; there would be nature in him, as well as grace. And while the spirit would be willing, the flesh would be weak. We see this related of some of the martyrs. *Latimer*, in one of his letters in prison, says to his friend: "O! pray for me! I sometimes shudder, and could creep into a mouse-hole, and then the Lord visits me again with His comforts, and thus, by His coming and going, shows me my infirmity." *Ridley*, at the stake, said to the smith that was driving in the staple: "Knock it in hard, my good fellow, for the flesh may have its freaks." And when they were leading *Rawlins* along to the flames, chancing to see his wife and children among the crowd, he burst into a flood of tears, and striking his breast, he exclaimed: "Ah, flesh, you would have your way, but I tell thee, by the grace of God, thou shalt not gain the victory."

19. This spake he, signifying why what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.—2 Peter i. 14.

By what death, *i. e.*, by what kind of death. That Peter suffered martyrdom there can be little doubt. Nothing short of a violent death at the hands of his enemies can satisfy the conditions of this prophecy. It is an ecclesiastical tradition that he was cru-

cified with his head downward, at Rome, during the reign of the emperor Nero. *He should glorify God.* "The revelation of God unto the world by the Gospel," says an ancient writer, "is called the light of the knowledge of the glory," that is, of the manifestation "of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," and in 1 Peter iv. 14, those that suffered for Christ, are said, in allusion to the Schechinah, to have "the glory and Spirit of God to rest upon them," because, I conceive, God appeared as eminently in them in their confessions and sufferings, as if His glory had descended upon them in lambent fires, and rested upon their heads. (Isa. xxiv. 15; Matt. v. 11.) Persecution has always been overruled to advance the cause it aimed to destroy. The wrath of man has praised God. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church. The death of such men has been honorable to the truth and grace of the Gospel. We are not martyrs. But we are often called to suffer, and we may glorify God in the fires. There is only one way into the world, but there are many ways out. By which of these we are to pass we know not. But we may glorify God by the death we shall die—if we are enabled to exercise faith, patience and repentance, if the joy of the Lord is our strength, and we can, from experience, recommend His service. *Follow me.* Our Lord, we now suppose, rose from the meal and prepares for His disappearing. He moves from the company and bids Peter "follow Him." Peter was, perhaps, startled by the prospect which his Master had opened to him, and needed a repetition of this charge, "Follow me," which he had received on being first called to be an Apostle. That charge, delivered this second time, would remind him of all which his blessed Master had lately undergone, and so strengthen his feeble will, and make him content to drink of that cup which Christ Himself had drunk before him.

20. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21. Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shalt this man do?

¹Chap. xiii. 23, 25 and xx. 2.

Turning about—uneasy, perhaps, at having been singled out from the other Apostles, for the purpose of being prepar-

ed for what he would naturally shrink from. (See notes on chap. xiii. 23.) The Lord speaks to Peter, John hears, at once applies the word to himself, and *follows*. The sensitive conscience of an advanced Christian catches at the first intimation of a duty, however indirectly made, nor does it fail to do so, when, as here, there is a call to suffering. Trials, undertaken in this spirit, the ready ventures of a true faith and love, show our wills to be united to the will of God, and that we are, indeed, "in the Spirit," living members in the Body of Christ. (Ps. lxxxv. 8; Acts xxi. 11-14.) On the other hand, the mistake of the other disciples, who spread the saying that *that disciple should not die* (verse 23), shows how prone sometimes we are, through that infection that remains in the regenerate, to construe the promises of God in a mere temporal or worldly sense. We are the more inclined to do this, if by such interpretations we can save ourselves from the necessity of suffering. (iv. 15, 33, 34; Ps. cxix. 25; 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.) *What shall this man do?* Peter ventures to ask the Lord what would become of John, who was following their steps. It was natural that he should expect this question would be answered, for at the last supper, when he had asked John to inquire who should betray the Lord, a reply had been granted. But there was a great difference between these two inquiries. *Anxiety* to clear themselves of the foul crime that one of their number would commit, led all the faithful Apostles to desire to know who the traitor was. But it was *curiosity* that induced Peter *now* to ask, "What shall this man do?"

22. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry 'till I come, what is *that* to thee? Follow thou me.
9Matt. xvi. 27, 28 and xxv. 31; 1 Cor. iv. 5 and xi. 26; Rev. ii. 25 and iii. 11 and xxii. 7, 20.

If I will, &c. This answer of our Lord contains a plain proof of His Divinity. He here intimates that it depends upon His will how long John shall remain alive. But *the issues of life and death* proceed from God *alone*, Christ therefore must be God. *Tarry till I come.* In regard to this coming of Christ, there are three modes of explanation, based on our Lord's three comings, one at the hour of death, another, His coming to destroy Jerusalem, and put

an end to the Jewish persecuting power, and the third, to which the first two are subordinate and secondary, His coming at the last day to judge the world. In our judgment the second mode of explanation is the true one. And such was in truth the portion of John. He outlived the other Apostles, and survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and though banished and exposed often to various perils, yet he died, it is said, in extreme old age. So that we should reflect in what various ways God's saints are called to glorify Him: some, by dying for His sake: some, by living long to serve Him here. The martyr's death may seem to us to be the more honored lot: but the lengthened service, the patient tarrying for that blessed summons, which those, whom we loved early in life, have perhaps long received and gone home before us, may, in some instances at least, need yet higher grace, and be the more glorious course. *What is that to thee? Follow thou me.* (See on verse 19.) There is nothing revealed in the Scriptures to gratify curiosity. Man would like to know the history of the *angels*, but he is only told his *own* history, for this alone concerns him: he would like to know who are the inhabitants of the worlds suspended in the heavens, but he is only told who *he* himself is. We should not perplex ourselves with needless questions on matters which do not concern us. We are apt rather to speculate on our neighbor's faults, our neighbor's spiritual state and eternal prospects, than to attend to our own. We have all a great work to do, even to follow Christ, and the less we entangle ourselves in vain questions, and affairs of others with which we have nothing to do, the more simply and singly shall we be likely to attend to the one thing really needful, the work which God has given us to do.

23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die: but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is *that* to thee?

See notes on verses 20, 22.

Then went this saying, &c. Observe, how much more ground of dependence there is in the Scripture, than in tradition. A *saying* may among brethren be interpolated through mere error, without any fraudu-

lent design. The hand of the Apostle (*i. e.*, in writing), heals the error, and preserves the truth to the present day. (See at xx. 9.) Observe also the sincerity of John, and his jealousy for his Master's honor in not suffering an erroneous report to be spread among the brethren, though it were in favor of himself. (1 Cor. xiii. 5.) Into this "saying" the "brethren" more easily fell, from the prevalent expectation that Christ's second coming was then near at hand.

24. ¶ This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.—Chap. xix. 35; 3 John 12.

It is an argument of John's humility, that he does not call himself a master in Israel, or a doctor, but a *disciple*, and that five times in this Gospel. (xiii. 23, xix. 26, xx. 2, xxi. 7, 23.) *Which testifieth*, &c. This verse completely identifies John as the writer of this Gospel. *These things* refers to the whole Gospel, and not to the last chapter merely. The "*we know*" and what follows, is by some ascribed to the Church. But the phrase is in John's style (see 1 John v. 18, 19, 20; also iv. 14, 16), and followed as it is by *I suppose* (verse 25), furnishes no positive proof that a collection of persons, rather than a single individual, is referred to. If the phrase, in its reference, reached beyond the Evangelist himself, it must have been to such of his fellow-Christians as had either personally seen Christ, or had an abundant measure of faith wrought in them by the Spirit, or to the testimony which the Apostles and disciples had borne of the acts and words of Jesus, to whose number John regarded himself as belonging, although at that time perhaps the only surviving one.

25. ¶ And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.
*Chap. xx. 30. *Amos vii. 10.

Many other things which Jesus did. To be convinced of the numerous unrecorded miracles performed by Him, who, "in the days of His flesh, went about doing good," we may see at Matt. ix. how many He wrought in one day. Again, no mention is made in any of the Gospels of the performance of miracles at Chorazin, nor are we even told that Jesus was ever there; and yet "the mighty works," as our Lord calls them, done in that city, would have

been sufficient to make the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon repent, had they seen them. (Matt. xi. 20, 21.) "*I suppose*"—an expression used to show that what follows is not to be pressed too far, *even the world itself would not hold the books*, &c.—not a mere hyperbolical expression, unlike the sublime simplicity of this writer, but intended to let his reader know that, even now that he had done, he felt his materials so far from being exhausted, that he was still running over, and could multiply "Gospels" to almost any extent within the strict limits of what "Jesus did." But in the *limitation* of these matchless histories, in point of number, there is as much of that Divine wisdom which has presided over and pervades the living oracles, as in their *variety* and *fullness*."

It can scarcely be doubted that it will be one of the employments of the family of the redeemed in heaven, to hold converse together on "all that Jesus began to do and to teach," in the days of His humiliation, including, as a most interesting part, His unrecorded miracles and discourses. If we are made worthy, through the blood of Jesus, to enter His kingdom of glory, we may hear from the *lips* of Apostles circumstances which their *pens* have not recorded. *Angels* were witnesses of scenes where Apostles were not present: hereafter those holy watchers may describe events that occurred among the green hills near Bethlehem, and on the sultry plains of Egypt, in the lowly dwelling at Nazareth, and on the shady banks of Jordan, amidst the dismal caverns of the wilderness, and upon the sorrowful summit of Mount Olivet—events which have never yet been heard by mortal ear. And may not the Lord Jesus Himself condescend to reveal to His people some passages in His life, and some feelings of His heart, which are known to none but Himself? In the meantime, let us remember that we do not want the aid of traditional supplement, or human additions, to the Scriptures of truth—that though short, they are sufficient, leaving nothing obscure as to our duty or welfare, and that they are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus.

John adds with his three co-Evangelists

before him the solemn and confirmatory *Amen*, the *Verily* of his Lord, sealing up the record with such a formula ; so setting seal to this his testimony. Let our hearts and lives answer, *Amen*.

It was in old age that John wrote his Gospel, which has been so blessed a source

of light and life to God's Church. Thus may we serve God even to the end, and be it our prayer that we may have grace to receive whatever is written for our learning in this or other books of Holy Scripture, as the engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls.

1. Where did Jesus again show Himself to His disciples? 2. Under what circumstances? 3. What did our Lord say to Peter? 4. Why did he thrice repeat the question to him? 5. Explain verse 13. 6. What did Peter inquire respecting John? 7. What answer did he receive? 8. What is said about "many other things which Jesus did?"